



Handouts

Social Coaching with Toddlers and Preschoolers



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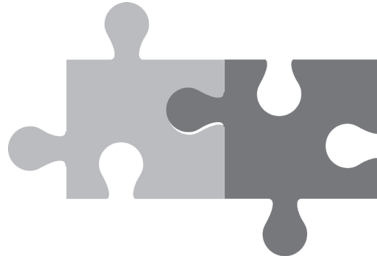
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Social Coaching with Toddlers and Preschoolers

Practice Activities

To Do:

- **USE** Social Coaching during child-directed play with **toddlers and preschoolers** by modeling and describing children's social behaviors such as turn taking, sharing, waiting and asking.
- **ENGAGE** in pretend play using puppets and/or books with **toddlers** to practice modeling appropriate social skills. With **preschoolers** also include prompts and intentional commenting to promote practice of social skills and awareness of peer's intentions.
- **SET UP** dramatic play experiences with three selected **preschool** children to promote social communication interactions and cooperative play.
- **TRY** using a teacher directed play script to enhance play choices and joint play for preschool children with developmental delays.

To Read:

Chapters Four and Thirteen from
Incredible Teachers book.



Key Points

Social Coaching for Toddlers and Preschoolers



One-On-One With Toddlers and Preschoolers

- During child-directed play model social skills such as offering to share, wait, take turns, asking for help, pointing/gesturing, eye contact and praise.
- Prompt child to ask for help, to share, or take a turn; let it go if child does not respond to prompt.
- Imitate and praise child's social responses.
- Encourage pretend and make-believe play with puppets or action figures, to model social skills such as asking to play, offering to help, taking a turn, giving a compliment and sharing.
- Model the words and nonverbal gestures for the child to say and copy (ex. "my turn" and patting chest to indicate your turn).

Peer Coaching (Teachers with 2-3 preschool children)

- Occasionally prompt child to notice what another child is doing or to help him or her understand what another child said. (Intentional Commenting)
- Avoid questions and corrections and praise children's friendly interactions.
- Prompt, coach and praise social behaviors whenever you see them (e.g., sharing, helping, asking, taking turns, being polite, giving a compliment).
- Help children accept peer's refusals to share by reinforcing their waiting and patience and by distracting them to other interesting activities.
- Coach dramatic play with 3-4 children to encourage joint social play.
- Use books in interactive ways to talk about social skills and set up practices.
- Use visual prompts and play scripts for children with language delays.
- Give more attention to positive social behaviors than to inappropriate behaviors.
- Help the child understand that when she/he shares or helps, the other child feels happy. This helps the child see connection between social behavior and peer's feelings.
- Teach specific social skills in circle time.
- Use teacher-directed play scripts with children who have developmental delays.
- Encourage and train parents to use social coaching and child-directed play with their children at home.

Tips for Using Puppets to Promote Preschool Children's Social and Emotional Development

Preschool children are working to accomplish the important developmental milestones of learning social and friendship skills including beginning to share, help others, initiate social interactions, listen, and cooperate with peers. They are also working on emotional regulation skills including emotional literacy, self-control over aggressive behaviors, ability to wait and accept limits, and beginning problem solving skills.

One of the ways to promote a preschool child's social and emotional skills is through the use of puppet play. Puppet play is effective because it helps the teacher/child care provider enter the child's imaginary world and allows children to experience the feelings of other characters (early empathy development) and learn important social behaviors and conversation skills.

With puppets, dolls, or action figures you can act out stories you are reading with children, make up fantasies, and explore solutions to pretend problems. You may be nervous at first using puppets, but try it out and before long you will experience the joy of entering into a child's thoughts, feelings and imagination, one of the most intimate places you can be with a child at this age.

