

Activities to Improve Your Child's Social and Language Skills

1. Read, Read, Read!

- a. As you read ask your child the following:
 - i. How do the characters feel?
 - ii. What was his/her favorite part of the story?
 - iii. What do you think will happen next?
- b. Also, connect the story to your child's experiences or to other stories.

2. Practice Friendship-Making Skills

- a. Taking turns
- b. Sharing
- c. Initiation of a game ("Would you like to play with me?")
- d. Kind ways to say no to a friend ("I'll play with you tomorrow," "Thank you, but I'd rather not...")
- e. Inclusion ("Would you like to play with us?")

3. Play Language Games

- a. Opposites
- b. Rhyming words
- c. Change beginning sounds
- d. Category treasure hunt (e.g. colors, animals, things you ride, etc.)
- e. What if . . . ? Game
- f. Take a nature hike and talk about the things you see, smell, hear, etc.
- g. Follow the Leader or Simon Says.

4. Model Positive Self-Talk

- a. Ask your child to rephrase negative statements into positive ones (e.g. I can't do this! – I'm going to try this even though it's hard).
- b. Other positive statements to reinforce: I will try harder. I will do my best. I am smart. Mistakes are part of learning. This is hard, but I will try my best. I won't give up. I can do this!

5. Teach Your Child Relaxation Strategies

- a. Take a deep breath (breathe in through your nose, hold your breath for 5 seconds and gently release your breath through your mouth).
- b. Take some private time and relax your body (tighten your muscles, count to ten, relax your muscles and then take a deep breath).
- c. Imagery: close your eyes and think happy thoughts (playing outside, eating ice cream, etc.).
- d. Sing a song in your head (silly song, jingle or your favorite song).