

Connecting Words with Pictures: Social Skills for School Success

Clarissa Willis, Ph. D.

cwillis@kaplanco.com

clarissa@clarissawillis.com

Social-Emotional Intelligence

- Social development covers the broad range of skills people use to relate to, play with, learn from, and teach others. Social skills are important for survival and for a good life.
- Healthy emotions allow people to express and constructively manage the full range of human feelings, to postpone gratification, to find constructive outlets for negative emotions, and to understand and appreciate how others feel. Healthy emotions lead to self satisfaction and joy.

Social Skills and Children with Special Needs

- Many preschoolers with disabilities demonstrate problems in their social interaction skills
- Compared to their typical peers, these children demonstrate lower rates of social initiations and responses and use less effective social strategies
- Preschoolers with special needs can improve their social competence with their peers in inclusive settings, however, especially when their teachers encourage positive social interactions between these children and their typical peers

The Social-Emotional Intelligence Model

Emotional Intelligence	Social Intelligence
Self-awareness	Social awareness Primal empathy Empathy accuracy Attunement Social cognition
Self-management	Relationship management Synchrony Self-presentation Influence Concern

Characteristics of Social-Emotional Intelligence

- Exhibits self confidence
- Expresses natural curiosity
- Makes thoughtful choices
- Exhibits self control (controls impulses, delays gratification)
- Relates to others (reads social cues)
- Knows feelings of others and expresses concern
- Communicates needs, desires and ideas
- Problems solves (negotiates and compromises)
- Employs calming strategies

How?

Experience wires the brain.

Repetition strengthens the wiring.

When?

Neurological wiring is chronological and non-linear.

There are fertile moments when positive experiences lead to optimum wiring.

Windows of Opportunity

Window	Wiring Opportunity	Greatest Enhancement
Emotional Intelligence Trust Impulse Control	0 - 48 months 0 -14 months 16 -48 months	4 - 8 years
Social Development Attachment Independence Cooperation	0 -48 months 0- 12 months 12-24 months 24-36 months	4 years to puberty
Thinking Skills Cause and Effect Problem-Solving	0 - 48 months 0 -16 months 16 - 48 months	4 years to puberty
Motor Development	0 - 24 months	2 years to puberty
Vision	0 -24 months	2 years to puberty
Reading Foundation Skills Early Sounds Vocabulary	0 - 24 months 4 - 8 months 0 - 24 months	2 - 7 years 8 mos. -10 yrs. 2-5 years

How this applies to children with special needs

- The windows of opportunity may occur at a later time chronologically
- The time frame itself may be shorter
- There may be a “Swiss Cheese” effect especially in children with autism spectrum disorder

Five Strategies for Developing Social-Emotional Intelligence

- ❖ Model
- ❖ Discuss
- ❖ Practice
- ❖ Acknowledge
- ❖ Reflect

Methods for inclusive settings

- environmental arrangements
- imitation of peers
- teacher prompts
- group affection activities
- positive teacher reinforcements
- peer-mediated interventions
- correspondence training

What:

Seven character traits (skills) are essential for school success.

Each of these skills are grounded in social and emotional intelligence.

Seven Key Ingredients of School Readiness

1. Confidence
2. Curiosity
3. Intentionality
4. Self-control
5. Relatedness
6. Capacity to communicate
7. Cooperativeness

Confidence

- **Challenge** children to the edge of their competency.
- **Balance** abilities and limitations.
- Keep physical space **cozy**.
- **Avoid** perfectionism.
- Provide opportunities for children to **practice** problem-solving. Embrace failure.
- Be **“fully present.”**
- Use **encouragement** as opposed to praise.

Use Encouragement instead of Praise

- Findings:

Extrinsic reward inhibits intrinsic motivation.

The brain functions optimally when stress is low and safe challenges are high.

- Applications:

- Eliminate the use of stickers and privilege rewards.
- Be honest and sincere with compliments.
- Encourage children to critique themselves.
- Avoid comparisons.
- Focus on process instead of product.

Negative Impacts of Praise

- Too much praise burdens—it pressures children to live up to your expectations.
- Value - driven praise results in children equating good with pleasing others and bad with displeasing others. We raise people-pleasers instead of thinkers.
- If you praise for only completed tasks, you send a message that effort doesn't matter.
- Bottom line: You can't build confidence from the outside.