Puppet Scenarios for puppet time with children:

- **Puppet models greeting child.** For example, "Hi I am Tiny Turtle. What is your name?" When child tells your puppet his/her name, puppet thanks him/her for being so friendly. (Modeling friendly social greetings.)
- **Puppet models interest in child.** For example, "What do you like to do?" When the child tells your puppet his/her interests, puppet also shares his/her interests. (Learning how to get to know someone.) You can also prompt the child to ask the puppet what s/he likes to do? (Learning how to show interest in someone else.)
- **Puppet asks for help.** For example, "I can't get this block to go together, can you help me?" When the child helps your puppet, your puppet compliments his/her helping behavior. (Learning to ask for help as well as how to help a friend.)
- **Puppet shares his/her emotion.** For example, "I am embarrassed because I can't ride my bike. Do you know how to ride a bike?" Ask the child what your puppet is feeling. Encourage or prompt the child to say something to make the puppet feel better. (Learning to express emotions and think about another person's emotions.)
- **Puppet shares something with child.** For example, "I see you looking for green blocks, would you like my green block." (Modeling sharing.) If child takes your puppet's block, say "I'm happy to help you." (Connecting sharing action with emotion.)
- **Puppet waits for his turn.** For example, "I am going to wait until you finish that game, then can I have a turn?" If child gives your puppet a turn, puppet thanks him and tells him it makes him feel happy to have such a friend.

Note: If the child does not have the language skills to respond verbally to the puppet, it is still good for the puppet to model the words involved in the social interaction. You can also structure interactions that involve nonverbal responses from the child. “Would you share that with me?” “Would you like to shake the puppet’s hand?” “Can you help me build this tower?” This way, the focus is on the child’s friendly behavioral response to the puppet. You and the puppet can provide the verbal structure. This will support the child’s eventual language development in these social situations.

Teacher/Child Care Provider Praise: Teachers can use a silly/different voice for the puppet character and then go out of role as teacher to praise the child for his or her social skills. Teachers can look for opportunities to comment and praise the child when she/he waits, takes turns, helps, offers a friendly suggestion, asks for help, shows interest or empathy, is gentle and listens well with your puppet.

Teacher/Child Care Provider Prompts: In these puppet plays teachers can prompt their children’s appropriate social responses by whispering in their ear some ideas for what to say to the puppet. For example, “you can tell the puppet you like to play with trucks.” Or, “you can say please can I have that book?” Don’t worry if the child doesn’t use your suggestion, just move on to something else as compliance is not required. Often times children will copy your suggestion and then you can praise them for such nice asking or sharing.

Remember: Keep it simple, have fun, and do not have your puppet model negative behaviors. Try using puppets when reading stories to act out the character’s feelings and communication.



Brainstorm/Buzz

Dramatic Play



Think about a dramatic play experience you could set up either one-on-one with a child using a puppet or with a group of three children to help coaching their social skills. Write down your ideas.



One-On-One Puppet

Scenarios:

Dramatic Play Plan for 3-4 Children:

Goal:

Facilitating Children’s Social Learning: Teachers and Child Care Providers as “Social Skills Coaches”



Describing and prompting children’s friendly behaviors is a powerful way to strengthen children’s social skills. Social skills are the first steps to making lasting friendships. The following is a list of social skills you can comment on when playing with a child or when a child is playing with a friend. Use this checklist to practice your social skills coaching.

Social/Friendship Skills	Examples
____ helping ____ sharing ____ teamwork ____ using a friendly voice (quiet, polite)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “That’s so friendly. You are sharing your blocks with your friend and waiting your turn.” • “You are both working together and helping each other like a team.”
____ listening to what a friend says ____ taking turns ____ asking ____ trading ____ waiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “You listened to your friend’s request and followed his suggestion – that is very friendly.” • “You waited and asked first if you could use that. Your friend listened to you and shared.” • “You are taking turns. That’s what good friends do for each other.”
____ agreeing with a friend’s suggestion ____ making a suggestion ____ giving a compliment ____ using soft, gentle touch ____ asking permission to use something a friend has ____ problem solving ____ cooperating ____ being generous ____ including others ____ apologizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “You made a friendly suggestion and your friend is doing what you suggested – that is so friendly.” • “You are helping your friend build her tower.” • “You are being cooperative by sharing.” • “You both solved the problem of how to put those blocks together – that was a great solution!”

