Social Skills Development in Early Childhood
Enabling Learning, Growing Friends

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Learning is a Very Social Event for Most Students & Teachers!

1. Children learn many behaviors from observing other children or adults.
2. Children can teach each other important skills.
3. Learning is improved when opportunities to respond are increased.
4. Learning is improved when time-on-task is increased.
5. Learning is improved when feedback about effort & products is provided in a timely manner.
6. Learning is improved when reinforcement is provided.
7. Academic performance & classroom behavior are highly interrelated.
Social Skills, Problem Behaviors, and Academic Functioning are Interrelated
Guiding Questions

1. Who needs social skills instruction?

2. What are the most important social skills to teach?

3. How can you effectively teach social skills to preschoolers?

4. What is the most efficient way to monitor outcomes of your social skills instruction?

5. What if my instruction is ineffective at improving a child’s social behavior?
Definition of Social Skills or Prosocial Behaviors

Socially acceptable learned behaviors that enable an individual to interact effectively with others and to avoid or escape negative social interactions with others (Gresham & Elliott, 1990).

- **Major categories of social skills** (CCAREES)
  - Communication
  - Cooperation
  - Assertion
  - Responsibility
  - Empathy
  - Engagement
  - Self-Control
Examples of Social Skills

• COMMUNICATION
  – Takes turns in conversations
  – Makes eye contact when talking

• COOPERATION
  – Follows your directions
  – Follows classroom rules

• ASSERTION
  – Asks for help from adults
  – Questions rules that may be unfair

• RESPONSIBILITY
  – Respects the property of others
  – Takes responsibility for own actions

• EMPATHY
  – Forgives others
  – Feels bad when others are sad

• ENGAGEMENT
  - Makes friends easily
  - Invites others to join in activities

• SELF-CONTROL
  - Makes a compromise during a conflict
  - Stays calm when teased
Social Skills: The Foundation for Academic Success!

• Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, Bandura, & Zimbardo (2000) found that prosocial skills (cooperating, helping, sharing, and consoling) in 3rd grade was a better predictor of 8th grade academic achievement than 3rd grade academic achievement.

• Malecki & Elliott (2002) reported similar findings for social skills and problem behaviors for an elementary sample, with social skills significantly predicting end-of-year achievement test performance on a high stakes test.
Social Skills: Key Academic Enablers

- Social skills (i.e., interpersonal skills in the figure) play a key role in facilitating a student’s achievement in reading and mathematics by directly influencing motivation, which in turn influences engagement and study skills (DiPerna & Elliott, 2000).

- Students who are socially skilled spend more time on task and more time helping others. As a result, learning time goes up, classroom problem behavior goes down, and achievement increases.
The Top 10 School Social Skills!

- Listens to Others
- Follows Directions
- Follows Classroom Rules
- Ignores Peer Distractions
- Asks for Help
- Takes Turns in Conversations
- Cooperates With Others
- Controls Temper in Conflict Situations
- Acts Responsibly With Others
- Shows Kindness to Others
Definition of Competing Problem Behaviors

Competing problem behaviors are those behaviors that compete with or “block” either the acquisition or performance of socially skilled behaviors. These competing problem behaviors may be externalizing, internalizing, bullying, hyperactivity/inattention, or autism spectrum (Gresham & Elliott, 2008).

- **Major categories of competing problem behaviors**
  - Externalizing
  - Bullying
  - Hyperactivity/Inattention
  - Internalizing
  - Autism Spectrum
Variables that Influence Social Skills

- Lack of Cues or Opportunities
  - Problem Behaviors
  - Lack of Knowledge
  - Lack of Practice or Feedback

- Low Frequencies

- Maladjusted Outcomes

- Interference
  - Prevention
  - Interference
  - Low Frequencies

- Lack of Reinforcement
Tools to Support Sound Assessment and Effective Intervention with Preschoolers

Universal

Targeted
Comprehensive, Multi-Tiered Model for Improving Students Social Behavior

