



5 Ways to Build Social Skills at Home This Summer

With some children at home for a year or longer due to the pandemic, parents may be concerned that their child's social skills are suffering. This may be especially true for children who have speech, language, or social communication disorders. As more activities and public spaces open up this summer, and before the next school year begins, here are some easy ways to practice social skills at home:

- 1. Play "restaurant" or "school."** Have your child play different roles, such as the teacher, student, restaurant host, or server. Act out different scenarios with them (a class clown, an angry customer). Problem-solve together.
- 2. Talk about feelings when watching TV and reading together.** Discuss how the characters are feeling. How can you tell? What clues do you use (facial expressions, body language, tone of voice, etc.)?
- 3. Give board games a spin.** There are many different board and conversation-based games specifically designed to help kids understand emotions, boost empathy, and build social skills. Board games also teach the social skills of turn-taking and teamwork. Check out recommendations from The Parents' Choice Foundation (www.parentschoice.org/).
- 4. Have fun with emojis and memes.** These fun, lighthearted images are great ways to explore feelings, emotions, and the intent behind a message (humor, anger)—and to just be silly and have fun, all while practicing social skills.
- 5. Plan safe playdates, to the best extent possible.** Consider safe ways to get together with peers—as public health recommendations and personal comfort allow. Talk to your child about expectations (such as keeping a mask on or staying socially distant), as needed.



For more information on children's communication and social skills, visit www.asha.org/public/speech/development