

Tips and Strategies: Social Initiations

➤ Guiding Questions and Expected Responses:

- How should you introduce yourself to someone new?
 - You should say "Hi, my name is..." and say your name. You may also shake the person's hand.
- What can you ask someone when you start talking to them?
 - You can ask someone "How are you?" when you start talking to them.
- What can you say to start a conversation?
 - You can ask someone a question like "What did you do this weekend?" to start a conversation.
- How can you ask someone to play?
 - You can say "Do you want to play with me?" and suggest a game/toy to play with.

➤ Tips and Strategies to Practice Social Initiations:

- Role-play with parent/caregiver
- Practice with a sibling/neighbor/friend
- Practice in the natural environments where the skills take place (school, community, etc.)
- Use the skills during play or leisure activities either at home or in the community
- Use various cues/prompts:
 - **Verbal Cues:** Ask a question that suggests a response (e.g. "Can you tell her your name?") or "comment on other people's actions" (e.g. "She is holding out her hand to shake your hand.") (Watling & Spitzer, 2018, p. 411)
 - **Visual Cues:** Picture prompts that demonstrate skills (e.g. shaking hands, asking someone how they are doing), Gesturing (e.g. gesturing toward another child that you want the child to introduce themselves to) (Watling & Spitzer, 2018)
 - **Tactile Cues:** Tapping the child on the shoulder to get them to direct their attention to another child who wants to talk to them (Watling & Spitzer, 2018)
- Demonstrate how to appropriately complete skills (modeling) (Kramer & Hinojosa, 2010)
- Ask higher order questions (e.g. "How could you do it differently?", "Why is it important to say your name to introduce yourself?") (Kramer & Hinojosa, 2010, p. 245)
- Give feedback (e.g. "You did well at asking a question to start a conversation.", "You didn't say your name to introduce yourself.") (Kramer & Hinojosa, 2010)
- Teach child to rehearse the skill before performing it (e.g. practice how to introduce yourself directly before meeting someone new) (Kramer & Hinojosa, 2010)
- Teach child to verbally instruct themselves on what to do (e.g. "I will walk up to him and say 'Hi, my name is...'" (Kramer & Hinojosa, 2010)

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➤ Tips and Strategies to Practice Social Initiations (cont'd):

- Create a mnemonic for the child to use to remember skills (Kramer & Hinojosa, 2010)
- Video feedback - record the child demonstrating the skill and allow them to watch the footage to analyze their performance
- Social Autopsies/Social Dissection (OCALI, n.d.):
 - Analyze social situations from the child's life to determine social errors and how to correct them
 - Analyze social situations in cartoons/movies
- Continue to use other evidence-based interventions that are effective for your child (Social Stories™, scripts, etc.)

References

- Kramer, P. & Hinojosa, J. (2010). *Frames of reference for pediatric occupational therapy* (3rd ed.). Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- OCALI. (n.d.). Social autopsy.
https://www.ocali.org/project/resource_gallery_of_interventions/page/social_autopsy
- Watling, R. & Spitzer, S. L. (Eds.). (2018). *Autism across the lifespan: A comprehensive occupational therapy approach* (4th ed.). American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.

