



January 2009 - Volume 40

Helping Children and Adolescents Succeed Socially!

The Social Skills Groups

Social Skills Groups are held at:
The Social Skills Place, Inc.
464 Central Avenue Suite 6
Northfield, Illinois 60093

Date and times:

Elementary School

Tuesday's 4:00PM-4:45PM
Thursday's 4:30PM-5:20PM

Middle School/Jr. High

Monday's 5:00PM-6:50PM
Thursday's 5:00PM-5:50PM

High School/College

Tuesday's 6:30PM-7:30PM

Parent Group

Wednesday's 1:00PM-2:30PM
Wednesday's 7:00PM-8:30PM

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Visit us at:

www.socialskillsplace.com

Promote your child's well being and they will attract friends into their lives.

Reason is powerless in the expression of Love.
(According to the Sufi poet and mystic Jelaluddin Rumi)

Children need a parent, a teacher, just a thoughtful leader who is an authority figure with compassion. At times we may need a plumber or an electrician to fix something in our homes, but the only person who can sincerely assist your child, is YOU. We cannot hire someone to fix our child. You need to see yourself as an instrument of change and your child will change too.

Naturally, parents bring children into the world to love and cherish them, at least I hope so. Adults who work with children and young people naturally work with children and young people to assist them and to lead and teach them in a caring way.

It is easier said than done. Children act up and parents and professionals who work with children get tired, run down, and lose their patience. We must remember that children need to know that we always sincerely care about them and they must experience us this way. If you lose your temper and patience, tell them and apologize, and reassure your children that you love and care about them.

No parent is born with the natural ability to parent another human being. Like it or not, we are often reflecting our own experiences with our own parents, caretakers as well our siblings with our own children or with the children with whom we work. Some of us may have been raised by a father or mother who often expressed depreciation of us. That was less than ideal. Why would we want to recreate such a feeling in a growing child under our care? We wouldn't if we were sympathetic and thoughtful about our actions. If it felt terrible to us why would we subject another little being to such depreciation? Yelling may work and it may get the child to comply, but it does not make the child feel good about

Please Note:

We begin new groups as soon as we have enough children or adolescents to form a new group.

Dates and times of the groups are flexible.

themselves. It makes them feel bad. Then the same child may go to school and cannot attract friends and nice relationships into their lives because they are coming from a place of feeling bad about themselves. How can one have a nice experience with others when they are feeling so bad about who they are?

Everyone longs for loving, intimate connections. Harmonious relationships are good for our health, heart, and soul. Sadly, relationships often do not live up to their tender promise, leaving us let down, angry and confused.

Heinz Kohut, (1913-1981) was at the center of the twentieth-century psychoanalytic movement in Chicago. As founder of Self Psychology, he coined the term "self soothing" as one aspect of a healthy self. According to Self Psychology, children learn self-soothing as a natural developmental process. The presence of a stable parent, teacher (caretaker) who is available to the child allows them to feel safe in the world and leads to a sense of dealing with the world. Self-soothing is the natural result of the simple effort to attend to ourselves in a caring and thoughtful way. After such a comforting experience the growing child will then be able to take on such a role and self-sooth themselves. They will be able to care for others in a caring and thoughtful way too. It always starts with our self. This will assist the child into attracting friends and nice experiences into their lives.

Being shown the way to attend to our needs and ourselves in a caring gentle way, enables us to find more peace in relation to difficult feelings. Self-soothing is an essential skill, not only for peace of mind and comfort, but in developing fulfilling relationships with others. (Friendships) We all want this for our children.

1. **What can parents, teachers, and caretakers do to help children to develop this ability to self-sooth themselves?**
2. **What can we all do to assist our children to feel good about them and to attract nice friendships into their lives?**
 - Parents/teachers need to see themselves (Not the children) as an instrument of change.
 - Practice using kind firmness and firm kindness.
 - Children need authority with compassion.
 - Children need parents and teachers caring about

- them. Be sure they are picking this up from you.
- A child who has been soothed from birth on will learn to soothe themselves from the proper caretaking experience with you. If they don't receive this, then they will need something from outside of themselves to accomplish this need. As they grow, they will continue to search for someone or something from the outside (drugs and alcohol) to accomplish this self soothing for them.
 - Reinforce positive behaviors in children and you will see more positive behaviors. Example: "I notice that you helped Mom carry in the groceries." Notice the good stuff. Do not deprecate them by yelling. Remember they will comply to the yelling, but they will feel bad about themselves. They will also learn to yell at others by imitating you.
 - Be a positive mirror for your child; let them know what a great kid your see in them. Express confidence in them and in their future.
 - Be there for your children. Let them tell you how they feel. This way they will learn to act out less and talk more. Give them quality time with you.
 - Show patience and a high frustration tolerance. They learn from you.
 - Tolerate their feelings so they will learn to tolerate their feelings.
 - Tell them to have a nice day. Tell your children you love them every day. Always kiss your children good night.

Some ideas taken from: Self-Soothing: A Foundation for Authentic Love John Amodeo, Ph.D.

The ability to self-regulate is the other core strength which is so important so that our children can learn to self regulate their behaviors. It is another important essential part of healthy emotional development. It will be discussed in the next month's newsletter February 2009.

The Social Skills Place, Inc. wishes you a healthy, a happy, and a peaceful new year.

Make it a nice New Year!

-- Susan Stern, LCSW is the founder of The Social Skills Place, Inc.

