

Gifted Children

*Social Skills
and why they are important*

My background

Primary trained

Classroom teacher

Deputy principal

Acting principal

Break from teaching

Realized how much I missed teaching children (3 years)

Returned to teaching as a specialist teacher of gifted children

Became aware that some of my students would not reach their potential because of social and emotional issues

Researched social skills workshops and lessons and found most of them appeared to be written for developmentally delayed children.

Established my own set of lessons to suit the specific needs of gifted children

Social skills

Take some time to consider what you think would be some good definitions.

We'll share these ideas.

Definitions of social skills

1. What you need to interact successfully with others.
2. Social skills can be defined as the set of skills people use to interact and communicate with one another.
http://socialskillstraining.org/social_skills.html
3. Social skills training (SST) is a form of behavior therapy used by teachers, therapists, and trainers to help persons who have difficulties relating to other people.
[Social skills training - children, effects, therapy, adults, person, people, used, medication](http://www.minddisorders.com/Py-Z/Social-skills-training.html#ixzz1q4Jwx2eO)
<http://www.minddisorders.com/Py-Z/Social-skills-training.html#ixzz1q4Jwx2eO>

Some more definitions

4. Social skills are measured in a child's ability to cooperate and play with others, paying attention to adults and teachers, and making reasonable transitions from activity to activity.

[Definition of Social Emotional Development | eHow.com](http://www.ehow.com/about_5042688_definition-social-emotional-development.html#ixzz1q4KtKRwr)
http://www.ehow.com/about_5042688_definition-social-emotional-development.html#ixzz1q4KtKRwr

- Friends serve central functions for children that parents do not, and they play a critical role in shaping children's social skills and their sense of identity. . . . The difference between a child with close friendships and a child who wants to make friends but is unable to can be the difference between a child who is happy and a child who is distressed in one large area of life.

Zick Rubin (20th century), U.S. social psychologist. Children's Friendships, ch. 1 (1980).

http://quotes.dictionary.com/Friends_serve_central_functions_for_children_that_parents#d34TH3il8lyho8BW99

From: Emotional Intelligence Daniel Goleman Chapter 8, The Social Arts

- story is instructive because it points up the crucial nature of the countless lessons children get in interaction synchrony and the unspoken rules of social harmony. The net effect of failing to follow these rules is to create waves, to make those around us uncomfortable. The function of these rules, of course, is to keep everyone involved in a social exchange at ease; awkwardness spawns anxiety. People who lack these skills are inept not just at social niceties, but at handling the emotions of those they encounter; they inevitably leave disturbance in their wake.

Social Skills Workshops

- Once a week
- One hour
- Small age related groups
- After school
- Trust essential
- Referred by Educational Psychologists, RTLB, parental request, CYF and school requests
- Summary sheet to take home after each session

Sample of a sheet to take home to share with family

Name.....

Today's topic is conversation cues. There are many things we can do to improve the way we talk with other people and the way we listen.

Roadblocks to good communication

1. Interrupting.
2. Asking too many questions.
3. Talking when someone else is talking.
4. Using a loud voice.
5. Not looking at the person you are talking to.
6. Playing with something when someone is talking to you.
7. Moving around when someone is talking to you.
8. Moving away when someone is talking to you.

Next week: Personality types

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Content

1. Expectations
2. Calming ourselves
3. Non- verbal communication
4. Anxiety
5. Conversation cues
6. Personality types
7. Conflict resolution
8. OPV (Other people's views)
9. Problem solving strategies
10. Friendships

Expectations

- What is the expectation?
- Is my expectation realistic?
- Time lines.
- What needs to happen?
- Who needs to be involved?
- What will I do if my expectation is not met?
- The role of our feelings.
- Behavioural expectations of others.

Calming Strategies

- Identification and sharing of strategies that work for us.
- Different strategies for different situations.
- Visibility of strategies.
- Use of neutral language.
- Use of positive responses.

Non-Verbal Communication

- Definitions and examples.
- The power of body language.
- The role non verbal communication plays in our lives.
- View CD/YouTube with examples.
- What is the more powerful: verbal or non verbal?
- Role-play using non-verbal using video recording
- Use of a full-length mirror to recognise the power of our own body language.
- Eye contact.