Prompting

- “Look at what your friend has made. Do you think you can give him a compliment?” (praise child if s/he tries to give a compliment)
- “You did that by accident. Do you think you can say you are sorry to your friend?”
- “Your friend asked for a turn with the roller. Can you answer them?”

Modeling Friendly Behavior

- Teachers can model waiting, taking turns, helping, and complimenting, which also teach children these social skills.



Teacher-Child Social Coaching: Child Developmental Level 1

Teacher-Child Play: Teachers can use social coaching in one-on-one interactions with the children to help them learn social skills and emotional language before they begin to play with peers. A great deal of the child’s learning will occur by modeling and by your descriptive commenting, which will enhance children’s language skills as well as help them recognize and learn social skills.

Social/Friendship Skills	Examples
<p>Teacher Models:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Sharing ❖ Offering to Help ❖ Waiting ❖ Suggesting ❖ Complimenting ❖ Behavior-to-Feelings 	<p>“I’m going to be your friend and share my car with you.”</p> <p>“If you want, I can help you with that by holding the bottom while you put another on top.”</p> <p>“I can use my waiting muscles and wait until you’re finished using that.”</p> <p>“Could we build something together?”</p> <p>“You are so smart in figuring out how to put that together.”</p> <p>“You shared with me. That is so friendly and makes me feel happy.”</p> <p>“You helped me figure out how to do that. I feel proud that you could show me that.”</p>
<p>Teacher Prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Self-Talk ❖ Asking for help <p>Teacher Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Praise child when s/he shares or helps you ❖ Ignore or model acceptance when child does NOT share or help 	<p>“Hmm, I really wish I could find another piece to fit here.”</p> <p>“Hmm, I’m not sure I know how to put this together.”</p> <p>“Can you help me find another round piece?”</p> <p>“Can you share one of your cars with me?”</p> <p>“That was so helpful and friendly to share with me.”</p> <p>Continue to use descriptive commenting.</p> <p>“I can keep trying to find that round piece.” (model persistence)</p> <p>“I can wait until you’re finished playing with the cars.” (model waiting)</p> <p>“I know it is hard to give up that car, so I will wait to have a turn later.”</p>
<p>Puppet or Action-Figure Models:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Entering Play ❖ Being Socially Friendly ❖ Ignoring Aggression 	<p>“Can I play with you?”</p> <p>“That looks like fun. Can I do that with you?”</p> <p>“I’m being friendly. I’d like to play with you.”</p> <p>“I want to play with a friendly person. I think I will find somebody else to play with.”</p>



Teacher-Child Social Coaching: Child Developmental Level 2

Children in Parallel Play: Young children start out playing with other children by sitting next to them and engaging in parallel play. In the beginning, they do not initiate interactions with other children or seem to notice they are even there. They may not talk to them or offer an idea or interact with them in any way. Teachers can help promote peer play by prompting their students to use social skills or to notice their friends' activities or moods. Providing children with the actual words for interactions, or modeling social behaviors will be important since children may not yet have these skills in their repertoire.