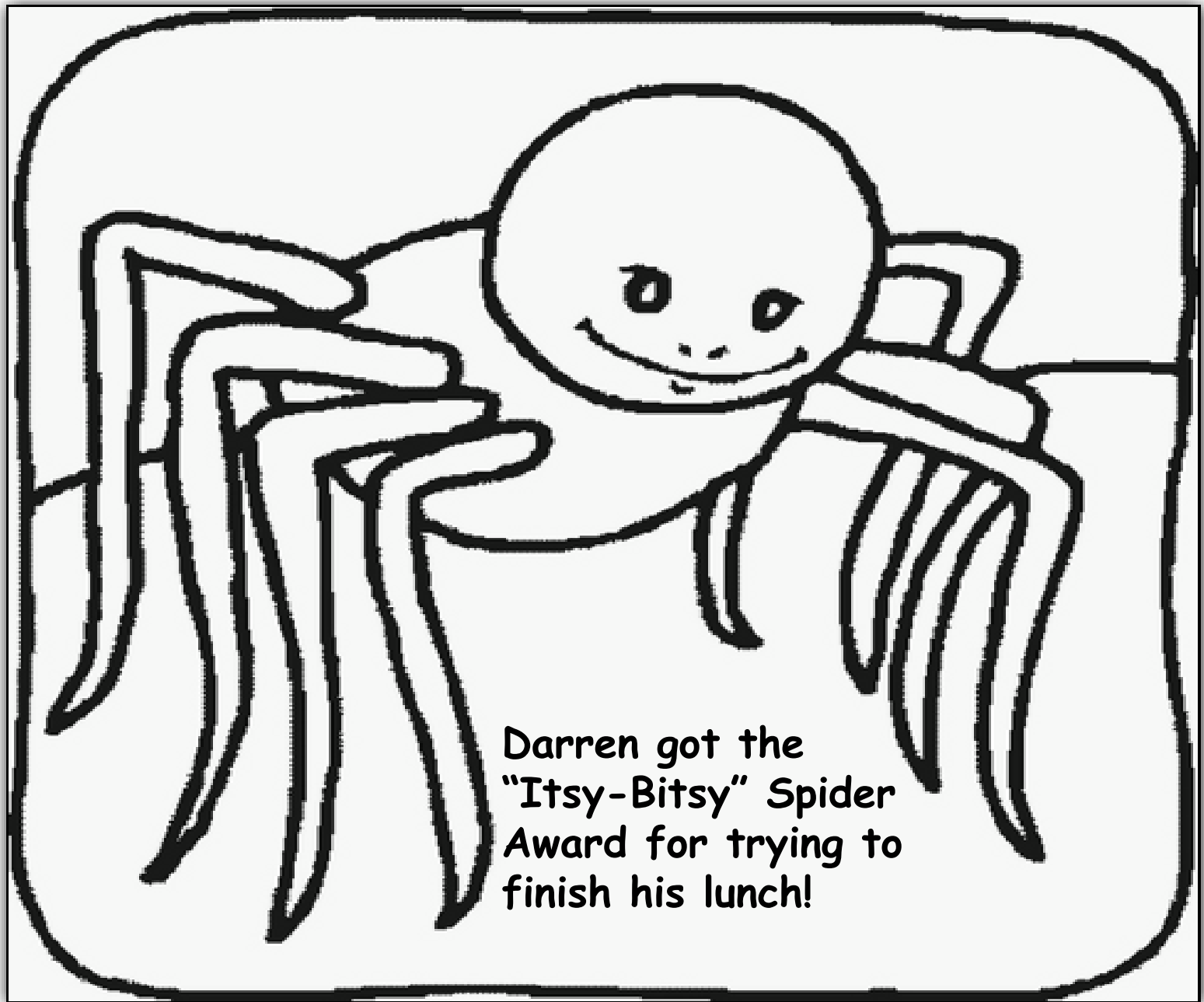
Praise Versus Encouragement

- Children with special needs often experience failure to the point they are unmotivated to try new activities
- Their lack of social-emotional development combined with their limited repertoire of generalization strategies can result in repeated the same behavior over and over.

