

Real World Ideas for Social Skill Facilitation

In Classroom

1. When the child is negative, e.g., does not say good morning or makes nasty comments, tell the child how that makes you feel or how that makes others feel and model what they should have done.
 - i. If you can track the negative behaviour back to the source, e.g. another child has said something that has been taken seriously by your target child, see if you can track back to what set your target off and talk the situation through with the target.
2. Increase the potential solutions to problem situations using problem solving steps: What is the problem? What are the alternatives or choices? What is the best solution based on the consequences? Try a solution and see how it works (Do it and learn). Be sure to accept any alternatives (e.g. I would hit the kid and take the toy back), but talk through the consequences and the fact that this action will not have the best chance of success in the long run.
3. Practice conversational skills with adults using openers/introducers and closers, and the ask and tell routines that keep you in a conversation. For example, you may have a target who says that they can say hello but do not know what to say after they are in a conversation. You can practice asking (when you do not know much about the topic) and tell (when you have something to add to the topic). This will be awkward but will develop into a real conversation if you persist.
4. Use a confederate/helper within the class. A confederate who is tolerant and naturally caring will be the best initial choice. The confederate will need to be given a specific task, e.g., accept when target asks to do a puzzle together or include the target in a planned activity.
5. Do small group activities that the target may have an edge on because you have pre-taught or you know the child has an interest and knowledge base already.
6. Nudge the child on the playground, e.g. Have the target find someone who is standing alone and not doing anything, then have the target practice lines on what to say to the child. For example, Go up to the child and say "Hi" and then say "Let's go for a slide."
7. Do small group activities with an adult to oversee. Make the task very structured and short to begin with and model what the target should do and not do as the interaction goes on between the target and other children. The activity can vary from cleaning blackboards to making decorations to doing a small project for the class.
8. Include the target in activities that will raise class opinion of their competence. For example, make the child a class speller and tell the other children to go to the class speller before going to the teacher, or have the target be the leader for a project on something they already know well, e.g., horses.

9. Practice the use of "lines" that can be used in difficult situations. For example, the target is

taught pat phrases to use if he is teased such as "You seem to have the problem, not me.", "That hurts my feelings.", "Why do you want to hurt me?", "Same to you and more of it.", "I know you are but what am I?", "The teacher would like to know that you said that to me.", etc.

10. You may have to show the target how to "keep cool". This may require you to touch the target and talk right into their ear to begin with. As you see the signs of an impending spin-out, you may intervene. You are helping the child to control themselves at first and may use a simple cue such as a hand signal once the child learns to respond by cooling off.

At Home

1. Import children for a structured activity in which an adult is involved. The adult may be a parent or a hired helper, such as a neighbourhood teenager if the parent is busy or the child behaves better for someone other than the parent. (By the way this is common since parents seem to bring out the worst in their children). The activity should be structured (e.g., baking for the school or seeing a movie) and short to begin with. The adult may instruct (e.g., ask nicely for the flour), model (e.g., I used to feel that way when I was a kid so I tried to stay away from bullies) and prompt (e.g., You used to have one of those. Tell Beth about it.).
2. Others in the family may practice telling about events that have happened which would be passed on to others later. This practice will show the target how to tell about things that happened to them.
3. Practice using the "ask and tell" to keep a conversation going.
4. Play games that instead of being competitive require cooperation between partners to achieve a goal. Practice the game with the target so they have an edge going into the game.

Source: **GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF ORAL AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE** by Dr. Genese Warr-Leeper, Western University, Ontario