

Help your child develop social skills

For parents of students in the primary and junior grades

Home

A child will have her/his first social experience at home with the family. Parents will have the opportunity to establish social behaviour prior to starting school. The experiences that are developed and nurtured will assist in the foundation of future relationships.

Communication

As soon as possible, introduce your child to a variety of books and stories containing feelings and emotions (e.g., happy, sad, mad, scared). By doing this, your child will be able to identify, communicate and express a variety of feelings as they arise. You can also use characters from books and stories to explore empathy and problem solving. Ask questions: How does (character) feel? Why does he/she feel this way? How could you make (character) feel better? What should (character) do to solve the problem?

Cultural stories and Aesop Fables are great 'read-alouds' to explore social skills and emotions, where each story is linked to a moral and a lesson to learn.

<http://home.freeuk.net/elloughton13/aesop.htm>

Art / Literacy Link:

www.dltk-teach.com/fables/index.htm

Google Video Search: 'Aesop fables for kids'

The community

There are various social and educational groups within the Region of Peel where you can interact with other parents, children and professionals. Most of the groups are **free**, and provide useful information for both you and your child. For your child to have an easy transition into school, it would be beneficial for him/her to be exposed to other children and adults in a variety of settings. Your local library, Brampton Parks and Recreation, The Early Years and Readiness Centres provide **free and low cost** social and educational school-based, drop-in programs.

Library Programs and Events:

www.bramlib.on.ca/index.php/children-main/programs-events

Brampton Recreational Activities:

www.brampton.ca/en/residents/recreational-Activities/Pages/welcome.aspx

Brampton Early Years:

www.peelschools.org/early_years/

Under your guidance, group leaders and the Early Years Teachers, your child will have the opportunity to socialize with other children, develop social skills and learn the basics of friendship forming and group dynamics such as, taking turns, playing with others, sharing and positive conversation. These excellent experiences will also help to develop and foster your child's vocabulary as well as reinforce good habits, manners and help prevent future bullying issues.

Follow up and reinforce what is learned at home in order to achieve success.

Solving social problems

Children of all ages face problems from time to time and would benefit from learning important steps to help solve them. Talking out loud about a problem and solving it together can help give your child problem solving skills.

For preschool/kindergarten:

At this age, you want to keep it simple. Help your child put into words his feelings, the nature of the problem and what he can do about it.

1. How do I feel?
2. What is the problem?
3. What can I do?

Grade 5

By the time your child is in the junior grades, he will have more skills and knowledge. He will be able to take into account his own, and others' thoughts and feelings, while solving problems.

1. Stop and Think. Calm down (Take a deep breath. Count to 10.)
2. What is the problem?
3. What are some solutions?
4. For each solution, ask yourself, Is it safe? How might people feel about it? Is it fair? Will it work?
5. Choose a solution and try it.
6. Decide if it's working.
7. If not, try a different option.

Anger management

Learning to manage anger does not mean that you never get angry, but that you express your feelings in a way that is constructive and does not make a difficult situation worse.

Primary age. Teach your young child the "turtle" method for calming himself down. Just like a turtle uses its shell when it is upset, he can pretend he has a shell he can go into when someone or something upsets him, or makes him angry. Then, when he is calm, he can think about how to solve the problem.

Sharing

Skill steps:

1. Look. *Look at the activity.*
2. Think. *How many can play? Is it something we can share?*
3. Ask. *Can I share?*
4. Share. *Play with the other children, sharing the materials.*

Waiting your turn

Skill steps:

1. Look. *Look at the activity.*
2. Think. *How many can play? Is it something we can share, or do I need to wait my turn?*
3. Ask. *May I have a turn?*
4. Wait.

Joining a game or activity

Skill steps:

1. Look. *Look at the activity.*
2. Think. *How many can play? Can I join in? Do I want to join?*
3. Move closer. *Move fairly close to where the activity is taking place.*

By moving closer, the child is signaling to the group that he wants to join in. When the group notices a child moving closer, someone might invite the child to join. However, when a child moves closer, it's important not to interfere with the game or activity—not to grab items that the children are playing with.

4. Ask. *Can I play?*

(From the Kindergarten Intervention Project Resource Guide - Peel District School Board)

(From *Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum Third Edition*. Committee for Children 2002)

(From Huggins, Pat. *Helping Kids Handle Anger*. Sopris West Educational Services, 2005)

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April 18, 2015*