Encouragement Strategies

Notice, Acknowledge, and Appreciate

- Notice and describe behavior
“Look at you. You finished the puzzle. That took determination.”
“You did it. You came down the slide feet first and landed right in my arms.”
- Link actions to enjoyment and satisfaction instead of a tangible reward.
- Use encouragement especially when children make a poor choice.
“I feel confident that you will find a better way.”



Darren got the
"Itsy-Bitsy" Spider
Award for trying to
finish his lunch!

R

Repeat what you say and do

O

Offer opportunities for choice making and taking a turn

C

Cue the child what to do next

K

Keep it fun! Keep it going!

What's my Problem?

What are my Alternatives?



What strategy will best meet my needs?

What resources do I have?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What resources do I need?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What steps will complete my strategy?

Implement Strategy

How can I check my decision?

Books about Problem-solving

- *Imogene's Antlers* by David Small
- *Swimmy* by Leo Lionni
- *Domino* by Claire Masurel
- *Pickle-Chiffon Pie* by Roger Bradfield
- *Mr. Pine's Purple House* by Leonard Kessler
- *Benjamin Dilley's Thirsty Camel* by Roger Bradfield
- *Mouse Paint* by Ellen Stoll Walsh
- *Ant Attack!* by Ann James
- *The Doorbell Rang* by Pat Hutchins

Curiosity

- Set up an **environment** that allows children to “fall in love” with their world. Keep the environment safe for exploration.
- Accept the **non-traditional**.
- Consider ways to offer **novelty**.
- Provide **interesting** materials for exploration.
- Ask “what if” and other **open-ended** questions.
- **Redefine** failure—with children, it is called “determination.”
- Stimulate **imagination**. Encourage **dreams**.
- Follow the **interest** of the children.
- Use **literature** to simulate curiosity.

Curiosity	results in	Exploration
Exploration	results in	Discovery
Discovery	results in	Pleasure
Pleasure	results in	Repetition
Repetition	results in	Mastery
Mastery	results in	New Skills
New Skills	results in	Confidence
Confidence	results in	Self esteem
Self esteem	results in	Sense of Security
Security	results in	More Exploration

Perry, Bruce (2001) "Curiosity: The Fuel of Development." *Early Childhood Today*. NY, Scholastic.

Did Curiosity Kill the Cat?

What Kills Curiosity?

- Fear
- Disapproval
- Absence of inspiration opportunity

Encouraging Curiosity and Children with Special Needs

- Use choice making as an opportunity
- Limit choices to two (no more than three)
- Start out with dissimilar choices and work

Strategy: Choice making

- **Choice-making occurs when a child selects an item or activity from among two or more options.**
- **Choice-making occurs in all facets of our lives. We make choices between preferred alternatives (chocolate or strawberry ice cream) as well as less preferred alternatives (mow the lawn or paint the garage door).**
- **Choice-making offers control and empowerment to all individuals but may be particularly important for some individuals while engaged in socially-motivated challenging behavior.**
- **Choices can be positive reinforcers or actual tasks to be performed.**



Books that Encourage Curiosity

- *Curious George* by Hey A. Ray
- *How Come?* by Kathy Wollard
- *Why?* by Catherine Ripley
- *In the Forest* by Pierre de Hugo
- *Edward the Emu* by Sheena Knowles
- *The Rainbow Mystery* by Jennifer Dussling
- *The Nose Knows* by Ellen Weis
- *What's that Sound?* by Mary Lawrence

