

# PALS

## Social Skills Program

Playing and learning to socialise

## Parent Information

### Introduction

#### An introduction to social skills

As parents you want a happy and healthy future for your children. While most people emphasise the importance of language, motor and cognitive skills for children, it is only recently that the importance of social skills has emerged. Yet good social skills are essential to how well a child adapts to school. This program teaches social skills in a thorough and systematic way.

During the early years these skills start to develop rapidly, making it an ideal time to support and encourage the development of a range of socially skilled behaviours. For young children, the skills that will help them in social interactions include:

- fundamental skills, such as looking at people when talking to them, listening and not interrupting, following class rules, sharing and taking turns;
- complex skills, such as identifying the emotions of others and responding appropriately, managing conflict without aggression and asserting one's own needs appropriately.

When these skills are performed well, children are able to develop positive relationships with other children and adults, manage conflict and learn how to express their own feelings safely. In general, children who develop these skills form good relationships with peers and adults. As a result, they develop a strong sense of self-esteem and self-confidence.

Experiencing success in a range of social situations is essential to a child's development. Children who have difficulty developing and using social skills may be disruptive or aggressive, or become withdrawn and uninvolved in social activities. It is important that we assist children to master the skills that will help them develop relationships, which are essential for their future.

#### About PALS Social Skills Program

The program is designed to help young children develop a range of social behaviours that will help them develop friendships and get along with others. Story-telling, songs, games, role-play and activities are used to teach the children the various skills. The program runs for ten weeks and each session lasts for 20 to 30 minutes.

The program consists of ten sessions, each one focusing on a particular skill. One skill builds on another so that the program gradually progresses to the more complex skills required for competent social interaction. The skills taught are:

1. Greeting others
2. Taking turns: talking and listening
3. Taking turns at play
4. Sharing
5. Asking for help
6. Identifying feelings
7. Empathy
8. Overcoming fear and anxiety
9. Managing frustration
10. Calming down and speaking up

#### How to help your child

Each week you will receive information telling you about the skill your child is learning. The Parent Information sheets will also contain suggestions for how you can help your child develop each skill at home. Like learning to walk and talk, learning social skills takes time and practice. Your support and encouragement will help your child learn to use these skills not only at preschool but also at home.

#### Privacy policy

Any information provided by you or your child's teacher will be treated with confidentiality.

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