

**Why don't I
have friends to
play with?**

**Dr. Nicole Boyington &
Dr. April Doebert-Fischer**

1

Meet the Presenters

<p>Dr. Nicole Boyington</p> <p>Nicole Boyington has been an Occupational Therapist for 20 years. She currently works as an academic fieldwork coordinator/assistant professor for Mount Mary University in Milwaukee, WI. She became a co-owner of Occupational Therapy Family Services, LLC in 2019. Nicole has certifications in lymphedema, home modification, and ADHD. Nicole is an advocate for special needs families and the community. She currently lives in Menomonee Falls, WI with her husband and three children and grew up in the Milwaukee area.</p>	<p>Dr. April Doebert-Fischer</p> <p>April Doebert-Fischer has been an Occupational Therapist for eight years. She currently works as an assistant clinical professor at Carroll University in Waukesha WI. She became co-owner of Occupational Therapy Family Services, LLC in 2019 which is a company that focuses on the social skill building in children and adolescents. As a mom of two children with special needs she saw a need for the development of social skills in children as well as the academic and personal benefit it brings children and families. She is a certified clinical anxiety treatment professional for child & adolescent (CATP-CA). She also holds certifications in dementia and Kinesiotape.</p>
--	--

2

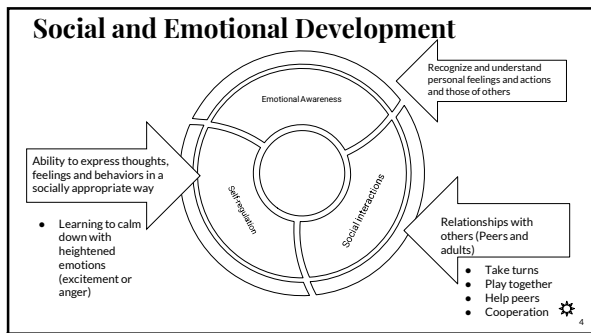
Fostering a Healthy Environment for Children

Children have a desire and need to connect with those around them from birth

Positive relationships established by parents, family, providers and teachers in the early years lay a foundation for healthy social and emotional development. This affects how children

- Experience the world
- Express themselves
- Manage their emotions
- Establish relationships with peers

3



4

Developing social and emotional development in infants

Talk, read and sing to infants daily

Provide a warm, responsive and consistent environment

- Smile
- Laugh
- Use their cues to help guide you

Maintain consistent and predictable routines

- This can help with security and safety

Get to know the child

- What are they interested in
- How are they feeling

Play simple social games

- Peek-a-boo
- Taking turns cooing

Be a role model for emotions

- Joy
- Sadness
- Kindness

Imitate the child's facial expressions and sounds

- This sets the earliest foundation for interacting with others

5

5

Emotions with infants - Recognizing and Talking

Say what you think the infant is feeling

- You look happy
- You look sad

Help the infant learn to calm themselves and praise this behavior

- Sucking on fingers/pacifier helps babies self-soothe - the first step to managing emotions

Learn to read the moods of the child - help the child through their mood

- Smiling
- Squirming
- Crying

6

6

Developing social and emotional development in toddlers

Provide age-appropriate toys and books so the toddler can safely explore

- Allow the child to explore independently in a safe environment

Set predictable daily routines

- Expectations can help create security and safety
- Visual schedule (pictures) and refer to it often

Tune into how the child responds to the environment

- Stimulation
- Attention
- Down time
- engagement

Celebrate children's home cultures

- Development of connection between families and the child

Opportunities for playful group activities

- Place toys on the floor and allow the child to explore and play with others even if just next to peers

Choices throughout the day

- Snack (use pictures if not verbal)

Teach the child to share and take turns

- Hand out two items: keep one and share one

Encourage friendships early

- Parallel play



7

Emotions with Toddlers - Recognizing and Talking

Talk about emotions

- Give examples
- "Two stuffed animals were fighting over a toy and they became angry"

Talk about your own feelings and emotions

- Example: "It's hard for me to wait for that toy while someone else is playing with it"

Help the child describe their feelings


- Pictures
- "I can tell you are happy/sad/excited"

Offer comfort and reassurance

- Let the child know it is ok to have emotions and strong emotions

Teach ways to manage emotions

- Deep breaths
- Comfort item
- Hug
- Cool down area



8

Developing social and emotional development in preschoolers

Provide warm, consistent and responsive care

- Help build confidence that their needs will be met

Tune in and observe information about the child to help guide learning

- How are they feeling?
- What activities are they interested in?

