



Rosario Counseling & Associates

Let's Get Social!

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Socialization provides:

- Quality face to face interaction
- Communication skills – nonverbal and verbal
- Ability to navigate a variety of social interactions
- Opportunity for children to make friends by the ability to share feelings

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Challenges with Socialization and Technology

Today's technology offers multiple venues for interaction and communication with others, particularly for teenagers. Research suggests that people who highly rely upon the internet for social networking tend to be lonely and lack the social and emotional skills characteristic of high emotional intelligence (Engelberg & Sjoberg, 2004). The Pew Research Center (2011) found that the average teen (ages 12-17) texts 60-100 messages per day. Here are some practical ways in which parents can help their children enhance social skills (adapted from Mize & Abell):

- **Provide your child with multiple opportunities to interact with their peers** – Examples include frequent play dates, extracurricular activities, and team sports.
- **Play with your child on their "level"** –Children whose parents frequently play with them have more advanced social skills and get along better with peers.
- **Frequently talk with your child about social relationships and values** – This provides open dialogue for problem solving.
- **Reflect a positive, resilient attitude toward social setbacks** – Offer positive, constructive statements to encourage your child to take an optimistic view of others.
- **Intervene when necessary, but let older children work out problems themselves when possible** – As children get older, they benefit from trying to work things out during play on their own.

Regardless of the above proactive approaches, some individuals simply struggle with social skills. Preschoolers who struggle may display no eye contact, avoidance of others, little emotional or physical contact, rejection by peers, and no attempts at communication with either gestures or sounds. Older children, adolescents, and adults who have social skills deficits often pursue solitary activities, seem disconnected from others, are unsuccessful at social attempts, avoid interaction with others, have few or no friends, don't follow unspoken social rules (standing too closely), and often experience anxiety and panic in social settings

Social skills are like any other skill—they can be learned! Whether you struggle with social skills personally, or have a child who is struggling, Rosario Counseling & Associates can help. We will work together on mastering basic interaction skills, conversation, building and maintaining healthy relationships, understanding empathy, and conflict resolution skills. To schedule an appointment please call 919-649-5882.

Engelberg & Sjoberg, 2004. *Internet Use, Social Skills and Adjustment*. *CyberPsychology and Behavior*, 7(1): 41-47.
Mize & Abell, 1996. *Encouraging Social Skills in Young Children: Tips Teachers Can Share with Parents*. *Dimensions of Early Childhood* 24(3). Retrieved on May 13, 2012 from Pew Research Center Publications, 2012. *Teens, Smartphones, and Texting*. Retrieved on May 13, 2012 from <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2012/Teens-and-smartphones/Summary-of-findings.aspx>