

Improving Your Child's Social Skills

Social skills include:

- Responding to social cues
- Saying hello and goodbye
- Making eye contact, smiling, being polite
- Having interesting things to say
- Cooperating by taking turns
- Acknowledging other's comments
- Responding appropriately to questions
- Being sensitive to the feelings of others
- Problem solving
- Controlling aggression and other inappropriate behaviors
- Knowing the rules of conversation

Rules of conversation are:

- Agree to pay attention to who is talking
- No one person does all the talking
- Participate in choosing and developing a topic
- Take turns in an orderly fashion
- Add information relevant to the topic (related to what you were talking about)
- Provide enough information to convey the message without being too 'chatty'

Social cues are: Those things we understand from others without needing to be directly told about them.

- Facial expressions
- Gestures
- Postures

Parents of children with hearing loss often need to explain their facial expressions and how the communication partner's mood will affect how someone answers or chooses not to answer.

Examples of sending social cues – think about how you use your body language to express:

"I'm really busy right now"

"Wait just a second and I will pay attention to you"

"I'm upset"

"I'm happy to see you and spend time with you"

TEACH – Explain what the child should do, be aware of, wait for, think about

Use 'SELF-TALK' so the child is aware of what you are thinking that affects the choices you make

MODEL – Use good social skills yourself, role-play with your child, provide the words for what he's feeling

PAY ATTENTION TO HOW YOUR CHILD INTERACTS WITH OTHERS

- **Reinforce good social behaviors – be specific about what s/he did well! Praise level of EFFORT!**
- **When your child has a social mis-step:**
 - immediately model what s/he should have said/done
 - use words to describe what s/he should have said/done (You mean....)
 - explain how it made you feel (ignored, angry)
 - describe how your child actions can be interpreted by others in a way he didn't mean (i.e. by not answering someone may think you don't care about them or what they say)

TIPS FOR IMPROVING SELF-ESTEEM

- **Encouragement boosts self-esteem; it is better than praise ("I know you can do it")**
- Decision-making leads to feeling confident.
- Treat him as an intelligent individual able to understand and reach conclusions.
- Mutual respect will foster trust and confidence.
- Teach a child that failure doesn't exist – only temporary setbacks on the road to success.
- Help him believe he has the ability to succeed no matter how long it takes.
- Do not tell him he has failed or cannot succeed.