Create consistent and predictable routines


- Have a picture schedule that is reviewed frequently

Tell children about transitions between tasks

- "Warning" before a change in activity
- Example in 5 minutes/1 minute we will be doing...

Celebrate diversity - include all children

- Home language
- Body language
- Gestures
- Signs
- Team-building activities



9

Emotions with Preschoolers - Recognizing and Talking

Use daily activities

- Snack time
- Center time
- Outside time
- Taking turns, playing together, conversations

Encourage pretend play

- Encourage multiple children to play together
- Ask questions - "if you are cooking, can ___ set the table"

Build positive peer relationships

- Teach children how to get each other's attention
- Practicing waiting a turn to speak

Use children's books to help build social skills

- Themes - making friends, taking turns, cooperating
- Discussions with the group



10

Emotions with Preschoolers - Recognizing and Talking

Tell the child their thoughts, feelings and efforts matter

- Listen and let them know you are listening
- Praise child for how hard they are trying
- Praise child for their accomplishments

Help the child link a word to their emotion

- Example - "I can tell you are scared/mad/angry"

Encourage the child to practice thinking about how others (peers/adults) feel

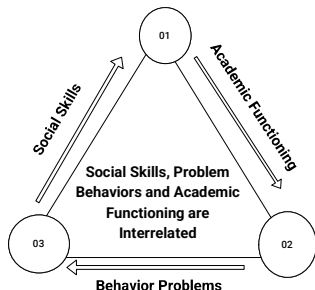
- Have discussions after reading stories
- Practice asking the child how their peer felt during the situation (taking away a toy)

Acknowledge difficult feelings

- Let the child know that it's okay to have strong feelings - anger, frustration, excitement
- Help them understand the feeling - calm down or have a discussion



11



12

12

FEELINGS FELT BY EVERYONE:

SADNESS
HELPLESSNESS
ANGER
FEAR
SORROW
DISAPPOINTMENT
FRUSTRATION
EXHAUSTION

Parents
CHILD
Teachers
Therapists

Why won't my peers play with me?

13

13

Helping a child make friends...

SOCIAL SKILLS

14

14

<p>"Every dollar invested in effective social emotional programs in school can bring an average of more than 11 million dollars in benefits in the long run."</p>	<p>"Students with stronger emotional skills tend to do better in school, have better attendance and have higher grades."</p> <p>Research shows that children with stronger social emotional skills were less likely to experience health problems, struggle with substance abuse or engage in criminal activity as they got older."</p>	<p>"When we invest in our children earlier we promote social mobility within and across the generations, reduce health care expenditures and leads to be a better overall quality of life."</p>
↓	↓	↓
Social Skills Classes	Social Emotional Skills	Supporting our children

Greenberg, M. & Conigan, T. (2017). Can Learning Social Skills in School Pay Off Beyond the Classroom? Retrieved from <https://www.nrc.org/asset/blog/2017/08/learning-social-skills-in-school.html> on 6-11-20

15

15

01	1 in 10 children lack the social skills to get along with peers and engage successfully in education	Clark, Laura. (2010) One in ten children 'lack the social skills they need to benefit from education' Retrieved from: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1253629/One-children-lack-social-skills-need-benefit-education.html .
02	Children with learning disabilities "tend to engage in an antisocial behavior versus a prosocial behavior when they are pressured by peers."	Seevers, R., & Jones-Blanks, M. (2008). Exploring the Effects of Social Skills Training on Social Skills Development on Student Behavior. <i>National Forum of Special Education Journal</i> , 19(1). Retrieved July 20, 2015.
03	"One study found that poor interpersonal skills (e.g., externalizing problems) in childhood, predicted academic problems in adolescence, which in turn led to internalizing problems in adulthood"	Tominey, S., & McClelland, M. (2009, December 23). Social Skills. Retrieved July 20, 2015, from http://www.education.com/reference/article/social-skills/

16

What are social skills?