Social/Friendship Skills	Examples
<p>Teacher Coaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Asking for What They Want ❖ Asking for Help ❖ Asking a Friend to Wait 	<p>"You can ask your friend for what you want by saying, 'Please can I have the crayon?'"</p> <p>"You can ask your friend for help by saying 'Can you help me?'"</p> <p>"You can tell your friend you are not ready to share yet."</p> <p>If your child responds to your prompt by using his or her words to repeat what you said, praise this polite asking or friendly helping.</p>
<p>Teacher Prompting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Noticing Other Child ❖ Initiate Interaction With Other Child ❖ To Give Child a Compliment <p>Teacher Praising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Behavior-to-Feelings ❖ Playing Together 	<p>"Wow, look what a big tower your friend is building." "You are both using green markers."</p> <p>"Your friend is looking for small green pieces. Can you find some for him?" "Your friend has no cars and you have 8 cars. He looks unhappy. Can you share one of your cars with your friend?"</p> <p>"Wow! You can tell your friend his tower is cool." If the child does repeat this, you can praise him or her for a friendly compliment. If the child does not respond, continue descriptive commenting.</p> <p>"You shared with your friend, that is so friendly and makes her feel happy." "You helped your friend figure out how to do that, she looks very pleased with your help."</p> <p>"Your friend is enjoying playing with these Legos with you. You look like you are having fun with your friend. You are both very friendly."</p>
<p>Puppet or Action-Figure Models:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Sharing or Helping 	<p>"Wow! Do you see the tower that Nancy is building?" "Can either of you help me find a red block to make this truck?" "Could I help you build that house?" "Do you think we could ask Freddy if he'll share his train?"</p>



Child-Peer Social Coaching: Child Developmental Level 3

Children Who Initiate Play: Young children move from parallel play to play where they are initiating interactions with each other. They are motivated to make friends and interested in other children. Depending on their temperament, impulsivity, attention span and knowledge of social skills their interactions may be cooperative or at times conflictual. Teachers can help promote social skills during peer play by prompting and coaching them to use skills or by praising and giving attention to social skills.

Teacher-Coached Skills	Examples
Social/Friendship Skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Asking in a Friendly Voice (polite, quiet) ❖ Giving Help to Friend ❖ Sharing or Trading ❖ Asking to Enter Play ❖ Giving a Compliment ❖ Agreeing with or giving a Suggestion 	<p>"You asked your friend so politely for what you wanted and s/he gave it to you; you are good friends."</p> <p>"You helped your friend find what s/he was looking for. You are both working together and helping each other like a team."</p> <p>"That's so friendly. You shared your blocks with your friend. Then she traded with you and gave you her car. "</p> <p>"You asked kindly to play and they seemed happy to have you join in."</p> <p>"You gave a compliment to her, that is very friendly."</p> <p>"You accepted your friend's suggestion. That is so cooperative."</p>
Self-Regulatory Skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Listening to What a Peer Says ❖ Waiting Patiently ❖ Taking Turns ❖ Staying Calm ❖ Problem Solving 	<p>"Wow you really listened to your friend's request and followed his suggestion. That is really friendly."</p> <p>"You waited and asked first if you could use that. That shows you have really strong waiting muscles. "</p> <p>"You are taking turns. That's what good friends do for each other."</p> <p>"You were disappointed when s/he would let you play with them but you stayed calm and asked someone else to play. That is really brave."</p> <p>"You both weren't sure how to make that fit together, but you worked together and figured that out—you are both good problem solvers."</p>
Empathy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Behavior-to-Feelings ❖ Apology/Forgiveness 	<p>"You shared with your friend, that is so friendly and makes her feel happy."</p> <p>"You saw that she was frustrated and helped her put that together. That is very thoughtful to think of your friend's feelings."</p> <p>"You were both frustrated with that but you stayed calm and kept trying and finally figured it out. That is real teamwork."</p> <p>"You were afraid to ask her to play with you, but you were brave and asked her and she seemed really pleased that you did."</p> <p>"That was an accident. Do you think you can say you're sorry?" Or, "Your friend seems really sorry he did that. Can you forgive him?"</p>



BEHAVIOR PLAN RECORD SHEET

Social Coaching

Date: _____

Child behavior I want to see less of:	Positive Opposite Social Behavior I want to see more of:	Social Coaching Scripts:
<p><i>Examples: Anna ignores other children's requests to play or to share a toy, grabs desired toy from others.</i></p> <p>Target Child (nature of problem):</p>	<p><i>Example: Asks verbally or nonverbally for a turn, willing to share in play with one other child, begin to make a friend.</i></p> <p>Developmentally Appropriate Social Goal for Child:</p>	<p><i>Example: "You are sharing (or asking for a turn), that is so friendly." "When you used your words to ask, you solved your problem."</i></p> <p>Social Coaching Scripts:</p>

