



SUMMARY

Social skills are very complex. They have to be developed just like other skills are developed in children. They cannot be absorbed; they must be carefully taught. Children often need to be given direct, explicit instructions about how to behave in specific social situations. Children of different ages have different social capabilities.

Empathy Compassion, sense of humour, say nice things, be nice to EVERYBODY! Inclusion and cooperation.
ACTIVITIES: Circle group where everybody volunteers to say something nice about other children. Storytelling.

Basic Skills Smiling, eye contact, listening, taking turns, using names, and using “quiet voice”.
ACTIVITIES: Emotion identification with flashcards. Basic classroom rules review. Constant gentle reminders like we use for teaching politeness.

Joining Skills How to join a group as an activity participant or to become a friend.
ACTIVITIES: Role play. Brainstorm ideas on the board so that the students can give each other tips for joining different types of groups. Teacher assigned groups or pairs for activities.

Peace Skills Share, take turns, follow rules, cooperate.
ACTIVITIES: Reward and praise peacemakers with certificates or star stickers on a chart/wall display.

Friendship Skills Appropriate affection, allow others to help make decisions, be inclusive, ask to be friends, say YES to new friends.
ACTIVITIES: Cross-aged buddies with older children (assigned by teacher). Role play and storytelling.

Conflict Skills How to manage disagreements. Teach skills immediately when they are upset. Children must identify their own behavior as a problem.
ACTIVITIES: Talk time: “I feel frustrated when...” Reverse role play. Set classroom/school rules with precise consequences for unacceptable behavior (allow student input in establishing some of the rules).

Assertiveness How to say NO to wrong behavior and how to stand up for yourself.
ACTIVITIES: Create a comic strip, puppet play, book, or write a story that expresses the idea of assertiveness. Use examples on the board, “I feel _____ (say your feeling) when you _____ (describe the action) because _____ (say why the action connects to your feeling)” instead of the “You...” message.