

Ideas and Hints for Families Working with your Children at Home Social Emotional Skills Strategies

- **Read** at a special time with your child every day! Have your child pick out their own book. Read together at the same time each day and start your own “special time together”.

- **Talk** to your child about positive and negative feelings. Let your child know it is ok for them to have different feelings (sad, happy, tired, frustrated), and it is important for them to talk about those emotions.

- **Teach** your child the words used to name feelings (ex: happy, sad, mad, and scared). It is important for them to understand that communicating (sharing) their thoughts with an adult will help them through difficult times.

- **Listen** when your child shares his/her strong feelings. When children are able to verbally express their feelings and feel that they are being listened to, they are less likely to act inappropriately.

- **Help** your child learn how to relax & calm himself/herself. One calming technique is the “pretzel”. *

- **Talk** with your child about meaningful stories of your childhood. Hearing about your childhood will help establish a bond and create a tradition.

- **Establish family rituals** where everybody spends time together. For example have everyone sit together to eat dinner, or play a game or read a bedtime story at the same time each night.

- **Give** your child “real” important jobs in the house and work together. Completing a task together with your child will show them the value of working cooperatively with others.

- **Ask** for your child's help in an activity so that they can feel successful. This will help build your child's self-esteem and confidence.
- **Make a plan** to prevent difficult situations in and out of the home. For example tell your child where he/she is going and what he/she is going to do before you leave the house so that they will understand your plan.
- **Start a bedtime ritual** with your child (Ex. read a short story, talk about the pictures, snuggle, hug and give them a good night kiss).
- **Use pictures** that identify different emotions. Discuss those emotions and be honest with your feelings. Children understand more than we sometimes might think.
- **Establish a play activity** for example: taking turns. A board game is a good activity to demonstrate that everyone has to wait before it is their turn.
- **Play the Freeze game**. This will help teach your child to learn the concept of "stopping" when told. This will help when crossing the street or in a crowded area.
- **Support** your child's special interests & talents. Your interest will help them develop their skills and may start a lifelong hobby.
- **Modeling positive behaviors** will show your child appropriate behavioral skills (offer an alternative and help prevent potential problems).
- Have your child **look in a mirror** and make different emotional faces (happy, sad, and angry). Discuss different situations that might result in these feelings.
- **Reduce frustration** by setting up your home so things your child needs are within reach. This will reduce their frustration and give them a sense of independence and increase their self-worth.
- **Listen to your child!** They need to know that you value their opinion.

- **Model cooperation** with other family members. Seeing adults working together will show your child the value of teamwork.
- **Take a family picture**. Discuss the importance of each member of the family and how each person contributes to the family unit.
- Do the **"I Love You Ritual"**... "Round and Round the Garden.". This helps the parents and child connect with each other. *
- **Comment** on your child's good behavior. Acknowledging positive behaviors will help reinforce them.
- **Go over the safety rules** with your child. Discuss dangerous situations (for example what to do in case of a fire).
- For a **calming activity**: Blow bubbles with your child.
- **Ask your child to help** you sweep the floor. Knowing that you value their help will increase their willingness to help out.
- **Use the STAR technique** - When angry, do the "stop, take a deep breath, and relax." (STAR). This helps to disengage stress. *
- **Describe pictures and feelings** as you read to your child have him/her describe the pictures (there are no right or wrong answers- just let them describe what they see).
- **Go outside at night**, lie on a blanket and look at the stars. Talk about what you see. Count the stars.
- **Prepare your child for any change** of activity, for example tell them that they can play for 5 minutes longer and then they will have to leave- this will give them a signal for an easier transition.

- Allow your child to eat dessert before dinner as a **“Special night.”** Being treated special is a great reward.
- Give your child a **bubble bath** with lots of bubbles. This is a great relaxing technique.
- **Make a tent** together; take some pillows and a blanket. Use a flash light and read a book to your child.
- **Talk to your child** about the activities of the day. He/she needs to know what will happen next to prepare himself/herself for the activity.
- Before going into a restaurant or store, **remind your child of the rules** (i.e. stay with me, quiet voice, need to sit down).
- Show your child how to **help others feel good**. Have your child help you around the house with something and thank him/her for it (say” thank you for doing this for me” “That was helpful” “That was kind” “That was caring”).
- **Look through a family album** with your child. Point out your relatives. Tell your child their names, who they are, where do they live, and have him/her call them to say hello.
- **Have your child sit on your lap** with you while you read a whole story. Show him/her the pictures of the story. At the end, give him/her a kiss and a big hug.
- **Go outside** with your child; lay on a blanket and look at the clouds. Talk about what would he/she like to do when he/she grows up (there’s no right or wrong answer).
- **Plant seeds** with your child. Watch them grow. You can do this in the park, in your backyard. Take the time to check as it grows. If it is in a pot, give your child the job to water the plant.
- Allow your child to try on your clothes. Let him/her **pretend** that is you or whoever he/she wants to be. Ask him/her what he/she would do if he/she was you.
- ***Teach relaxation*** - Do “Bunny Breathing” or the “Butterfly” to relax with your child.*
- **Hug your child**, tell him/her you love him/her, and seal it with a big h

