

Social Skills

Being able to interact appropriately with other children and share resources is a key skill that will help your child when they start school.



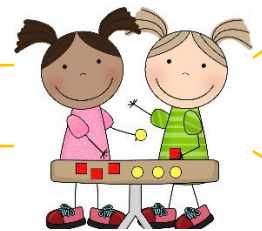
Making friends

Invite friends over for a play date and take your child to play with friends as often as you can. Playing with siblings is also good interaction. The more opportunities your child has to mix with others, the more they will practise socialising. During the play date, you can model useful social phrases, such as 'my turn please' or 'let's share'. You could arrange playdates with future classmates if possible.

Group Games

Play group games that involve taking turns. Children will learn with time that social interaction is fun and that in order for the game to work, they need to consider each other, and all be active participants.

- Building a tower: take turns in putting the blocks on a tower until it collapses
- Blowing bubbles: take turns in blowing bubbles.



Board Games

Board games are an excellent activity for older preschool children. These should have multiple players (even if you start with 2), rules and an objective (e.g. in *Snakes and Ladders* the objective is to reach the end first). It can be a complex task for a child to learn to follow rules and keep the game positive while competing with friends or family members. Younger children can start with simple card games or very basic board games.

Role Play

Role play, or dress-up play, is an important part of learning to socialize. During this kind of play, children make sense of their world and the people around them by role-playing. This is how they "practise" being an adult, behaving and interacting as an adult would. They also act out their own social customs and norms. Role play is a great social learning activity for children playing with one or more friends, as well as for smaller children playing alone. Even though the child is alone, the activity revolves around pretending to interact with others, which is a great way to safely act out an interaction. Provide opportunities at home by having a dress-up section in your child's room. Provide different themed clothes and props and change them frequently to encourage new ideas.

