

Teaching social skills ideally involves 3-tiered program:

1. The student gets direct instruction as in individual. Student's personal profile of strengths and weaknesses with regards to social interaction guides the instruction. Small group interaction may also be helpful.
2. Instruction is provided in the school and classroom setting. This includes peer and teacher training. Observation of student in this natural setting, as well as peer and teacher reporting, can guide individual instruction.
3. Parental guidance and consultation is important so that newly developing skills can be encouraged and strengthened in the child's day to day life. Parents are told what the child is working on and given activities to reinforce the skills. Also, parent reporting of child in natural setting can guide instruction.

Components of Social Skill Training:

1. What is social thinking?

It is thinking that occurs in the presence of other people. If only one other person is around, thinking socially should be occurring.

2. Focus on eye gaze.

Eye gaze and observation of people are essential skills for Social interaction. Eyes gaze is NOT eye contact. It is how to use your eyes to maximize your communication with others.

3. Instruction on thoughts that other people have.

Everything a person does in the presence of others creates thoughts. Awareness of these thoughts is important in social interactions.

4. Awareness of personal behaviors.

Sometimes people have quirky habits, odd movements, or unusual demeanors that they are not even aware of. By increasing their awareness, they can gain more control over these kinds of behaviors, which are often offsetting to other people who don't know them, or don't know them very well.

5. Structured lessons on how to participate using social thinking in the classroom setting.

Learning these skills takes practice! Lessons in a small protected setting followed by practice in the setting where the child usually operates is great way to for him/her to gain proficiency.