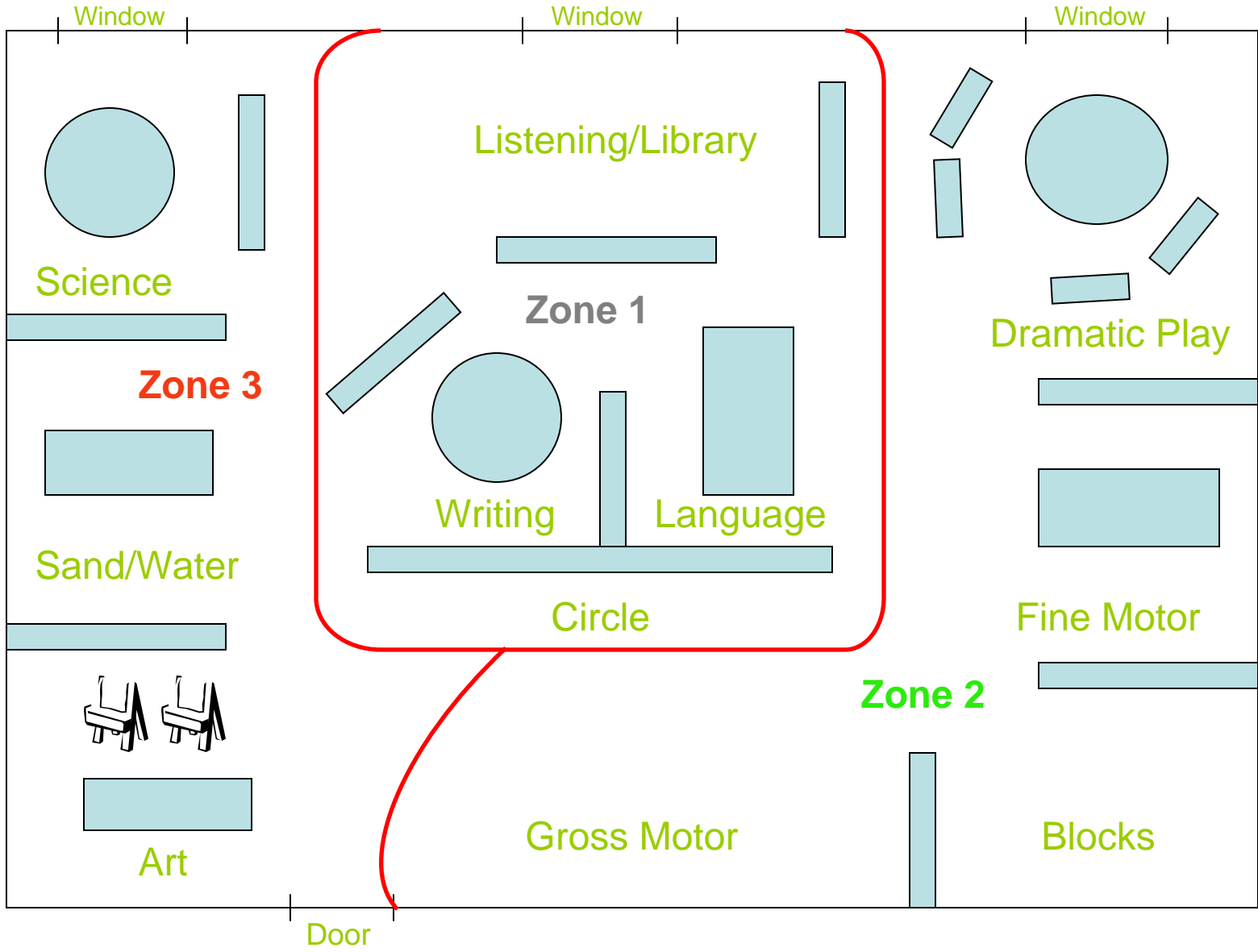
Intentionality

- Offer **choices**. Teach children how to make **thoughtful choices**.
- Discuss the **difference** in what we want to do and doing the right thing.
- Use the choices that characters in **literature** make as a springboard for discussion.
- Allow **time** for focusing and reflecting.
- Encourage **persistence** and **commitment**. Insist on **finishing** what is started.
- Encourage **internal** satisfaction.



Books about Intentionality

- *Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman
- *The Little Red Hen* (traditional)
- *Itsy Bitsy Spider* by Iza Trapani
- *Dream Carver* by Diane Cohn
- *A Chair for My Mother* by Vera Williams
- *Something for Me* by Vera Williams
- *The Little Painter of Sabana Grande* by Patricia Markum
- *The Little Engine that Could* by Watty Piper



Self-Control

- Ensure **physical needs** are met.
- Use **clear**, simple rules. Hold boundaries.
- Allow children to **help** set the rules.
- Be **consistent**. Be **firm**. Be **fair**.
- Provide opportunities to **practice** patience.
- Have **appropriate** expectations.
- Use **natural** and **logical consequences** for inappropriate behavior.
- **Ignore** attention-getting behaviors.
- Offer limited **choices**.
- Avoid **over-stimulation**.
- Read **books** about self-control.

