



# Promoting Social Success in Children with 22q11.2 Deletion Syndrome

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Irene Drmic, Ph.D., C.Psych.

# Overview of Presentation

What are social skills?

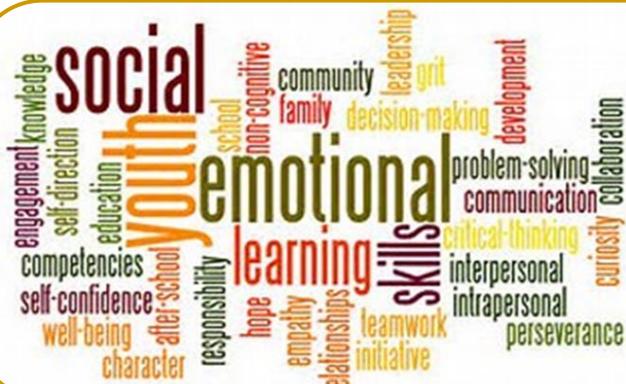
Why are they important?

Types of social skills

Identifying difficulties

How can we help?





# What are Social Skills?

- Behaviors that promote positive interactions with others and the environment
- Learned, made up of specific behaviors, includes initiations/responses, interactive, situation specific
- Competence in one situation does not mean that a child will be good in ALL situations
- No single behavior is sufficient for competence

# Why are Social Skills Important?

## Good Social Skills

- Acceptance by others
- Psychological adjustment
- Resiliency in face of crisis or stressful events
- Coping skills
- Lays foundation for later academic achievement and work-related skills
- Seek safer avenues for frustration/aggression

## Poor Social Skills

- Difficulties with interpersonal relationships with parents, teachers, peers
- Peer rejection/bullying
- Show signs of depression, aggression, anxiety
- Demonstrate poor academic performance as an indirect consequence
- Higher incidence of involvement with criminal justice system as adults
- Problems become more debilitating over time



# Examples of Social Skills

- Showing empathy
- Participation in group activities
- Generosity
- Helpfulness
- Communicating with others
- Negotiating
- Problem solving
- Sharing
- Taking turns
- Anger/conflict management

# Types of Social Skills



- Listening
- Following directions
- Ignoring distractions
- Rewarding self

- Sharing
- Asking permission
- Joining an activity
- Waiting your turn

Survival Skills

Interpersonal Skills



Problem Solving Skills

Conflict Resolution



- Asking for help
- Apologizing
- Accepting consequences
- Deciding what to do

Dealing with teasing, losing, accusations, being left out, peer pressure





# Identifying Social Skills Deficits

**Lack of knowledge**  
(acquisition deficit)

- Does not know the skills (“can’t do” problem)
- **Intervention:** teach the targeted skill

**Difficulty despite knowledge**  
(performance deficit)

- Can perform skill but fails to do so consistently/competently (“won’t do” problem)
- **Intervention:** Prompting or reinforcing the appropriate use of the behavior

**Insufficient degree/level of strength**  
(fluency deficit)

- Can/wants to perform skill, but does so in inadequate manner; little modeling practice
- **Intervention:** Increase opportunities to practice

**Other skill deficits/behaviors**

- Other factors interfere, even though skills have been taught
- E.g., depression, anxiety, hyperactivity,

# Areas of Difficulty

- kidney abnormalities
- partial immunodeficiency
- congenital heart defects



Medical



Cognitive

- thinking skills
- attention
- executive Functions
- working memory
- visual spatial
- arithmetic, language

Communication

- palatal defects including hypernasal speech
- language acquisition
- receptive language



Social



Mood & Behavior

- anxiety
- ADHD
- schizophrenia



- social competence
- concrete thinkers
- generalizing previous experience to new situations
- Determining social norms
- Poor social judgement

# Clues that there is a problem

- Seems quiet, withdrawn
- Changes in mood, anxious, depressed
- Behaves aggressively
- Frustrated or angry more easily than other children/youth
- Avoidance of social situations (e.g., playdates)
- Not invited to events (e.g., birthday parties)
- Ignored, shunned, rejected, bullied by peers
- Cries at night
- Doesn't want to go to recess, lunch, school
- Changes in academic performance or motivation



# How can we help?

## Teach the appropriate social skill

- Teach **one skill** at a time
- Identify what appropriate behavior looks like
- Try to teach skill in **natural setting**
- **Model, use role play** to reflect a variety of setting, read books, watch clips of movies
- Teach skills **loosely**
- Teach children to **generalize** by teaching problem solving strategies: self-talk, self-monitoring, self-recording, self-reinforcement
- Enroll in **social skills program**: techniques used include modeling, instruction, rehearsal, feedback, reinforcement

