

## Social Skills

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### Definition of Social Skills

We are social beings. The ability to relate to others in meaningful ways in a variety of contexts is critical to our development and learning. The following definition of social skills was retrieved from: <http://psychologydictionary.org/social-skills/>.



The ability to effectively relate to others is critical to success in school, the workplace and in life. Social skills require students to be aware of what constitutes meaningful relationships that support their learning and help them achieve their goals. They also need to be cognizant of what constitutes bad or destructive relationships that disrupt and inhibit their ability to learn and succeed. Social skills can be taught in the classroom as an intellectual exercise, but it is the

actual experience of relating to others that provides the most powerful and meaningful opportunities to learn how to be socially competent.

Social skills demonstrate a basic respect for self and others, and a willingness to accept others for who they are despite differences in race, gender and beliefs. Learning how to be socially competent also means learning how to be culturally competent and sensitive to the needs and interests of others. Given the fact that we live in a very diverse society and world, it is important for students to understand that we are all human beings with similar needs and desires to live in a peaceful world with fulfilling lives.

It is also important to recognize that we, as humans, are socially interconnected through relationships and that we, as an evolving species, are also in relation with other sentient life forms and with the earth itself. Learning to be skilled socially and manifest appropriate ways to relate to each other in school can have a profound influence on how we treat each other and other species with which we share this earth.

### **Social Skills are Fundamental to a CBA**

Social skills are built on a foundation of social and emotional learning. Research shows that social skills can be taught in school contexts. The CBA suggests that all students should develop good social skills through their interactions with the school counseling program. School counselors, therefore, have a responsibility to guide students in their social development.

This not only includes teaching students the characteristics of good relationships and how to form meaningful relationships, but also to help them learn strategies to change negative thinking and behavior patterns. Counselor led anti-bullying conflict resolution programs are a good examples of ways in which school counselors can contribute to students' social competence and make schools safe learning environments for all students and their families.

### **Additional Resources Related to Social Skills**

The Internet is a wonderful tool for accessing information on just about any topic. It has been invaluable in helping us to identify what research has demonstrated to be strongly related to students' academic achievement and well-being, and evidence-based practices that provide concrete examples of how to translate the research findings into meaningful learning opportunities that support student development.



Staying informed about what works and does not work to help students achieve and succeed is one of the defining characteristics of a professional school counselor. Internet search engines can be used to develop a deeper understanding of the topics discussed on the CBA Website. To get you started, here are some additional resources you may find helpful. These resources, however, only scratch the surface of what is available on the Internet or in published books and articles. We encourage you to use search engines to find more resources that will increase your understanding and build your capacity to apply these ideas in your work as school counselors.

## Videos

Teaching social skills at the elementary level. Teachers discuss and give student examples of working on social skills such as working with partners.

[https://youtu.be/qCuyM0\\_KnSA](https://youtu.be/qCuyM0_KnSA)

Video by the Center for Collaborative Classroom on “Teaching social skills to middle school students.” It describes the use of prompts in teaching social skills.

<https://youtu.be/6NGrzKLu6rI>

## Websites

Using video modeling to teach social skills. Good list of social skills. Videos are embedded in the webpage.

<http://www.watchmelearn.com/skill-development/social-skills>

An article on “Social Skills and Academic Achievement” by Kathlyn Steedly, Amanda Schwartz, Michael Levin, and Stephen Luke at the Center for Parent Information and Resources website.

[http://www.parentcenterhub.org/wp-content/uploads/repo\\_items/eesocialskills.pdf](http://www.parentcenterhub.org/wp-content/uploads/repo_items/eesocialskills.pdf)

“Social Skills: Promoting Positive Behavior, Academic Success, and School Safety,” from the National Association of School Psychologists. This Fact Sheet addresses topics such as consequences of good and poor social skills, defining types of social skills and social skill deficits, and social skill interventions.

[https://www.hcps.org/departments/docs/studentervices/psychology/socialskills\\_rk.pdf](https://www.hcps.org/departments/docs/studentervices/psychology/socialskills_rk.pdf)

A rich resource on teaching social skills from PBIS. Information on why, when and how you should teach social skills. Contains a very long list of resources and supports.

<http://www.pbisworld.com/tier-1/teach-social-skills/>

Lesson plans for teaching social skills in the middle school. Extensive list of lessons divided into four categories: Prerequisites, Skills in the Classroom, Skills with Peers, Skills with Adults.

<http://www.cccoe.net/social/skillslist.htm>

Article on “Teaching Social Skills” by the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition. Discusses a wide variety of topics, including teaching social skills to students with disabilities and social skills needed by transition-age students.

<http://www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=1749>