- Universal Screening (Tier 1)
- Universal Intervention
- SSIS Classwide Intervention Program
- SSIS Performance Screening Guides
- SSIS Rating Scales & Other Assessments
- Selected Assessment (Tier 2)
- Selected Intervention
- SSIS Intervention Guide (Small Groups) Intervention
- Targeted Assessment (Tier 3)
- Targeted Intervention
- Individual Interventions (Resource: SSIS Intervention Guide)
- Diagnostic & Functional Behavioral Assessments
- Special Education Referral
- SPED Placement
Classwide/Universal Assessment

The SSiS Performance Screening Guides:

- Three levels: Preschool, Elementary, Secondary
- Four key areas assessed by Teacher:
  - Prosocial Behavior,
  - Motivation to Learn
  - Reading Skills, and
  - Math Skills
- Easy to use and time efficient
- Focus on keystone classroom behaviors and skills
- Quickly screen a whole class or an entire school
- Monitor progress
- Provide documentation on all students, not just those needing instruction or intervention

In 25-30 minutes, a teacher can quickly and effectively screen 25 students.
Criterion-Referenced Judgments Using Performance Level Descriptors

- Each set of descriptors summarize several weeks of teachers' observations and interactions with students.

- The more frequent a student exhibits a behavior or the more competently the skills are expressed, the higher the level of performance for the descriptor.

- Teachers compare each student to the behavioral criteria as opposed to comparing students to each other as commonly done with norm-referenced assessments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prosocial Performance Descriptor</th>
<th>Preschool Student Performance Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prosocial Behavior</strong> is behavior directed toward other people that involves effective communication skills, cooperative acts, and self-control in difficult situations. For example, children who consistently act in a prosocial manner compromise in conflict situations, invite others to join activities, volunteer to help others, and listen when others are speaking.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prosocial Behavior</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **4** | Students at this performance level demonstrate most of the following:  
  - effective skills to communicate and/or cooperate with others  
  - effective skills to initiate and sustain conversations/interactions with others  
  - a high level of self-control and/or concern for others  
  Students at this performance level generally do not need additional instruction to improve their social skills, but their current skill level is considered to be high for their age. |
| **3** | Students at this performance level demonstrate most of the following:  
  - a general competence when communicating and/or cooperating with others  
  - adequate skills to initiate conversations/interactions with others  
  - adequate self-control and/or concern for others  
  Students at this performance level may benefit from additional instruction to improve their social skills, but their current skill level is considered to be appropriate for their age. |
| **2** | Students at this performance level demonstrate most of the following:  
  - frequent difficulty communicating or cooperating with others  
  - frequent difficulty initiating conversations/interactions with others  
  - limited self-control or little concern for others  
  Students at this performance level are often in need of additional instruction to improve their social skills. |
| **1** | Students at this performance level demonstrate most of the following:  
  - very limited communication or cooperation skills  
  - extreme difficulty initiating conversations/interactions in an age-appropriate manner  
  - poor self-control or little or no concern for others  
  Students at this performance level often need remedial instruction and/or reaching to improve their social skills. |
Classwide Intervention Program

• Designed for use by general education teachers in mainstream classrooms.

• Provides teachers with an easy-to-use, effective, and efficient way to teach 10 of the most important social skills.

• Blends instructional best practices and proven intervention methods to teach social skills.

• Three developmental levels:
  – Preschool/Kindergarten
  – Early Elementary
  – Upper Elementary/Middle
SSIS Intervention Guide

- Designed for school psychologists and other educational specialists providing targeted interventions

- Guides intervention planning for keystone behaviors from SSIS Rating Scales assessment results

- Easy-to-implement instructional model facilitates intervention planning

- Builds on the SSIS Classwide Intervention Program by including modified versions of the Top 10 Social Skills and selected resources
Dear Parent,

I am pleased to share with you that your child has recently completed the Social Skills Improvement Program. As a whole, the class did very well! The students now have a greater understanding of social skills and how they can have a very positive effect on their relationships with other people and on their learning at school.

