



Tender Hearts Child Therapy Center

Parent Newsletter

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Improve Your Child's Social Skills: Play Games!

Do you have a child who has a social skills deficit? Or do you simply want to encourage better social skills with your child? Children with poor social skills often need help in the areas of eye contact, reading other's emotions, and staying on topic. Eye Contact is a very important social skill because it lets other people know that we are interested in what they have to say. Likewise, it's important for children to be able to read the emotions of others. Not being able to do so can cause relationship problems with peers. Finally, helping your child learn to stay on topic during a conversation can greatly improve their social skills.

Here are 5 easy and fun things you can do with your child to improve their social skills.

To improve your child's eye contact have a staring contest. This is especially effective if you have a competitive child. You can also teach your child to look at a person's forehead. For practice, place two stickers that represent eyes on your forehead and have your child practice looking there. While it may not be directly in the eyes, it is less intimidating for your child (and most people won't notice anyway!)

To improve your child's ability to read emotions of others, try playing charades with emotions. Have slips of paper with different emotions listed on them (sad, happy, angry, scared, disappointed, nervous, excited, etc.) and then have each person take turns acting out the emotions. You could also play a mirroring game. Make an expression that indicates an emotion and have your child try to mimic that expression and identify it.

To help your child learn to stay on topic during a conversation, try playing an alphabet game. Pick a theme such as fruits, things at a zoo, etc. and take turns listing things in alphabetical order. A is for ape, B is for bird, C is for cougar. . .

Playing any sort of game is a great way to encourage your child to develop social skills. Think of playing these games as practice. The more your child practices, the better his or her social skills will be!