

Parents and Guardians,

Young children develop social skills as they interact with teachers, friends, parents, siblings, and others around them. Teachers can model and encourage positive social skills such as sharing, cooperative play, appropriate ways to express emotions, and conflict resolution skills during the school day. Children, however, often spend many more hours out of school than they do in school. It is important to continue to teach these positive social skills while children are at home or in their community. Below are a few ways that children can develop needed social skills outside of school.

Play Board Games

One way children can learn positive social skills is by playing board games. Children can play with a parent, a sibling, or a friend. Board games offer friendly competition in a comfortable setting. Social skills that may come up during the game include playing fair, how to be a good winner, how to deal with losing, taking turns, and deciding who goes first. Board games also offer a chance for children to learn how to follow directions. Plus, depending on the game, board games can reinforce academic lessons such as counting or spelling.

Practice Good Manners

Another social skill that can be developed at home is good manners. The dinner table is the perfect place for children to practice table manners such as saying please and thank you when asking for something to be passed to them. Parents can also encourage children to sit properly at the table. When at a restaurant, children can practice their table manners by saying please and thank you to the server.

Discuss What You See on TV

A third way to promote good social skills is to discuss what characters do on TV shows. While watching a TV show with your child, discuss different events that happen. How do the characters handle the situation? How might the other characters feel? What was the result? What could have been done differently to make the situation better? Discussing what the TV characters have done lets your child know how you feel about that behavior without placing any attention on the child's behavior.

These are just a few ways that parents can help their children develop good social skills. Many more situations will come up throughout the day, and can be turned into learning experiences for future interactions. Working together, teachers and parents can help children develop good social skills.

