

## Helping Children Navigate the Social Skills Jungle

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### Stages of Social Development

Birth to 6 years	Wants the facts.	Asking What and How
6 to 12 years	Wants the reasons.	Asking Why?
12 to 15 years	Wants to know: Who am I?	Asking When and Where?
15 to 18 years	Wants to know: Where do I belong?	

Children learn social skills most effectively through our modeling appropriate behavior and our giving direct instruction to build essential skills.

### **Any unnecessary help is a hindrance to a child's development.**

Don't let your child be shy, bossy, socially awkward, or (fill in the blank).

Don't make excuses for your child.

### **Dr. Mel Levine says we need to be our children's "mindwatchers".**

Where our children meet obstacles in their growth we need to help them get around those obstacles.

### **What skills do our children need to have to healthy relationships?**

**Manners:** What to do with your hands (from *manus*, hand in Latin)

Our children need to be good at doing things in order to help themselves and others.

We model and we give direct instruction.

We assess skills.

**Values:** Make clear what we find to be the important way to live our lives.

Use the phrase, *in our family, we..., in our classroom we..., in our school, we....*

**Rules:** Dale Carnegie in *How to Make Friends and Influence People* gives us some rules.

1. Don't criticize, condemn, or complain.
2. Give honest appreciation.
3. Arouse in others an eager want
4. Become genuinely interested in other people.
5. Smile.
6. Remember that a person's name is the sweetest sound in the world.
7. Be a good listener. Encourage others to talk about themselves.
8. Talk in terms of the other person's interests.
9. Make the other person feel important and do it sincerely.

What is the one communication skill that we can help our children develop in order to have a lifetime of healthy relationships?

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*I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve.*

Albert Schweitzer

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### **Resources:**

Carnegie, Dale. *How to Make Friends and Influence People*. 1937. Simon & Schuster; Reissue edition (2009)

Glennon, Will. *200 Ways to Raise a Boy's Emotional Intelligence*. Canari Press. (2000).

Levine, Mel. *A Mind At A Time*. Educators Publishing Service. (1992).

Montessori, Maria. *The Absorbent Mind*. 1949. Clio Press. (1997)

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Maren Schmidt writes Kids Talk, a weekly syndicated newspaper column on child development. She is the author of *Understanding Montessori: A Guide for Parents* and *Building Cathedrals Not Walls*. Maren founded a Montessori school and holds teaching credentials from the Association Montessori Internationale with a M.Ed. from Loyola College in Maryland. She has worked with children and families for over 25 years and currently spends her time writing and giving workshops across the United States.

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