



DAY TO DAY: SOCIAL INTERACTION SKILLS

EASY WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD EVERYDAY

General tips:

- Identify your child's "**social comfort zone**" by being aware of their apparent comfort level with physical closeness. Remember that all people are different in this way.
- It is best to practice social interactions in an environment where your child is most comfortable. This can be with **people who are very familiar and places that they know well**.
- **Be patient**...recognize the small steps your child may be taking and know that pushing your child too much may result in them retreating from you.
- **Remember the fun!** More fun = faster learning. People of all ages want to continue activities



Promoting Interactions:

- **Pay attention to what your child likes.** This might include playing with a favorite object or lively physical games such as moving to music, running, bouncing, and swinging.
- **Position yourself** so that you are on the same level as your child, face to face, so they have a clear view of your face and eyes.
- Try to **eliminate other distractions** by removing objects from your child's view that may attract their attention.
- **Join in** their play and follow their lead. Use **active listening** by:
 - 1) narrating a child's actions,
 - 2) making admiring comments
 - 3) adding drama such as drum rolls, cheers
 - 4) making sound effects, like saying "ouch" if a person falls or "boom" if a car crashes
 - 5) imitating your child's actions with a second toy by doing what they are doing
- **Encourage turn taking** when your child is playing a toy by asking them to pass it back and forth.
- Work on getting your child to **give and show you things** they are holding and eventually work up to **pointing at objects** together when they want something.

Non verbal:

- Pick a **sensory-rich activity** like tickling, bouncing, flying through the air, peekaboo or pattycake. Invent a **simple narration** like "one, two, three swing!" and use these same words everyday to help your child learn the game and language.
- Don't be afraid to **make silly faces and noises** like sticking your tongue out and wiggling it, fish faces, whistling and popping your cheek with your finger.
- During play, **pause and wait** for your child to **request more**. If blowing bubbles, pause and see if they try to blow, reach out, smile or make a sound. If they do, reward them by blowing bubbles!
- **Add words** to describe what your child wants but **keep language simple**. For example, use short phrases like: "you want cereal," "blow balloon," "up," "bang bang."
- Teach your child to **use gestures**, such as waving and giving high-fives. Model an **easy gesture** they can use for **communicating** important words like "yes," "no," "need help."
- **Exaggerate your own gestures** by using your hands and body along with your speech.



The Autism Program
AT BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER



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Augmentative and Alternative



Communication:

- **Sign language** can be used to interact instead of verbal speech
- **PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System)** may be helpful in allowing interactions to be initiated by your child more easily.
- **Communication Boards** can also help facilitate communication as they mirror the structure of a conversation while allowing your child to develop the skills at their own pace.

For more information visit:

<http://www.autismspeaks.org/family-services/community-connections/social-skills-and-autism>

Helpful books:

“An Early Start for your child with Autism: Using everyday activities to help kids connect, communicate and learn”

By: Sally J Rogers, Geraldine Dawson and Laurie A. Vismara

“Do-Watch-Listen-Say: Social and Communication Intervention for Children with Autism”

By: Kathleen Ann Quill

“You are a Social Detective”

By: Michelle Garcia Winner, Pamela Crooke and Kelly Knopp



For more information visit:
bmc.org/pediatrics-autism-program

Assistive Technology:

Autism Speaks App List:: Some examples of useful apps are mentioned below.

<http://www.autismspeaks.org/autism-apps>

Social skill building applications:



- **Between the Lines-** Helps the child practice how to interpret social cues and understand idioms.
- **Look In My Eyes-** Allows child to practice eye contact across different scenarios.
- **Little Star conversation Story-** Allows you to customize an interactive social story to practice conversation skills. You can add your own pictures and words so your child can learn to speak using his or her favorite topics.

Community Social Skills Groups:

The Boys and Girls Club of Dorchester:

Project B.I.N.D. full inclusion programming

For all children 5-18 years of age

<http://bgcdorchester.org/programs/project-bind/>
617-288-7120

Friday Night Club at Harvard University

For teens ages 13+

<http://frinightclub.com/boston.html>

fncboston@gmail.com

Contact your local **Autism Support Center** and visit the **Autism Consortium’s Resource Database** for more information on social skills groups and activities in your community:

<http://www.autismconsortium.org/resources-and-events/database>



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