


**STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES**



Swedesboro-Woolwich SEPAC Presentation  
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**TONIGHT'S PLAN**

- o Defining social skills that are appropriate for your child
- o Discuss strategies for teaching skills at home and in the community
- o Other resources that may be helpful

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**WHERE TO START?**

- Prosocial behavior: 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).
- Continuum of skills
  - Listening and communication
  - Cooperation
  - Assertion
  - Responsibility
  - Empathy
  - Engagement
  - Self management

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**LISTENING AND COMMUNICATION**



- o **Functional communication:** following directions from different people, communicating wants/needs to appropriate people, asking for help, answering questions, etc.
- o **Social communication:** understanding and displaying appropriate body language, checking for audience interest, reciprocal conversation skills, staying on topic, etc.

talk to someone, not at them

→ getting needs met

→ including nonverbal


someone, not at them

**COOPERATION**

- o Key to game-playing, team sports, and every day interactions
- o Examples include waiting your turn, offering and accepting help, working together to complete a project, etc.
- o Barriers to cooperation skills include
  - Concrete thinking
  - Rigidity
  - Egocentric thinkers
  - Difficulties with perspective taking

**SELF MANAGEMENT**

- o Vital for all areas of social skills, regardless of child's cognitive level
  - Waiting
  - Trying when something is hard ★★
  - Dealing with frustration/mistakes
  - Ignoring others



**THINGS TO CONSIDER...**

- o Your child's cognitive level
  - How does he/she learn? Visually, rule-governed, through cause-and-effect, etc.
  - Developmental level
- o Language ability
  - Vocal/non-vocal
  - Follows directions
  - Communicates wants/needs
  - Answers questions
  - Asks questions
- o Interests\*\*\*\*
  - HUGE factor in teaching social skills
  - Take advantage of interests when planning to address skills

→ Partially based on language, age.

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**PERSPECTIVE TAKING**

- o Ability to recognize and understand the feelings, opinions and thoughts of others
  - People interpret events differently and have different feelings than we do
    - o AND THIS IS OK!
- o Impairment affects social opportunities
  - Most limited = factual, step-by-step teaching of social behaviors
  - Emerging = can teach the process of determining how others are thinking; still difficult for them to practice 'in-the-moment'
  - Impaired, but interactive = already "know" the differences in social thinking, but falter during interactions

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**BEING REALISTIC**

- o Focus on skills that are appropriate for your child developmentally
  - DANGER: A common pitfall of teaching social skills
  - Remember the levels of play:
    - o Individual—Parallel—Cooperative
- o Remember your child's level of perspective-taking
  - Is the skill really deficient?
  - OR does he/she know what to do and simply not do it?
- o Recognize that your own priority may not align to your child's abilities
  - Take a step back when determining where to start

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**SCENARIO---WHERE TO START?**

o Gianna is four-year-old girl who has global developmental delays. She communicates using some speech and sign language, primarily with adults. She generally follows the routine at school. When it is time to follow directions at home, she often refuses or does not respond. She loves to do puzzles and play with her kitchen set. She plays near other children but grabs toys and does not share. If another child takes a toy from her, she pushes or hits until she gets the toy back.

- Factors?

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**SCENARIO—WHERE TO START??**

o Owen is a seven-year-old boy who has ADHD. He is learning on a Kindergarten level and loves to play soccer. Owen HATES to lose, get an answer incorrect, or not be first. He often yells at classmates for completing work before he does or at teammates for missing a goal. Once he becomes angry or frustrated, he cannot recover easily.

- Factors?

*Perspective-Taking*

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**TEACHING APPROACH**

1. Pre-teaching
  - Discuss what you're going to do
  - Rules/expectations
  - Social story, video modeling
2. Practice, practice, practice
  - Contrived and naturally occurring opportunities
3. Reinforce/correct/follow-up

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"You tell me and I forget. You teach me and I remember. You involve me and I learn."  
-Ben Franklin

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**PRE-TEACHING**

- o What is your target skill?
- o Review the situation with your child *prior* to the event
  - What's the expectation? State the rules
  - Rationale for using the skill
- o Visuals are great for pre-teaching
  - Pictures for non-readers
  - Helpful for reference in situation and during follow-up

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**EXAMPLE: JOINING A GROUP**

1. Watch 
2. Walk to the kids  
3. Wait for a pause 
4. Ask to join  
5. If yes, join the group. If no, do something else.

