

## **Social Skills Instruction Books**

Imagine that social behaviors are the “gateway” to learning where learning can only occur when the “behavior gateway” has been opened. The question then is, “How do we open the gateway?”

As is well known, social skills are essential to everyone’s success in school, work, and life whether you have learning challenges or not. Often the biggest challenge for children with developmental delays is communication which typically leads to social difficulties.

Children who have little language or social communication often have not experienced social situations as fully as their peers. Unfortunately they’ve likely missed that critical window of learning how to play, interact, and problem solve. That’s where social skills instruction comes in to specifically teach children these skills.

Although many children learn social skills incidentally, many others still struggle. And even though we teach our children through daily opportunities some children need to be directly taught these skills – we are opening the “gateway”.

Through my 20 years of experience as a special education teacher, I’ve observed the best success when a specific social skill is directly taught daily for two consecutive weeks, sometimes several times per day. During the first two to three days, the social skill book is simply read, but by the third to fourth day the concepts can start to be demonstrated by the adults in the classroom. During the second week of reading the same social skill book the adults continue to role play the social skill being taught. This is a critical time to be identifying any time a child exhibits any part of the social skill book that has been presented and verbally reinforcing the child for displaying the skill. *It is extremely important to purposely encourage the social skill by telling the child that you are proud of him for displaying a specific skill.* For example, during the “Listening &

Talking” book one way to encourage a child would be to say, “Johnny, I know you were listening to me because you looked at me with your eyes when I said your name.”

For children with developmental delays, social communication challenges, Autism, or PDD, being told the specific behavior that is being looked for unlocks the mystery of ‘how’ to successfully interact with others.

As with any skill being taught, research tells us that children need hundreds of repetitions to learn it so be patient. This is especially important for children with more severe delays as it could take months of daily patience and persistence before seeing the first glimmers of success.

## **Order of Presentation – Social Skills Instruction Books**

**Daily Routine: “Our Rules At School”**

**Daily Routine: “Saying Good Morning”**

**Week 1 – 2: “Going to the Bathroom”**

**Week 3 – 4: “Listening & Talking”**

**Week 5 – 6: “Saying ‘Hi’ & ‘Bye’”**

**Week 7 – 8: “Being A Friend”**

**Week 9 – 10: “I Need to Sit”**

**Week 11 – 12: “I Need to Wait”**

**Week 13 – 14: “Getting Someone’s Attention”**

**Week 15 – 16: “Using Name’s To Get Someone’s Attention”**

**Week 17 – 18: “Taking Turns Is Good”**

**Week 19 – 20: “This Is How I Share”**

**Week 21 – 22: “How To Deal With My Feelings”**

**Week 23 – 24: “Hugging Each Other”**

**Week 25 – 26: “I Can Be a Leader”**

### **Special Situations:**

**“This Is What I Do When I Hear the Fire Alarm”**

**“Going To the Dentist”**

**“I Need to Rest My Body”**

**“Playground Rules”**

**“This Is My Mouth” – oral motor, articulation**