Your child's progress chart for the Top 10 Social Skills is attached as a record of his or her efforts and accomplishments. I believe the improvement efforts will result in a better behaved class, more engaged in learning, and more emotionally healthy students.

I know many of you played valuable supporting roles in these improvement efforts. I thank you for your time and welcome any feedback or observations you have about the outcomes of the social skills program.

Thank you very much!

[Image of a CD with the text: CIP Resources on CD]
### Instructional Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TELL</th>
<th>SHOW</th>
<th>DO</th>
<th>PRACTICE</th>
<th>MONITOR PROGRESS</th>
<th>GENERALIZE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Provide a learning objective for the featured social skill.  
  2. Introduce the skill via questions.  
  3. Define the specific skill and stress Key Words.  
  4. Discuss why the skill is important.  
  5. Outline steps for performing the behavior. | 1. Model the behavior.  
  a. Model positive behavior.  
  b. Model negative behavior.  
  2. Model each of the major steps for enacting the featured social skill.  
  3. Direct a role play of a typical situation along with a student helper.  
  4. Lead a discussion of alternative behaviors to accomplish the social behavior objective. | 1. Ask students to define the skill.  
  2. Ask students to state the steps required to accomplish the skill.  
  3. Ask students about the importance of using the skill.  
  4. Repeat critical steps for enacting the behavior.  
  5. Ask students to model the skill in role plays.  
  6. Ask other students to provide feedback for the students using the skill in the role plays. | 1. Review and apply the skill in role plays.  
  2. Have pairs of students practice the Skill Steps and provide each other with feedback.  
  3. Encourage use of the skill outside of the intervention group sessions.  
  4. Assign homework to use the skill in other settings or with other students. | 1. Ask students to think about how well they are progressing with the social skill.  
  2. Ask students to complete the Social Skills Progress Chart. | 1. Have students brainstorm various situations to use the social skill.  
  2. Encourage use of the skill outside of the intervention group sessions. |
Materials for Teaching Social Skills

Unit 8: Stay Calm With Others

Student Booklet

Your Name: ____________________________

Class/Teacher: ____________________________

Early Elementary
Social Skills Improvement System
Classwide Intervention Program

Early Elementary
Stay Calm With Others
Lesson 1

OBJECTIVE: The student will stay calm and control his or her temper in conflict situations with peers. Specifically, the student will identify triggers and situations that make him or her angry and use anger-resolution strategies taught in this unit. The student will focus on skills learned in previous units to be able to stay calm with others.

TELL (4 min.)
1. Introduce the skill and ask questions about it.

Say: Today, we are going to talk about staying calm with other people. Staying calm means we don’t get mad at others, we try not to lose our temper, and we try to work things out when we have problems.

Say: I don’t think of some things that we can do to stay calm if we get mad or upset.

- How do we stay calm? (Take a deep breath, count to ten, tell a teacher, Mom, Dad, etc.)
- What can we do to show we are staying calm? (Be nice, talk about what is bothering us.)
- Why do we need to stay calm with others? (So we can talk about things clearly, get along better.)
- Sometimes we might get mad, but we can learn how to get calm again and stay calm.

Say: Staying calm with others means that even if we get mad about something, that we try to stay calm.

Say: Look at the picture on the front of your book. What do you see in the picture? (Teacher, student.) What is happening? (Teacher is telling the student about something that is bothering her.) See how the girl is talking to the teacher! She is staying calm and telling her what is wrong.

Say: When we stay calm with other people, we are able to figure out our problems and talk about what makes us mad or upset. It’s easier to get along when we’re all calm, and doesn’t get mad.

Say: Staying calm is important. It makes us better at getting along with other people and makes people happy when we are nice to them instead of getting mad.

- Losing your temper or not staying calm can sometimes make things worse.
- Things won’t get better if you don’t stay calm.
- if you can calm down from getting mad, you can make things better when talking with other kids.
- Listening to others and taking turns who you talk calm can help you stay calm with others.