Teacher-to-Parent Communication Letter



Encouraging Your Child's Social Skills

At child care or preschool the children are learning about how to make their first friends. You can help support your child's learning by commenting and praising when you notice him or her doing any of the following behaviors:

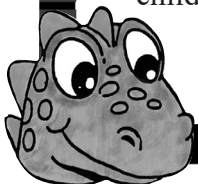
Sharing: Praise your child whenever you notice them sharing toys with another child or with you. *"Thank you for sharing your toys with me and for letting me play with you."*

Helping: Praise your child whenever you notice him or her helping someone else. *"You are really helping your sister with picking up her things. That is so helpful and your sister looks happy about getting your help."*

Waiting & Taking Turns: Praise your child whenever you notice him or her waiting her turn and being patient while waiting. *"You are so strong at waiting your turn. You found something else to do while your friend finished her turn on the computer."*

Remember that sharing and taking turns are developing social skills that will be hard for most toddlers. Model, praise, and practice these skills with your child, but do not expect that most toddlers will be able to share and wait, especially with peers or siblings. You can start this learning by modeling the skill yourself or with a puppet or toy characters.

Record on the *Parent-to-Teacher Communication Form* a time when you see your child doing one of the three behaviors and send this form back to school with your child.



Incredible Children!

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The Incredible Years®
Teacher and Child Care Provider
Self-Reflection Inventory

Social Coaching

Date: _____ Teacher Name: _____

Teachers learn extensively from self-reflection regarding their classroom management and the teaching strategies they are using that are working or not working. From these reflections teachers determine personal goals for making changes in their approaches to bring about the most positive learning climate they can. Use this Inventory to think about your strengths and limitations and determine your goals.

1 – Never 3 – Occasionally 5 - Consistently

<i>Social Coaching</i>					
1. I use social coaching language with all the children when I am engaged in play with them.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I use social coaching with children during lunch and recess times.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I model social skills such as asking for a turn, sharing, helping and waiting and name the social behavior when I model it.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I prompt children to use the social behavior with a request or by helping them understand what another child needs.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I avoid using too many questions or making corrections when coaching and don't demand that prompts be followed.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I enthusiastically praise children for appropriate social behaviors such as helping, sharing, waiting, and turn taking.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I help children accept their peer's refusals to share or take turns by distracting them with another activity or reinforcing their waiting behavior or suggesting a timer.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I encourage pretend play using dramatic scenarios with 3-4 children to encourage social communication and joint play.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I use puppets with children to model appropriate social behaviors, help children understand the perspective of another and to set up practices of social behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I read books to children in interactive ways to promote practice of social skills.	1	2	3	4	5
11. For children with developmental delays I use visual play scripts to enhance their choices and options for different ways to play.	1	2	3	4	5

12. I use intentional commenting to help children be aware of what their peers are asking for, sharing, or feeling.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I use visual prompts to encourage verbal discussions of favorite superheros, sports, and foods.	1	2	3	4	5
14. In addition to coaching, I use labeled praise statements with positive affect – to reinforce social behaviors immediately.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I give more attention to positive social behaviors than to inappropriate behaviors (5:1).	1	2	3	4	5
16. I identify target positive social behaviors goals for each child that I want them to work on.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I work hard to give special time to children who are withdrawn, isolated, or anxious to promote more positive peer interactions.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I help children learn how to compliment each other and have compliment circle times.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I work with parents and teach them how to use social coaching at home with their children in order to enhance their social skills.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I recommend to parents peers that would be good play dates.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I invite parents to participate in play times in the classroom providing them with opportunities for practice, feedback, and modeling in social coaching.	1	2	3	4	5