Anxiety

- Definition of anxiety.
- The role of our emotions in our lives.
- Anxiety as a motivating factor.
- What causes our own anxiety?
- What are the characteristics we show when we are anxious?
- What we can do to reduce it?
- The role other people play in our anxiety and how we can manage this.
- Past, present, future.
- Circle of influence and circle of concern.

Circle of Influence, Circle of Concern

[The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People](#)

By Steven Covey

The circles represent the two areas where you can focus your time and energy. The vast majority of people focus too much time and energy outside of their Circle of Influence, in their Circle of Concern. Such people typically worry about things they cannot control, such as the weather next weekend or war in the Middle East. Preoccupying yourself with issues like that is a huge waste of time and energy.

Conversation Cues

- Samples we have experienced.
- Why are they successful?
- Casual language / formal language.
- Listening skills.

Understanding what is being said before you expect to be understood.
([The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People](#) By Steven Covey)

- Greetings and farewells.
- People who dominant conversations.

Personality types

- Explanation of personality types.
- How our personality influences the way people interact with us.
- Personal acceptance of ourselves.

The BIRD Type Personality Grouping

1. The Dove
2. The Eagle
3. The Owl
4. The Peacock

The Dove

Amiable, caring, sensitive. Great helpers, very personal, indirect communicators (tend to ask permission before they will do something). Also don't like too much change, but if change has to happen, they want to know WHO needs to do what. Can become personally involved with other people's problems, sometimes to the detriment of their workload. Their whole reason for being is to build personal relationships. Very supportive people; great in customer service. Under great pressure can tend to do a 'Poor me, it's not fair' type of reaction. Can be martyrs if they are not careful. Love careers to do with people. Nursing, counselling, teaching and being nannies. Great in customer service and love dealing with customer complaints. They will love your customers to bits.

The Owl

A quiet thinker with analytical traits: wants to know things, wants accuracy, likes lists, numbers & statistics. Loves detail, research, data and information. Dislikes change, taking risks, people who are sloppy in their work and who have poor time-keeping habits. Owls also dislike people who are showy and loud. When change is happening, they want to know HOW to do what they are being asked to do.

Can get quite stressed during change processes, particularly if a lot of change happens over a sustained period. Under pressure Owls will avoid conflict. Owls are attracted to careers in banking, insurance, office management and even credit control.

The Eagle

Direct, action-orientated, can be quite forceful and dominant. Often in positions of power. Wants to know WHEN. Needs to be in Control, needs deadlines and expects people to stick to them. A direct communicator - can tend to tell rather than ask. Not good with time-wasters or woolly thinkers. Particularly dislikes long-winded explanations and hates excuses.

The Peacock

Peacocks are the very loud, life-and-soul of the party types that Owls dislike so much. They are intuitive, impulsive, swift moving (often hard to find because they move about so much and so often). Love being the front person, love social situations, parties are their life-blood. Need appreciation, recognition and regular pats on the back. Like to inspire others - can be very charismatic. Not good with deadlines, detail or time frames. Dislike meetings, particularly meetings that drill down into too much detail. Great at coming up with off-the-wall ideas, but don't ask them to implement the ideas, they are not great implementers. Want to know WHY. Great salespeople.

Where do you fit?

Where do the people you
work with fit?

Where do your family
members fit?

The dove
The peacock
The eagle
The owl

Conflict resolution

- Strategies that have not worked in the past and why.
- Make your thinking and reasoning visible.
- Asking others to make their thinking reasonable.
- Test your assumptions.
- Comparing assumptions. Do they match?
- Separating fact from fiction.

O.P.V (other people's view)

- Looking at situations for a variety of different perspectives.
- Learning to accept the views of others.
- Disagreeing with the views of others.
- Basing your actions on your viewpoint.

From Edward De Bono's Cort Programme

Problem solving strategies

- Identification of problem.
- Resources available to help us.
- Time lines for resolution.

Friendships

- Are they important?
- Our role in a friendship
- Who are our friends?
- The challenges of friendships
- The rewards of friendships

So why are social skills especially important for gifted children?

- They are important for all of us.
- I work with gifted children. This is my area of expertise.
- I am passionate about people reaching their potential.

- Over excitabilities
- Intensities
- Social capital
- Emotional and social wellbeing
- Removing the sense of "aloneness"