Key Words: get along, calm, mad, temper, talk.
Video Clips Provide Positive & Negative Models of Social Behavior

26 video clips to facilitate discussion & modeling of skills
Students Monitor Their Own Progress

Students evaluate their progress during each lesson.
Social Skills Practice in Varied Settings

**Practice (4 min.)**

**Stay Calm with Others Exercise**

Say: Now, let's find the rain cloud on page 2 again. See these lines for these words. Write the letters of the words on these lines.

- The first word is: T-H-R-E. (Pause about three to five seconds between each letter.) What does this spell? (This) The second word is: O-N-E. (Pause). What does this spell? (One) Who can read this sentence? (The girl is looking at the boy.)

Say: For these lines, I will spell two more words. Write the letters of the words on these lines.

- The first word is: Q-W-E. What does this spell? (Que) The second word is: B-O-Y. What does this spell? (Boy). Who can read this sentence? (One boy is not staying calm.)

**Say:** Let's talk about places where we stay calm with others.

**Brainstorm places where we stay calm with others, for example:**

- Home
- School
- At a friend's house

Say: Go to the back page. Look for the soccer ball at the top. Look at the pictures. These are places where we can stay calm with others. Write the pictures (Classroom, play area, lunch area, home, car/bus). We can stay calm with others at school and at home.

This week, we are practicing the four steps that help us stay calm with others. The four steps are: Step 1: Read. Step 2: Think. Step 3: Talk. Step 4: Do. Today, we all practiced in class. Everyone drew a smiley face (😊) in this box next to the picture of the classroom. This box says, "I did it!" Today, we all did it in class.

During this week, I will ask where you practiced using the four steps. Did you practice on the playground? Did you practice at lunch? Did you practice at home? Did you practice on the bus or in the car? If you answered yes, then you can add a smiley face (😊) to the other boxes.

**Homework**

Say: Today (or tomorrow) at lunch, practice with a friend. Use the four steps: Step 1: Read. Step 2: Think. Step 3: Talk. Step 4: Do.

**Generalize (4 min.)**

**Practice:** Use what you learned at school and at home. After you do it, put a smiley face (😊) in the "I did it!" box.

**Place** | **I did it!**
--- | ---
Classroom | ![Classroom picture](image)
Play Area | ![Play Area picture](image)
Lunch Area | ![Lunch Area picture](image)
Home | ![Home picture](image)
Car/Bus | ![Car/Bus picture](image)
Dear Parent,

It is important for children to have good social and emotional health. When they do, they are better able to talk, interact, and relate with adults and peers. To improve their chances for school success, children need to learn key social skills. These include the skills needed to listen to others, cooperate, and control feelings when upset.

Social skills are also important to improving academic skills. In fact, some researchers think of social skills as an “academic enabler,” or an ability that helps students do better in school. The classroom is a great place to teach social skills. There are many chances to practice skills throughout the day, such as talking or interacting.

During the next 10 weeks, your child’s entire class will be studying social skills. We will use the Classwide Intervention Program (CIP) Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS). This program provides a fun, quick, and easy way to teach 10 of the most important social skills to students. The 10 units are:

1. Listen to Others
2. Follow the Steps
3. Follow the Rules
4. Pay Attention to Your Work
5. Ask for Help
6. Take Turns When You Talk
7. Get Along With Others
8. Stay Calm With Others
9. Do the Right Thing
10. Do Nice Things for Others

The CIP uses proven best-practice methods for teaching social skills. Students learn skills to help them relate to and learn better with others. We will spend about 25 minutes three times each week studying these key social skills. During these 10 weeks, your child may bring home his or her Student Booklet during the week or at the end of the week. Your child will be asked to share with you the skill he or she is learning.

Parents and families are the key to improving the social skills in children. This important role includes knowing about the program and making time to talk about social skills. For example, it would be very helpful if you could find 10 to 15 minutes to talk with your child about the CIP Student Booklet and the skill he or she is learning. Talking with your child will help him or her discover more new ways that social skills help people learn. It will also increase his or her motivation to do the work he or she needs to do each day.

