



# TOP TIPS FOR SOCIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- Rehearse acceptable responses - help your child to practise alternative ways to respond to their peers in an amicable way.
- Use role-play scenarios with your child during play. This can help to prepare children for real world situations.
- Use books, television programmes or films as an opportunity to discuss facial expressions and both appropriate and inappropriate behaviour shown by characters.
- Play short games such as snap to encourage turn-taking and communication.
- Provide immediate and frequent feedback relating to inappropriate behaviour and social miscues. This can act as a gentle reminder for your child to think about their actions and words towards others.
- Encourage eye contact during conversation. This can be done by prompting with their name and a gentle reminder to show that you have gained their attention.
- Encourage play-dates with peers in a safe space such as your home or garden. Children are more comfortable socialising in a familiar space and this provides opportunities to observe their current skills. Supervision can also allow for intervention to support your child to improve their responses in the moment.
- Model good communication and response styles in front of your child – this can be with a partner, grandparents, siblings and friends. Children learn from how we communicate and use this as a building block for their interactions.
- After a heated argument or challenging situation, wait until your child has had time to cool off and is more willing to listen to you to then offer constructive feedback and advice on their behaviour.
- Spend quality time with your child focussing on having fun and building interests together. This can help them feel safer and encourage open communication.
- Encourage your child to get involved with activities that interest them – this could be sport or even building with Lego. Allowing them to explore these can help build self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Focus on one or two areas that your child is struggling with socially at a time, for example listening and turn-taking. Facilitate these skills using strategies and cues until your child becomes confident. This can be done by setting specific,

achievable goals for the child to accomplish while building their skills. An example would be successfully carrying out a task set by their teacher, or yourself.

- Reward improved social skills with frequent, small rewards and reinforce social skills that need more work.
- Stay calm and consistent – some children need more time and guidance to become confident with their social skills.