Interpersonal skills necessary for successful social interaction with others.

17

“Good social skills”

“Having good social skills simply means people share space with others effectively.”

or

“Adapting to others effectively across settings”

Neugabauer, T., Veenema, S., Roberts, N. Social Thinking for Elementary Students.

18

Classification of Social Skills

Acquisition Deficits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of knowledge for executing skill Failure to discriminate which social behaviors are appropriate in specific situations (can't do)
Performance Deficits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skill is present in repertoire, but student fails to perform at acceptable levels (won't do)
Fluency Deficits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of exposure to sufficient or skilled models of social behavior Insufficient rehearsal/practice or low rates Inconsistent delivery of reinforcement of skilled performances

Schoenberg, S., Erdelyi, J. & Hathaway, M. (2012). Social Skills Webinar.

19

Social Skills Checklist

Does the child have difficulties with the following?

<input type="checkbox"/> Having good manners	<input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate communication--verbal and non verbal
<input type="checkbox"/> Active listening	<input type="checkbox"/> Understanding and expressing emotions
<input type="checkbox"/> Using Gestures and facial expressions appropriately	<input type="checkbox"/> Taking turns
<input type="checkbox"/> Eye contact	<input type="checkbox"/> Following social rules
<input type="checkbox"/> Showing empathy	<input type="checkbox"/> Following the steps or directions to a game or task
<input type="checkbox"/> Respecting Personal Space	<input type="checkbox"/> Having Self Control in unpredictable situations
<input type="checkbox"/> Expresses wants and needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate body language during conversations

20

Defining the problem of Behaviors

"Competing problem behaviors are those behaviors that compete with or "block" either the acquisition or performance of socially skilled behaviors.

These competing problem behaviors may be externalizing, internalizing, bullying, hyperactivity/inattention, or autism spectrum (Gresham & Elliott, 2008)."

21

Consequences of poor social skills

- Strained and challenging relationships with peers, parents and siblings
- Poor academic performance
- Increased likelihood of bullying
- Peer rejection
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Difficulty concentrating



22

What is the importance of social skills?

- Social competence is important to present and future quality of life
- Peer relationships and social support networks are protective factors in the face of challenges
- Increases academic, overall wellness, and emotional health
- Decreases at risk behavior (drug/alcohol abuse)



23

Functions of Social Skills

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Acceptance and tolerance for others | Recognizing emotions in self and others |
| Assertiveness | Effective verbal and non-verbal communication |
| Manners | Problem solving |
| Cooperation | Conflict resolution |
| Empathy | Social perception (correct interpretation of social cues) |
| Responsibility | |



24

Activity

Brainstorm and discuss different social scenarios that children in preschool/elementary school encounter?

25

25

Top 10 School Social Skills

1. Listen to others
2. Follow directions
3. Follow classroom rules
4. Ignores peer distractions
5. Asks for help
6. Takes turns in conversation
7. Cooperates with others
8. Controls temper in conflict
9. Acts responsibility with others
10. Shows kindness to others

26

26

Myths...

"Kids are just mean"

"I don't have to be social if I don't feel like it"

"Smart kids don't have friends"

27

27

The reality is....

Students with social challenges:

- Don't understand HOW to develop relationships
- Have difficulties recognizing expectations
- Struggle with personal problem solving
- Struggle with understanding personal emotions and those of others
- Are unaware that others do not share their same thoughts and feelings
- Benefit from direct, step by step teaching and modeling with many opportunities to practice

28

28

Infancy and early childhood	Between the ages of 4-5
Learn to pay attention to people and copy them	Understanding "wanting": different people want different things
Recognize others' emotions and use words to express them	Understanding "thinking": different people have different, but potentially true, beliefs about the same things
Know that they are different from other people and have different likes/dislikes from others	Understanding that "seeing leads to knowing": if you haven't seen something, you don't necessarily know about it (like dad on the telephone) and might need more information
Know that people act according to the things they want	Understanding "false belief": sometimes people believe things that are not true, and they act according to their beliefs
Understand the causes and consequences of emotions (if I throw my toy, mom will be mad)	Understanding "hidden feelings": people can feel a different emotion from the one they display
Pretend to be like someone else when they play	

Neugebauer, T., Veenema, S., Roberts, N. Social Thinking for Elementary Students

29

Understanding Expectations

Expected Behavior

- When kids say and/or do things that other kids think is friendly, helpful and respectful.



