

Teaching Social Skills To Kids Who Don't Have Them

Do any of these comments sound familiar?

"I tell him to stop doing that, but he keeps on doing it. This kid must have been raised by wolves!" 🐾

"That kid knows how she is supposed to behave. She CHOOSES to misbehave."

"I ask him what he is supposed to be doing and he can tell me. He knows better, so why isn't he doing it?"

Yep. Some kids know (intellectually) what to do, but they've never (physically) done it before. It's difficult for all of us to all-of-the-sudden display a completely different behavior than we've been showing for years. Changing a habit is no easy task. To get an idea of what it's like, try this activity:

Do now activity (Yes...right now)

Cross your arms across your chest. Notice how one arm goes over the other with its hand tucked under its biceps (upper arm). At the same time, the hand of the lower arm has its hand resting on top of the biceps of the other limb. OK, now switch the position of the arms so that the one that was on the bottom is now on the top (and vice versa). Alright. It took you awhile, but you were able to do it. Feel a bit uncomfortable and odd? Now, uncross the arms and fold them again in the new way. Again. And again. In fact, for the rest of your life, do it this new way. Don't ever make a mistake or revert to the old way.

Think that'll be difficult? **Yep**. Now imagine what we are asking our socially unskilled kids to do. We're expecting them to immediately change a behavior that is indelibly etched into their brains, feels "comfortable", and has been "assigned" to them by others who have labeled them as the type of person who "does that thing". Kids who display the wrong behaviors as they interact with others will have a long and arduous path to travel as they work to change to a "better way". Thank goodness they have a patient and supportive teacher like you.

Example:

Pedro is going to be congratulated by the principal for being "Most improved student" with regard to behavior. As the principal approaches, the teacher whispers into Pedro's ear "Remember to wipe the booger off your finger before shaking hands with Mr. Yoon."

Wording for more socially advance student

"What do we do with boogers before we shake hands?"

(The student must decide on correct course of action)

To see the entire article go to:

http://maxweber.hunter.cuny.edu/pub/eres/EDSPC715_MCINTYRE/SocialSkills.html

Social skills training, helps individuals make better choices in situations.

