

# Important Social Skills

Developing healthy social skills are important for many reasons. The following are a few reasons why healthy social skills matter:

- Express their own emotions appropriately
  - Understand emotions of others
  - Help build meaningful relationships
  - Allow for peaceful conflict resolution
  - Help build confidence
  - Improve mental and emotional health
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## How to Disagree Appropriately

1. Make eye contact with the person.
2. Use a pleasant voice.
3. Say, *"I understand how you feel."*
4. Tell why you fell differently using I-statements. Resist the urge to put the other person or their ideas down.
5. Listen respectfully to the other person.

## How to Accept Criticism

1. Make eye contact with the person.
2. Say, *"Okay!"*
3. Clarify what they are saying if you don't understand. Say, *"What I hear you saying is..."*
4. Don't argue or try to justify your actions.
5. Thank the person for their courage to talk with you about the issue.

## How to Give Compliments

1. Smile and make eye contact with the person.
2. Speak with a clear, authentic, and enthusiastic voice.
3. Tell the other person what exactly you like.
4. Use words such as, *"That great!"* or *"Good job on..."*, or *"That was awesome!"*
5. Keep it specific and simple. Don't go on and on or give compliments on multiple things.
6. Give the other person time to respond to your compliment.

## How to Accept Compliments

1. Look at the person who is complimenting you.
2. Smile and use a pleasant tone of voice.
3. Thank the person sincerely for the compliment. Say, *"Thanks for noticing!"* or *"I appreciate that! Thank you!"*
4. Do not look away, mumble, deny, or downplay the compliment. (i.e. *"Oh, I bought it at Target on clearance."*)

## How to Ask for Help

1. Get the person's attention without interrupting. Wait to be acknowledged.
2. Make eye contact with the person.
3. Use a pleasant tone of voice.
4. Ask for help using words such as *"please," "would you be able to," "would you mind,"* or *"May I..."*
5. Listen to the person's answer.
6. Restate what you heard the person say.
7. Thank the person for their help.

## How to Express Feelings Appropriately

1. Take a deep breath, check in with yourself to acknowledge what you are feeling and why. Remain calm and relaxed.
2. Step away from the situation and come back if you do not feel in control of your emotions.
3. Make eye contact with the person you are talking to.
4. Describe the feelings you are experiencing.
5. Avoid using profanity or statements of blame.
6. Take responsibility for the feelings you are having. Use I-statements rather than You-statements. Say, *"I am feeling..."*.
7. Listen respectfully to what the other person has to say.
8. Thank the person for listening to you.

## How to Follow Instructions

1. Make eye contact with the person.
2. Watch closely if they are demonstrating how to do something.
3. Ask questions to clarify if you do not understand.
4. Restate the instructions in your own words.
5. Clarify if there is a specific time for the task to be completed.
6. Say, *"Okay, I understand."*
7. Do the task immediately.

8. Check back and ask if it is okay or if there is more that needs done to finish the task.

## How to Accept “NO” for an Answer

1. Make eye contact with the person.
2. Say, “*Okay.*” Don’t keep pushing or pressuring the person.
3. Calmly ask for a reason if you really don’t understand.
4. If you disagree, bring it up later but don’t continue the pressure now and don’t pressure again later. Just ask for help understanding the reason for no.

## How to Express Empathy and Understanding of Others

1. Listen closely to the other person’s words. Try to understand what they are feeling.
2. Express empathy by saying, “*I understand...*” or “*that must be really hard for you.*”
3. Don’t try to give advice or fix the problem. Just listen.
4. Reflect back the other person’s words by saying, “*It seems like you are saying...*”
5. Offer to help in practical ways.

## How to Apologize

1. Make eye contact with the person.
2. Use a serious, sincere tone of voice. Don’t pout or blame.
3. Begin by saying, “*I wanted to apologize for...*” or “*I’m sorry for...*”
4. Do not make excuses. Own your behavior.
5. Listen to what the other person has to say.
6. Offer to pay for or fix any damage done.

## How to Accept an Apology

1. Make eye contact with the person who is apologizing.
2. Listen to what they are saying.
3. Remain calm. Refrain from any sarcastic statements.
4. Thank the person for the apology. Say, “*Thanks for saying you’re sorry.*” or “*I accept your apology.*”