# How can we help?

## Find the teachable moments

- “**catch**” kids **doing the right thing** in naturally occurring situations and praise their appropriate social behavior
- Offer **alternatives** when poor decisions are made and teach more appropriate behavior
- Avoid teaching students how to cope better in the moment they are feeling overwhelmed, but instead wait for a time when they are **calm** to reflect on how they might handle that same situation

# How can we help?

## Enhancing skills through observation & play

- **Creating play opportunities/setting up a play date**
  - Set up the play
  - Step out and stand by (while children play together)
  - Step in (when children need your help)

coach
- ***Things to consider:***
  - Friend(s), location, structured/unstructured, create teamwork, choose the right toys/activities, discuss/rehearse
- ***Things you might need to teach:***
  - What a friend is
  - How to initiate, continue and end play
  - How to manage emotions, problem solve

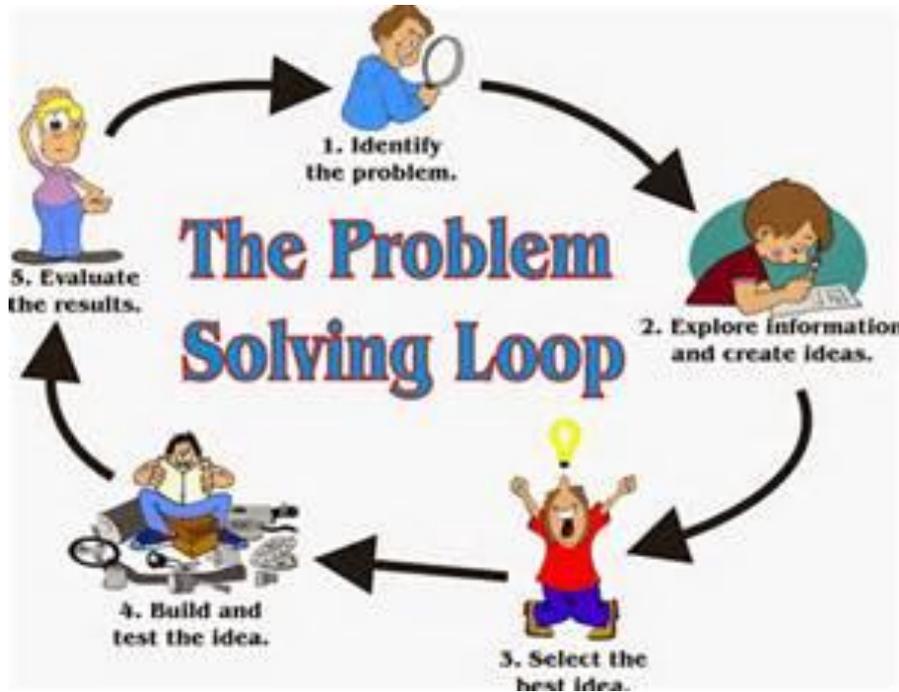
# How can we help?

## Social skills autopsies

- Pause, reflect, review
- Discuss what happened after child appropriately (or inappropriately used a social skills)
  - What did the child do?
  - What happened when the child did it?
  - What was the outcome (negative, positive, neutral)?
  - What should the child do next time?

# How can we help?

Teach how to handle conflict and resolve solve problems

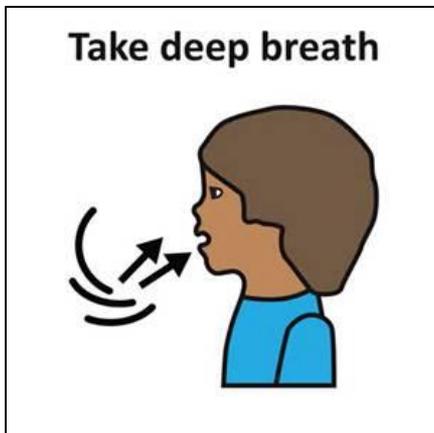


1. Identify and define the problem
2. Identify potential solution
3. Consider the outcomes of each solution
4. Implement a solution
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of the solution

# How can we help?

## Teach how to manage emotions

- Teach healthy ways to manage our emotions
- E.g., Time-out, meditation, deep breathing, counting to 10



