

## Improving Your Child's Social Skills

### Social skills include:

- Responding to social cues
- Saying hello and goodbye
- Making eye contact, smiling, being polite
- Having interesting things to say
- Cooperating by taking turns
- Acknowledging other's comments
- Responding appropriately to questions
- Being sensitive to the feelings of others
- Problem solving
- Controlling aggression and other inappropriate behaviors
- Knowing the rules of conversation

### Rules of conversation are:

- Agree to pay attention to who is talking
- No one person does all the talking
- Participate in choosing and developing a topic
- Take turns in an orderly fashion
- Add information relevant to the topic (related to what you were talking about)
- Provide enough information to convey the message without being too 'chatty'

**Social cues are:** Those things we understand from others without needing to be directly told about them.

- Facial expressions
- Gestures
- Postures

Parents of children with hearing loss often need to explain their facial expressions and how the communication partner's mood will affect how someone answers or chooses not to answer.

**Examples of sending social cues** – think about how you use your body language to express:

"I'm really busy right now"

"Wait just a second and I will pay attention to you"

"I'm upset"

"I'm happy to see you and spend time with you"

**TEACH** – Explain what the child should do, be aware of, wait for, think about

Use 'SELF-TALK' so the child is aware of what you are thinking that affects the choices you make

**MODEL** – Use good social skills yourself, role-play with your child, provide the words for what he's feeling

**PAY ATTENTION TO HOW YOUR CHILD INTERACTS WITH OTHERS**

- **Reinforce good social behaviors – be specific about what s/he did well! Praise level of EFFORT!**
- **When your child has a social mis-step:**
  - immediately model what s/he should have said/done
  - use words to describe what s/he should have said/done (You mean....)
  - explain how it made you feel (ignored, angry)
  - describe how your child actions can be interpreted by others in a way he didn't mean (i.e. by not answering someone may think you don't care about them or what they say)

### TIPS FOR IMPROVING SELF-ESTEEM

- **Encouragement boosts self-esteem; it is better than praise ("I know you can do it")**
- Decision-making leads to feeling confident.
- Treat him as an intelligent individual able to understand and reach conclusions.
- Mutual respect will foster trust and confidence.
- Teach a child that failure doesn't exist – only temporary setbacks on the road to success.
- Help him believe he has the ability to succeed no matter how long it takes.
- Do not tell him he has failed or cannot succeed.