Unexpected Behavior

- When kids say and/or do things that other kids think is not friendly, hurtful, weird & disrespectful.



30

30

Become a social skills detective

“Social detectives use their eyes and ears to figure out what people are thinking, feeling, or planning to do next. When these thoughts combine with what they already know about expected behavior they can figure out how to behave and what other people might do next.”

Neugebauer, T., Veenema, S., Roberts, N. Social Thinking for Elementary Students.



31

31

Assessment

- Screening and selection of social skill interventions - who needs it? Why?
- Classification of specific types of social skill concerns - matching the skill to the need
- Selection of specific targeted skills - can't do everything
- Functional assessment
- Evaluate the effect of the intervention

32

32

What is the desired outcome of social skills?

- Positive peer relationships and friendship
- Grades
- Attendance
- Communication
- Social Participation

Activity: What leads to friendships?

33

33

Social Skill Interventions

- Modeling
- Teaching
 - Groups of 3-8 children
 - Similar needs
 - Similar developmental levels
- Coaching
- Rehearsing skills
- Targeting specific skills
- Social problem solving
- Positive reinforcement
- Progress monitoring
- Social Stories



34

Social Skill Instruction

The social skill treatment and intervention must match the social skill deficit
An ideal curriculum does not exist - the social skills curriculum must match the child's **specific** need



35

Social Skills Instructional Approach

- Tell = coaching
- Show = modeling
- Do = role play
- Practice = behavioral rehearsal
- Monitor progress = feedback
- Generalize = apply in multiple settings (school, home, community)



36

Social Skills Instructional Approach

TELL: Coaching

Teacher leads, students follow

1. Provide learning objective
2. Introduce skill via questions
3. Define skill and stress **key words**
4. Discuss skill importance
5. Outline steps to perform skill



37

Social Skills Instructional Approach

SHOW: Modeling

Teacher leads, shows video clips, and role-plays

1. Model the behavior (positive and negative)
2. Model each of the steps for the featured skill
3. Direct a role play of a typical situation along with a student/child
4. Discuss alternative behaviors to accomplish the social behavior



38

Social Skills Instructional Approach

DO: Review and role play

1. Ask students to define the skill
2. Students state skill steps
3. Ask students to state the importance of the skill
4. Review steps
5. Ask students to model the skill in role play situations
6. Group role-play and feedback from all students and participants



39

Social Skills Instructional Approach

MONITOR PROGRESS: Having students self assess: REFLECTION

1. Ask students to think about how well they are progressing with the social skill
2. Ask students to reflection **How Am I Doing**



40

Social Skills Instructional Approach

PRACTICE: Behavioral rehearsal in class
Practice with classmates, reinforce exhibition of skill

1. Review and apply the skill in role plays
2. Have pairs of students practice the skill and provide each other with feedback
3. Encourage practice outside of class
4. Assign homework to use the skill in other settings and with other peers



41

Social Skills Instructional Approach

Generalize: Applying Learning in Multiple Settings
Teacher initiates, students complete activity outside of class

1. Have students brainstorm various settings they could practice the social skill
2. Give **Homework** assignment to use skill in other settings or with other students
3. Have students share their skill with a parent, friend, other adult, or sibling to communicate information about the social skill they are learning



42

Social Stories

- Story is written in first person from the child's perspective
- Designed to help the child understand the expectations of a situation.**
- Use reassuring language to answer the who, what, when, where, and why of the situation and/or target behavior
- Include descriptive statements (e.g. state the facts) and directive statements (e.g. identify possible responses).
- Stories are more descriptive than directive.
- New stories should be read frequently and prior to the challenging situation.