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**SOCIAL STORIES**

- o Describe a situation, skill, or concept in terms that are relevant to your child.
  - Includes social cues, perspectives of other people, and common responses
  - Emphasis on *what to do*
- o Goal is to present information in positive, easy-to-understand format
- o Picture examples and scripted response examples can be helpful
  - Real pictures for literal, concrete thinkers

? When to use scripted / when not to?

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**DEVELOPING A SOCIAL STORY**

- o Choose your goal
  - Being a good listener, Following directions, Asking for help, etc.
- o Decide what information is important for your child
  - Use words and/or pictures that your child understands
  - Use first person language
  - Define what the skill is, where it is appropriate, and what the outcome will be for your child
- o Keep it short!
  - The more concise, the better!

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*Carol Gray* → wrote 1st social story

**SOCIAL STORY STRUCTURE**

1. Descriptive statements: Objectively define where a situation occurs, who is involved and why (observable facts)
2. Directive statement: Individualized statements of desired responses or choices (rule)
3. Perspective statement: Describe the reactions and feelings of others in a given situation
4. Affirmative statement: Stresses important points, states a rule, or reassures ("This is a safe thing to do")
5. Cooperative statement: Explain what others will do to support the child

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Make one!

**EXAMPLE: TAKING TURNS**



- I like to play with my brother. (Descriptive)
- When we play together, sometimes I push him away so that I can keep his toy.(Descriptive)
- When I push my brother, he doesn't want to play with me anymore. (Perspective)
- I can take turns with the toys when we play together. (Directive)
- My brother and I can take turns together. Mom can help us if we forget. (Cooperative)
- We have more fun when we take turns! (Affirmative)

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**VIDEO MODELING**

- o Create videos to teach child appropriate skills
  - Great for showing examples and non-examples of what to do
- o May require a 'good sport' to be the actor
  - Record the skill that you want your child to practice
  - Review with him/her and discuss
- o Examples: Waiting and Taking Turns Speaking




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**HOW TO USE**

- o Social stories and video modeling are tools for proactively teaching a skill
- o Review with your child prior to the situation
  - Practice, practice!!
  - Check for understanding

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**PRACTICING THE SKILL**

- o After pre-teaching, plan for opportunities to practice the skill
  - Role play at home
  - Play dates, parties, at the park, in the community
  - With different people in the expected setting
  - Refer to skill expectations
- o Begin pointing out examples throughout the day
  - In the community
  - In television shows, commercials etc.
  - Examples and non-examples

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Not getting anything @ Stone.

Point out examples

**REMEMBER TO BREAK IT DOWN...**

- o Does your target skill have several components?
  - May have to teach each step

Sharing

1. Sit near someone
2. Look at person
3. Use their name/respond when they say your name
4. Ask for item/respond when asked
5. Express thanks
6. Use the item/ or wait for next opportunity

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**FOLLOW-UP**

- o Review what your child did appropriately and **REINFORCE!!!!**
  - May require tangible rewards, depending on child
  - Remember that social skills are like other instructional skills: require practice and reinforcement
- o If improvement needed, review what to do differently next time
  - Matter-of-factly, do not reprimand
  - Plan for next opportunity to practice
  - Note which 'steps' were difficult

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→ what is issue?  
anxiety?

Questions??



\*March presentation will be given by HIB coordinator.

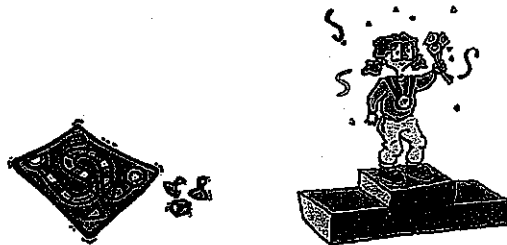
- Applying skills to larger group or unknown people

- Gianna meets Owen

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## Winning and Losing



I like to play games and win. All kids like to win!



