This info comes from the following website:

https://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/social-communication/

Social Communication

There are rules for how we use language in different situations and with different people. Adults and children can have trouble with these social communication rules. Speech-language pathologists, or SLPs, can help.

On this page:

* [About Social Communication](https://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/social-communication/#about)
* [Social Communication Skills](https://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/social-communication/#social)
* [Problems With Social Communication](https://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/social-communication/#problems)
* [Social Communication Tips](https://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/social-communication/#tips)

About Social Communication

Imagine these situations:

You invited your friend over for dinner. Your child sees your friend reach for some cookies and says, "Better not take those, or you'll get even bigger." You can't believe your child could be so rude.

You talk with a neighbor about his new car. He has trouble staying on topic and starts talking about his favorite TV show. He doesn't look at you when you talk and doesn't laugh at your jokes. He keeps talking, even when you look at your watch and say, "Wow. It's getting late." You finally leave, thinking about how hard it is to talk with him.

Both your child and your neighbor speak well. What they may have trouble with is social communication, also called **pragmatics**. These are the rules that we follow when we talk. There are rules about when and how you should talk to people. We use facial expressions or gestures to share how we feel. We learn how to let someone know when we change the topic. Knowing and using these rules makes it easier to communicate.

Social Communication Skills

Social communication includes three major skills:

**Using language** for different reasons, such as:

* Greeting. Saying "hello" or "goodbye."
* Informing. "I'm going to get a cookie."
* Demanding. "Give me a cookie right now."
* Promising. "I'm going to get you a cookie."
* Requesting. "I want a cookie, please."

**Changing language** for the listener or situation, such as:

* Talking differently to a baby than to an adult.
* Giving more information to someone who does not know the topic. Knowing to skip some details when someone already knows the topic.
* Talking differently in a classroom than on a playground.

**Following rules** for conversations and storytelling, such as:

* Taking turns when you talk.
* Letting others know the topic when you start talking.
* Staying on topic.
* Trying another way of saying what you mean when someone did not understand you.
* Using gestures and body language, like pointing or shrugging.
* Knowing how close to stand to someone when talking.
* Using facial expressions and eye contact.

These rules may be different if you come from another culture.

Problems With Social Communication

A person with social communication problems may:

* Say the wrong thing or act the wrong way when talking. He may laugh at the wrong time or start talking about something else.
* Tell stories that do not make sense.
* Use language in limited ways. She may not say hello, goodbye, or thank you. She may yell instead of asking for what she wants.

Children may break some of these rules as they learn. If your child has a lot of problems with these rules, he may have a social communication disorder. He may also have other speech or language problems. He may have trouble talking with others or making friends.

A speech-language pathologist, or SLP, helps people with social communication problems. The SLP can test speech and language skills. The SLP can then help your child learn how to use language with different people and in different situations.

See ASHA information for professionals on the Practice Portal’s [Social Communication Disorder](https://www.asha.org/Practice-Portal/Clinical-Topics/Social-Communication-Disorder/) page.

Social Communication Tips

Use the tips below to help your child.

Skill: Using Language for Different Reasons

**Ask questions or make suggestions** to help the person use language in different ways.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **What You Want Your Child To Do** | **Suggested Question or Comment** |
| Comment | "What did you do?" "Tell me about..." |
| Request | "Tell your friend you want to..." "What do you want?" |
| Question | "Ask me..." |

**Use everyday situations.**Give your child chances to practice good social communication during the day. For example, practice staying on topic by talking about school. Have your child ask others what they want to eat for dinner to practice asking questions. Let your child ask for what they need to finish a project.

Skill: Changing Language for the Listener or Situation

**Role-play conversations.**Pretend to talk to different people in different situations. For example, have your child explain the rules of a game to different people. Show her how she should talk to a child or an adult. Or, how she would talk to a family member or a stranger.