At the end of the program, you will get more information about your child’s performance and progress. If you have any questions about this social skills program, please feel free to contact me.
**Resources to Monitor Student Progress**

### Social Skills Improvement System: Classwide Intervention Program

#### Classwide Top 10 Skills Progress Chart

- **Teacher:**
- **Class:**
- **Date:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students’ Names</th>
<th>Listen &amp; Chat</th>
<th>Follow the Rules</th>
<th>Pay Attention to Your Work</th>
<th>Ask for Help</th>
<th>Take Turns When You Talk</th>
<th>Get Along With Others</th>
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**For each unit:**
- On Day 1, think about how well you can do the Skill Steps.
- Then, read the following:
  - 1 = I can do SOME of the Skill Steps.
  - 2 = I can do MOST of the Skill Steps.
  - 3 = I can do ALL of the Skill Steps.

Which number best matches how well you think you are doing? Circle this number under Day 1. Repeat these steps for Day 2 and Day 3.

**Repeat for other units.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Social Skills</th>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Listen &amp; Chat</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Follow the Rules</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pay Attention to Your Work</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Ask for Help</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Take Turns When You Talk</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Get Along With Others</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Stay Calm With Others</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
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Teaching the Top Ten

Listening to others
Unit 1: Lesson 1
Weekly Lessons Overview

• **Lesson #1**
  6. Generalize

• **Lesson #2**
  6. Generalize

• **Lesson #3**
  6. Generalize  7. Review Week’s work and progress
Parts of a Lesson: Tell

**TELL**: Coaching

Teacher leads, students follow in booklet

1. Provide learning objective
2. Introduce skill via questions
3. Define skill and stress **key words**
4. Discuss skill importance
5. Outline steps to perform skill
Parts of a Lesson: Show

SHOW: Modeling

Teacher leads, shows video clips, students use booklets and role-plays

1. Students work in booklet
2. Show and discuss positive video clip and discuss
3. Show and discuss negative video clip and discuss
4. Positive example role play
5. Negative example role play
Parts of a Lesson: Do

DO: Review and role play: teacher leads, students follow along in booklet and role play

1. Students define skill
2. Students state skill steps
3. Students state skill importance
4. Review steps
5. Group role-play and feedback
Parts of a Lesson: Monitor Progress

MONITOR PROGRESS: Having students self assess:

1. Ask students to think about how well they are progressing with the social skill

2. Ask students to complete the *How Am I Doing* activity in their booklet
Parts of a Lesson: Practice

PRACTICE: Behavioral rehearsal in class

Student activities in booklet, practice with classmates, reinforce exhibition of skill

1. Review and apply skill in booklet activities
2. Students practice skill steps with classmates
3. Encourage practice outside of class
Parts of a Lesson: Generalize

**Generalize:** Applying Learning in Multiple Settings

Teacher initiates, students complete activity outside of class

1. Give **Homework** assignment to use skill in other settings or with other students
2. Have students share their booklets with a parent, friend, other adult, or sibling to communicate information about the social skill they are learning
3. Have students complete the **Practice** activity in their booklets
An Integrated System for Social Skills Improvement

- **Performance Screening Guide**
  - Teacher Assessment of Student
  - Assesses Prosocial Behavior, Motivation to Learn, Reading Skills, Math Skills

- **Classwide Intervention Program**
  - 10 Classroom units & supporting materials for “Top Ten Social Skills”
  - 7 Prosocial behavioral areas covered

- **Rating Scales**
  - Assessment of Student Social Skills, Problem Behaviors & Academic Competence
  - Teacher, parent & student forms for comprehensive picture across school, home and community settings
  - Provide standard scores with percentile ranks

- **Intervention Guide**
  - Tied to Rating Scales; Offers intervention and remediation strategies
Thank you!

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Find more information on the Social Skills family of assessment and intervention tools at www.psychcorp.com