

Social development: Suggestions for families

Family relationships and expectations have a major influence on children's social development. Family relationships set the foundation for children to relate to others. Children learn how to manage relationships by observing the ways that parents, carers and other family members relate to others.



How parents and carers can help

Teach social and emotional skills

Teach children social skills such as listening to others, taking turns, making friends and resolving conflict. Emphasise skills for cooperative and respectful relationships and acknowledge children's efforts to use them. For ideas about how you can teach social and emotional skills, see the range of KidsMatter Primary information sheets on social and emotional learning.

Use positive discipline

Setting reasonable expectations for children's behaviour, and communicating them clearly and respectfully, sets the tone for cooperation. Being consistent and positive in your approach to discipline communicates to children that they are valued, even if a particular behaviour is not. For further ideas, see the KidsMatter Primary information sheets on effective discipline.

Talk about values

Read stories that emphasise values with your children. Ask their opinions on whether they think a particular action is respectful, responsible, caring etcetera. Discuss the pros and cons of different kinds of values for promoting effective social relationships. Make talking about values and opinions part of everyday conversation, for example, by talking about things you see on TV.



This resource is part of a range of KidsMatter Primary information sheets for families and school staff. View them all online at www.kidsmatter.edu.au



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