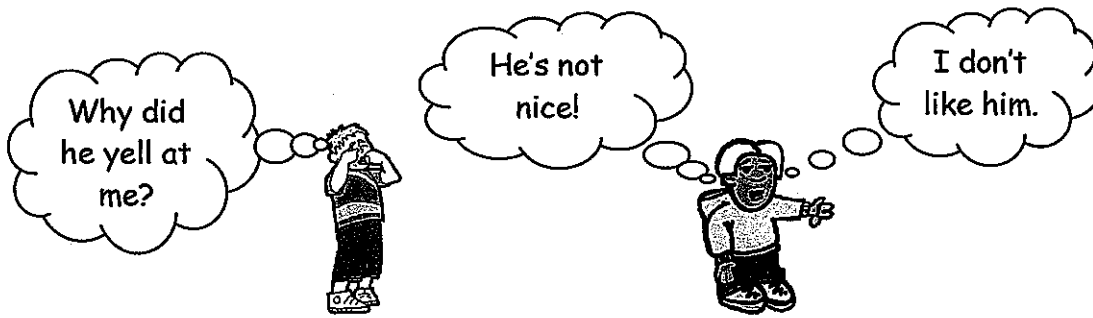
When I win I can say things like, "Good game," "That was fun," "I had fun playing with you," or "Want to play again?"



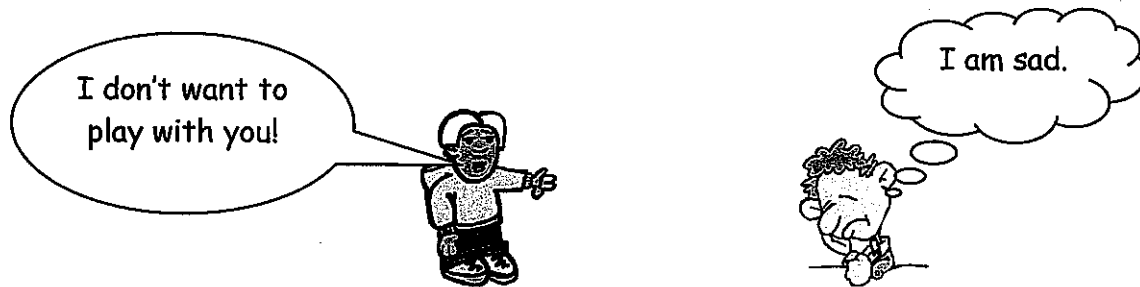
Sometimes I lose. This makes me feel mad. I don't like losing.



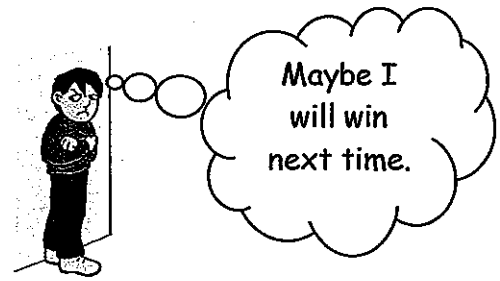
Sometimes when I lose I yell and get mad at the winner or say mean things.



When I get mad and yell, this makes the winner sad. Kids will think that I am a poor sport and mean.



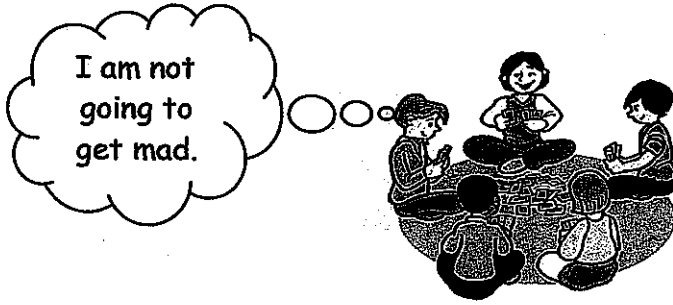
Kids will not want to play games with me. This will make me sad because I like to play games.



When I lose, I need to stop, take a deep breath and remember to think, "Its OK, maybe I will win next time."



I can then say, "Good game," "That was Fun," "I had fun playing with you," or "Want to play again?"



Kids will be happy and want to play games with me if I remember to not get mad.



I am happy when kids want to play games with me. It will make my parents and teachers happy too!