

MORE INFO?

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The skills listed below all work toward what you might have heard called 'perspective taking' or 'theory of mind.' These foundation skills assist us to learn and understand that people might be **interesting** and that their actions have **intentions**. This is vital to learning, exploration, group cohesion and functioning in society.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL SKILLS

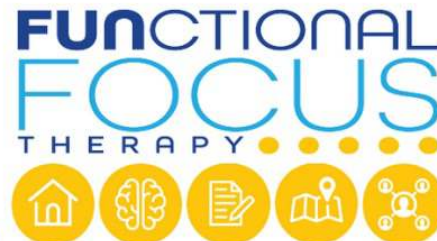
The building blocks of social skills, what to look out for and how to support.

Speaking of social....



We use our facebook and instagram to connect with our broader community.

Like, follow, comment or share our journey and lets get social!



SOCIAL ORIENTING AND REFERENCING

Orienting is looking toward other people for the purpose of being interested in what they may be doing. Social referencing is 'checking in' with those around us to gauge how to behave/proceed/etc. Both skills are really important foundations for realising that people's faces and bodies communicate a lot to us.

JOINT ATTENTION AND IMITATION

Joint attention is the act of connecting what you are thinking about (seeing, hearing, feeling, remembering, etc), with another/others for the social purpose of sharing the moment with them. Imitation is copying the actions of others. Imitation allows us to learn new skills and practice cultural norms. It also plays a part in developing a sense of self.

EMOTIONAL ATTUNEMENT AND EXPRESSION

Emotional attunement refers to the skill of connecting our emotional states to those around us. This allows us to share moments more deeply at an implicit level. It also allows us to learn contextual norms and helps us 'figure out' how to act among others. Regarding expression, we need to be able to portray a range of emotions, at varying intensities, to demonstrate our own emotional state to others.



ADJUSTING BEHAVIOUR TO COORDINATE WITH OTHERS

Sometimes called 'cooperative actions' this skill is all about behaving in a way that is **coordinated with others**. This can be doing the same thing for a common goal (e.g. lifting a heavy table at the same time) or doing different things for the same goal (e.g. holding a cup steady while someone pours in juice). We can also adjust our behaviour based on what we think others are intending such as holding a door open for them for moving your legs in a stadium so they can walk past

TURN TAKING

Turn taking is the natural, spontaneous back-and-forth of speech, gestures and sharing of ideas with others. This is different to explicitly teaching how to take turns in a game etc.



WHAT DIFFICULTY MAY PRESENT LIKE

As a social-species, social skill differences can have pervasive and life long impacts. These can include:

- Building and maintaining relationships with peers.
- Anxiety toward family gatherings.
- Over-reliance on explicit instructions.
- An apparent need for routine.
- Difficulties at school or work (including finding employment).
- A desire to be alone.
- Engagement in risky and/or illegal behaviours.
- + more.

HOW TO SUPPORT

We can give people opportunities to explore, understand or develop their social foundation skills by:

- Allowing time for social consideration to occur (not being so focused on the outcome).
- Use changes in affect (emotional expression) and/or create sounds within your environment to garner interest toward you.
- Spend time using large and obvious gestures allowing the person time to 'figure out your intention'.
- Use sounds and general words (with gestures before giving explicit instructions).
- Remain in back-and-forth interactions for long periods of time. Bring in changes slowly.