43

43

Communication, Communication, Communication

- Coordinate lessons
- Skill of the week
- Discussion of the skills during staff meeting
- Frequent feedback
- Visual cues and prompts for students

44

44

What if social skills aren't successful?

- Sometimes children don't use the skills after instruction...
- Why?
- Skills are not useful
 - New behavior doesn't bring better benefits
 - New behavior is awkward
 - Due to trauma/stress/anxiety student dismisses skills and resorts to old patterns of reaction
 - Instruction didn't match the specific need

45

45

Example Lesson Plan - "Sharing"

Discussion prompts

- What is sharing?
- How can you share with others?
- Why do we share?
- When should we not share with others?

Activity (Dice and Candy Game)

Discussion Prompts

- Did you like this activity? Why or why not?
- Do you have more or less candy than when you started?
- How do you feel when someone shared with you?
- Do you think others shared fairly? Why or why not?



46

46

Diagnosis that could benefit from social skills

Children that demonstrate behavioral problems, have difficulty at school or in social situations

ADHD

Autism

Anxiety

Depression

ODD

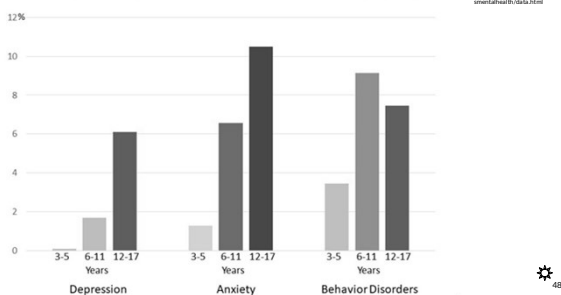
Conduct disorder

Diagnosed mental, behavioral, or developmental disorder

47

47

Depression, Anxiety, Behavior Disorders, by Age



48

48

Anxiety

Looks Different

Images Retrieved From: <https://isthaperpacks.com/wordpress.com/2012/03/anxiety-in-children-1/>; <https://isthaperpacks.com/wordpress.com/2012/03/anxiety-in-children-1/>; <https://www.scarsdale.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Cope-Childhood-Anxiety.jpg>

49

Technology - Good or Bad?

<p>Good</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health providers to rural areas • Some programs can help academically • Some TV can teach reading and learning skills (Sesame Street) • Internet can connect children to learning 	<p>Bad</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link to decreased social skills • Link to childhood obesity • Relationship between watching violent TV and violent behavior in children • Some TV can decrease language skills (Teletubbies) • May encourage irresponsible sexual behavior • Increases dopamine in brain and can cause addiction • May encourage unsafe behaviors
--	---

50

Case Study #1

Jake had trouble meeting and playing with friends. During recess or free play on the playground, Jake would frequently yell at other children various imaginative ideas in attempts for them to follow him. However, the other children did not respond well. Jake would then grab them and yell the imaginative idea at them. Many children would tell Jake he was weird or run away. Jake often was left playing alone. If Jake had the option to join other children for example: the sandbox, he would often play by himself next to the other children unaware of what they were playing and did not join or understand the play rules.

51

Case Study #1

How did Jake benefit from social skills class?

- Introducing himself
- Understanding how to play and development of rules within play
- Positive interacting with peers
- Cooperation
- Taking turns



52

52

Case Study #2

Jane has difficulty having a full conversation with others. She does not realize when she is in someone's personal space. She can be inappropriate with touching and hugging other children. Jane has difficulty with auditory processing so she misses the rules to the game and has difficulty with reciprocal conversations. She attempts to play with other children, but when she does not understand, will start acting like a baby. Jane will attempt to join games without asking and does not realize that is not socially accepted. Playing with her peers is difficult and she will often be made fun of. She tends to play next to her peers on the playground when this happens.

53

53

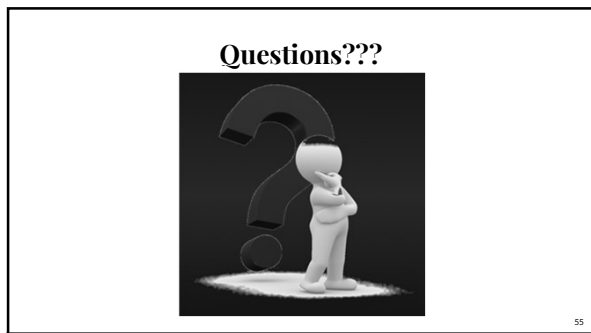
Case Study #2

How did Jane benefit from social skills class?