Self Control & Children with Special Needs

- Applications for children with autism spectrum disorder
 - Calming strategies
 - Looking at sensory needs
 - Working with the child's interest level

Goals of Misbehavior

Goal	Child's Perspective	Adult's Response	Strategies for Change
Attention	I am only important when I am being noticed.	Annoyed	Ignore when possible. Give unexpected attention. Give attention to positive behavior.
Power	I only count when I am in control.	Provoked Angry	Withdraw from conflict. Redirect constructively when calm. Establish equity.
Defiance	No one likes me. I hurt. I feel better when I hurt others.	Hurt	Maintain order with minimum restraint. Build trust. Check for fairness. Avoid retaliation.
Display of inadequacy	I can't do anything right so I won't do anything at all.	Hopeless Discouraged	Be patient. Encourage any effort. Have faith in the child. Refrain from pity or criticism.

Behavior

Form

Function

Avoid/Escape

Socially motivated

Non-socially motivated

Gain Access

Socially Motivated

Non-Socially motivated

Books about Self-Control

- *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak
- *Be Brown* by Barbara Bottner
- *Harry the Dirty Dog* by Gene Zion
- *Noisy Nora* by Rosemary Wells
- *Julius, the Baby of the World* by Kevin Henkes

Relatedness

- **Discuss** feelings: in stories, in class situations and in songs.
- Express **your** feelings as appropriate.
- Teach basic rules of **politeness**.
- Teach **verbal clues**.
- Teach strategies for **negotiating** and **resolving** conflicts (Cooperative-Problem Solving).
- Model **empathy**. Teach empathy. **Praise** empathy.
- Encourage an **environment** that reflects the classroom as a community of learners.
- Read **books** about relationships.

Five Important Factors

1. All children can participate.
2. Children learn best in natural environments with typically developing peers.
3. Each child is unique a child might exhibit one or more of these characteristics of a disability.
4. Always put the child first
5. Parents know all about what their child **can't do**, tell them about the things he can do!

Books about Relatedness

- *Chester's Way* by Kevin Henkes
- *Matthew and Tilly* by Rebecca Jones
- *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes
- *Best Friends* by Steven Kellogg
- *Old Henry* by Joan Blos
- *That's What Friends Are For* by Florence Heidi
- *That's What Friends Do* by Kathryn Cave
- *The Lion and the Mouse* (Aesop fable)

Capacity to Communicate

- Build **trust**.
- **Listen** with interest. Be “fully present.”
- Expand **vocabulary**. Strive for a common vocabulary base.
- Encourage **appropriate language**.
- Treat Show and Tell like **oral reporting**.
- Use **sign language** as a beginning with toddlers, reluctant speakers or second language speakers.
- **Model** vocabulary that shows compassion and empathy.
- Read **books** about communication.

Aspects of Communication

Communication	Definition	Example
Form	A way to communicate	Crying, talking, gestures, sign language, pointing to picture cards
Function	A reason to communicate	Hungry, want something, need something or someone, need attention
Content	Something to communicate about	The child needs experiences and opportunities to explore, so that he will have something to communicate about

Books about Communication

- *Marti and the Mango* by Daniel Moreton
- *The King who Rained* by Fred Gynne
- *Epossumondas* by Coleen Salley
- *Tops and Bottoms* by Janet Stevens
- *The Gardner* by Sarah Stewart
- *Dear Mr. Blueberry* by Simon James
- *The Old Man and the Door* by Joe Cepeda

Cooperativeness

- Play **games** that promote cooperative effort.
- **Participate** in community and school events.
- Work on **class projects**.
- Encourage children's **friendships**.
- Encourage **sharing and taking turns**.
- Use **peer tutoring** and the **buddy system**.
- Model: Say "**please**" and "**thank-you**."
- Lend a **helping hand**.
- Read **stories** that focus on cooperation.

Collaboration

- The purpose of a collaboration is to increase the probability that a task will be completed.



Books about Cooperativeness

- *The Great Big Enormous Turnip* by Alexei Tolstoy
- *Stone Soup* by Heather Forest
- *The Little Red Hen* (traditional)
- *Fox Tale Soup* by Tony Bonning
- *The Blind Men and the Elephant* by Karen Backstein
- *Eight Animals Bake a Cake* by Susan Middleton Elya

Whether a child enters kindergarten the first day of school ready to learn depends greatly on his or her level of social-emotional maturity.

Daniel Goleman

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