# How can we help?

## Become an emotional coach

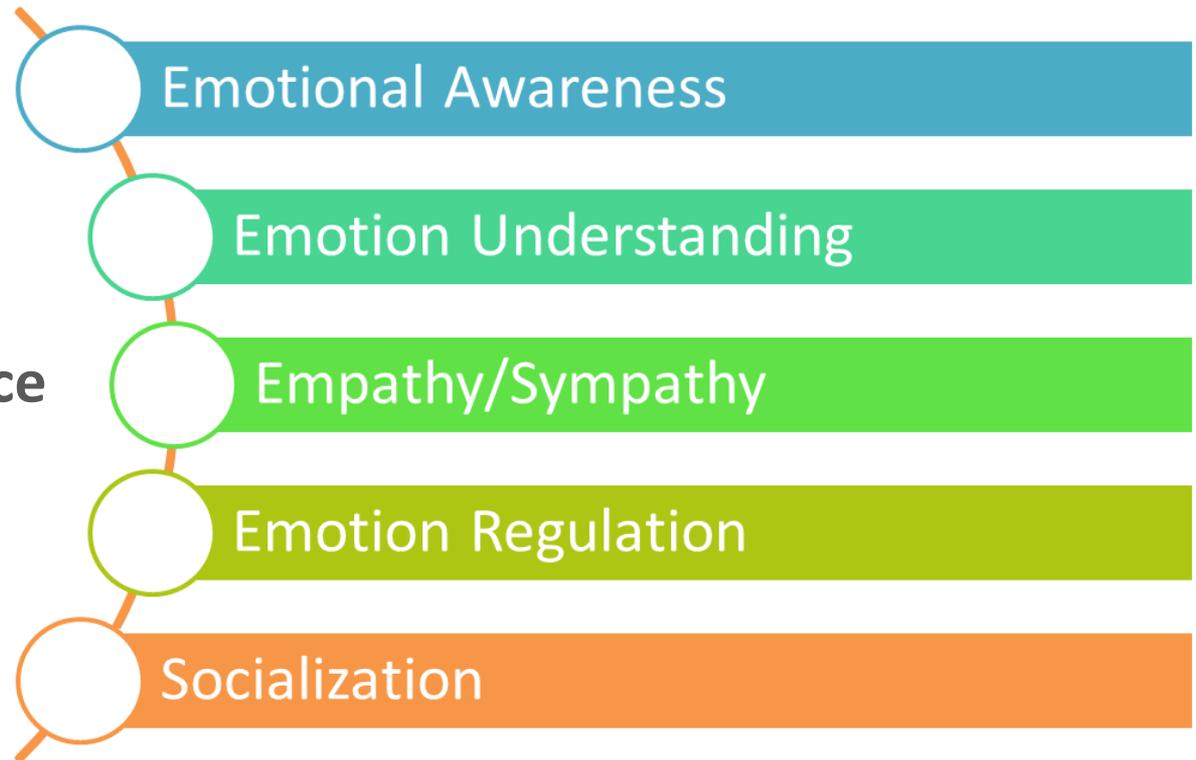
- Use emotional moments to help children become more emotionally aware and as teaching opportunities
- Validate the emotion by listening empathetically
- Help child label the emotion
- Help the child problem solve

# How can we help?

## Support the development of emotional competence

**Definition:** the ability of an individual to function adaptively in many contexts across many different aspects of emotional functioning

### Components of Emotional Competence



# Social skills intervention should...

- ↑ desirable behavior, ↓ undesirable behavior
- Emphasize learning, performance, generalization, and maintenance
- Provide practice opportunities in a wide array of settings, with different groups of people
- Identify areas of strength
- Should occur in “natural settings” to address naturally occurring causes and consequences



# Bullying

**Definition:** Bullying is a relationship problem

- It is about power and the abuse of power
- It is difficult for children who are being victimized to remove themselves from this destructive relationship
- Once a bullying relationship is established, attempts to make the bullying stop on their own are usually unsuccessful and may make the bullying worse.
- **Adult intervention is required** to correct the power imbalance.
- Children need to be **encouraged to report bullying** and be given multiple strategies on how to make these reports.
- Fighting back makes the bullying worse – teach children to be assertive (not aggressive)
  - sends the message that the bullying behavior is not OK and that he or she will report it to a responsible adult if it doesn't stop.
- Peers play a major role in bullying – by escalating or stopping the problem
- Encourage new friendships
- Build confidence



# Take care of yourself too....