- Introducing herself
- Understanding how to play and development of rules within play
- Positive interacting with peers
- Cooperation
- Taking turns
- Personal Space Boundaries
- Interacting in appropriate manner to change/emotion
- Increased flexibility

54

54



55

References

Bavelier, D., Green, C. S., & Dye, M. W. (2010). Children, wired: for better and for worse. *Neuron*, 67(5), 692–701. doi:10.1016/j.neuron.2010.08.035

Damon E. Jones et. al, "Early Social-Emotional Functioning and Public Health: The Relationship between Kindergarten Social Competence and Future wellness," *American Journal of Public Health* 105(11) (2015):2283-2290

Elliot, S. N. Early Childhood webinar series: Social Skills Development in Early Childhood Enabling learning, growing friends.

Greenberg, M. & Costigan, T. (2017). Can Learning Social Skills in School Pay Off Beyond the Classroom? Retrieved from: <https://www.rwj.org/en/blog/2017/08/learning-social-skills-in-school.html> on 9-11-19

Key Findings: Children's Mental Health Report retrieved from on 9/13/19 <https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/features/4d-childrens-mental-health-report.html>

Kuzma, J. Social Thinking: <https://www.socialthinking.com/> Center on Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL). <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/>

Lewis, T. & Powers, L. Implementing effective social skill instruction across the continuum of SW-PBS supports.

56

References

Mental health statistics: suicide retrieved on 9/13/19 <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide.shtml>

Neugabauer, T., Veenema, S., Roberts, N. Social Thinking for Elementary Students.

Payton, J. W., Wardlaw, D. M., Graczyk, P. A., Bloodworth, M. R., Tompsett, C. J. and Weissberg, R. P. (2000). Social and Emotional Learning: A Framework for Promoting Mental Health and Reducing Risk Behavior in Children and Youth. *Journal of School Health*, 70: 179-185. doi:10.1111/j.1746-1561.2000.tb06468.x

Reblin, M., & Uchino, B. N. (2008). Social and emotional support and its implication for health. *Current opinion in psychiatry*, 21(2), 201–205. doi:10.1097/YCO.0b013e328273a889

Sahoo, K., Sahoo, B., Choudhury, A. K., Sofi, N. Y., Kumar, R., & Bhadoria, A. S. (2015). Childhood obesity: causes and consequences. *Journal of family medicine and primary care*, 4(2), 187–192. doi:10.4103/2249-4863.154628

Sancassiani, F., Pirtus, E., Holbe, A., Paulus, P., Moro, M. F., Cossu, G., ... Lindert, J. (2015). Enhancing the Emotional and Social Skills of the Youth to Promote their Wellbeing and Positive Development: A Systematic Review of Universal School-based Randomized Controlled Trials. *Clinical practice and epidemiology in mental health - CP & EMH*, 11(Suppl 1 M2), 21–40. doi:10.2174/1745017901511010021

57

References

Schoenberg, S., Erdelyi, J. & Hathaway, M. (2012). Social Skills Webinar.

Seevers, R., & Jones-Blanks, M. (2008). Exploring the Effects of Social Skills Training on Social Skills Development on Student Behavior. *National Forum of Special Education Journal*, 19(1). Retrieved July 20, 2015.

Social Skills Training and Facts and Statistics. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://cep841socialskillstrainingemileberry.weebly.com/facts-and-statistics.html> on 9-20-19

Spence, S. H. (2003). Social Skills Training with Children and Young People: Theory, Evidence and Practice. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 8: 84-96. doi:10.1111/1475-3588.00051

Thomson KC, Richardson CG, Gademann AM, Emerson SD, Shoveller J, Guhn M. Association of Childhood Social-Emotional Functioning Profiles at School Entry With Early-Onset Mental Health Conditions. *JAMA Network Open*. Published online January 04, 2019;2(1):e186694. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2018.6694

58
