

# Put These Ideas Into Practice!

## Social Skills: Laying the Foundation for Success

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### What are social skills?

*Social skills* are behaviors that promote positive interaction with others and the environment. Some of these skills include showing empathy, participation in group activities, generosity, helpfulness, communicating with others, negotiating, and problem solving.

#### Use Teachable Moments

- Recognize that behavior problems indicate a need for children to learn a more effective way of interacting
- Model and teach social skills within the context of everyday play
- Help children recognize and identify their feelings and the feelings of others
- Smooth transition routines with songs, chants, and games

#### Prevent Inappropriate Behaviors

- Based on past experience, anticipate when there might be problems
- Instruct children in the appropriate behavior before the problem situation occurs
- During circle time and structured settings, keep a quick pace, involve children, and change activities every 5 to 10 minutes
- Let children know that "they are almost finished" when they become restless



Subjects & Predicates

#### Teach Social Skills Directly

- Use social scripts to teach turn-taking, sharing, and other needed skills
- Pair less mature children with those who have stronger social abilities
- Use social stories and story books to teach valued social skills

Note: *Dimensions of Early Childhood* readers are encouraged to copy this material for early childhood students as well as teachers of young children as a professional development tool.