



Mastering Social Skills

Many children are having difficulty with social skills during these times of social distancing and home-schooling. It's important to help them adjust to this new environment to maintain good social skills. There are a number of factors that contribute to a child's success socially. Children with good social skills can deal more confidently with friends, family and other adults. The following are steps you can take to help children of any age improve their social skills:

FREE LIFE-CHANGING ONLINE PARENTING COURSES

In these video-based, interactive classes—available 24/7—you'll learn a consistent, encouraging style of parenting that will benefit you and your children for a lifetime. With this self-study course, you have the option of when to participate based on your own schedule and at your convenience. Gain additional insight from your online group leaders as they provide support and feedback.

Choose from four available courses:

- **Active Parenting: First Five Years:**
For parents of children from birth to age 5
- **Active Parenting 4th ED:**
For parents of children ages 5 to 12
- **Active Parenting of Teens:**
For parents of preteens and teens
- **Crossroads of Parenting & Divorce:**
For divorced and divorcing parents

Continue your experience as an "active" parent by reviewing what you learn in the class in your accompanying parent guide. Each guide contains additional information, activities, and worksheets to help you practice what you learn.

- **Model good social skills in front of your children.**
Pay attention to your own social behavior. What do your actions tell your child? Do you show respect and courtesy towards others? How you deal with people and situations influences the development of your child's social skills. Talk to your children about why you do what you do and how it makes you feel.
- **Encourage interaction with playmates and peer groups.**
Children learn a great deal about getting along with others from interaction with playmates and in groups. Make sure your child has ample opportunities to play with others. Involve them in clubs and after-school activities that provide ready-made social situations.
- **Teach them how to resolve conflicts in a nonviolent manner.**
You can teach even very young children that "We don't hit in this family. We solve problems." It's important to teach children a better way to resolve conflicts. Showing your children how to share and take turns is a good first step. Help older children learn to calm down and consider a problem from other perspectives than their own.
- **Talk with your child about cooperation, friendship and getting along.**
Be alert for chances to discuss how to be a friend and get along with others. Read stories where the characters encounter situations where they have to either cooperate or clash. Use these stories as a way to start a dialogue with your child about cooperation, friendship and getting along with others. Your child's own experiences offer the best opportunities to teach. Help them find a strategy that feels right to them.
- **Role-play difficult situations.**
Sticky social situations, such as turning down a best friend's invitation in order to do something with another friend, call for skillful behavior. Talking with your child about such situations is a good start. But you can go further by role-playing the circumstances. Go through several scenarios to enable your child to practice getting the words right and to learn how their actions can make others feel.
- **Help your child learn to be assertive.**
Getting along with others and solving problems nonviolently does not mean letting others take advantage of you. You can help your children learn to stand up for themselves and to assert their rights and opinions without being aggressive. Look for opportunities to discuss the importance of standing up for their own ideas and beliefs, asking for what they want without being a bully, saying "no" or "yes" because it's what they want to do, not just to go along with the crowd. Expressing their point of view tactfully and knowing when to seek help from an adult is a good step towards conflict resolution.

Teaching children good social and communication skills is a great tool for helping them succeed. Starting early to develop these skills will serve them well through their school years, college years and in their careers, as well as in personal relationships.

Visit [ACFCcares.com](https://www.acfccares.com) for more information and to start your Active Parenting journey today.

To learn more about how to encourage your children to be courageous and confident, visit the Active Parenting Online Video Library. These helpful videos are offered free of charge by the ACFC in partnership with Active Parenting. Guidance and help is available for parents of children of all ages, from toddler to teen. To access the Online Video Library, go to the [ACFC website](https://www.acfccares.com), click on the Active Parenting tab, and follow the instructions on how to view the videos.