

## **Sample Parent/Teacher Letter to Target Skills**

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s):

Your child/student will be receiving social skills training as indicated in their IEP or from previous meetings with you. Skill lessons will be targeted based specifically on the needs of your child. To better serve your youngster, we ask that you share your thoughts about what social skill goals you feel are priorities for your child this year.

To help you select important social skill goals, we ask that you consider the following two questions:

1. **What does my child do too much of on a daily basis that might interfere with social functioning?** Examples might include interrupting others, talking at others about their interests, imposing their wishes on others, avoiding work in an aggressive manner, insulting others, or handling disagreements in aggressive ways.
2. **What does my child not do enough of that might interfere with social functioning?** Examples might include not responding to peers, not asking for help when needed, not managing their hygiene or dress appropriately, and not initiating interaction with others.

For more ideas on possible social skill goals, please take a look at the attached social skill menu. Feel free to write in any skill issues that do not appear on the menu. Please select no more than 4 skill issues/goals to work on. Research shows that if we work on a small set of goals for long period of time, we will get better results than trying to work on too many goals in a short period of time. We look forward to your suggestions. Thank you for taking the time to help us serve your child better. Please return the bottom page in a sealed envelope to Jed Baker, Ph.D. at Millburn Middle School. Alternatively, you can call me at \_\_\_\_\_ to leave me a verbal message.

Thank You,

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_ Social skill goals or problems to address:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
Person Completing Form: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Social Skills Menu (ages 3-14)

From Social Skills Training (Baker, 2003)

(items in bold are ways to measure skill)

### Conversational Skills

1. Maintaining Appropriate Physical Distance from Others (“Don’t Be a Space Invader”) **Frequency**
2. Listening Position **Duration or Momentary Time Sampling**
3. Tone of Voice (Volume, Pace, Prosody: e.g., flat versus “sing-song” tone) **Time Sampling**
4. Greetings **Frequency or Response Ratio**
5. How and When to Interrupt **Frequency or Response Ratio**
6. Staying on Topic **Duration or Time Sampling**
7. Maintaining a Conversation **Duration or Time Sampling**
8. Taking Turns Talking **Duration or Time Sampling**
9. Starting a Conversation **Frequency or Response Ratio**
10. Joining a Conversation **Frequency or Response Ratio**
11. Ending a Conversation **Response Ratio**
12. Asking a Question When You Don’t Understand **Response Ratio**
13. Saying “I Don’t Know” **Response Ratio**
14. Introducing Yourself **Frequency or Response Ratio**
15. Getting to Know Someone New **Frequency or Response Ratio**
16. Introducing Topics of Interest **Frequency or Response Ratio**
17. Giving Background Information about What you are Saying **Response Ratio**
18. Shifting Topics **Response Ratio**
19. Talking Briefly **Response Ratio**
20. Editing Sensitive Topics (Avoiding topics that upset others) **Frequency or Time Sampling**
21. Complimenting **Frequency or Response Ratio**

### Cooperative Play Skills

22. Initiating Play **Frequency or Response Ratio**
23. Joining In **Frequency or Response Ratio**
24. Compromising (Deciding What to Play) **Frequency or Response Ratio**
25. Sharing **Frequency or Response Ratio**
26. Taking Turns **Duration or Response Ratio**
27. Playing a Game **Duration or Response Ratio**
28. Dealing with Losing **Response Ratio**
29. Dealing with Winning **Response Ratio**
30. Ending a Play Activity **Response Ratio**

### Friendship Management

31. Informal Versus Formal Behavior—(when and with whom to be casual versus formal) **Response Ratio or Time Sampling**
32. Respecting Personal Boundaries **Frequency or Response Ratio**
33. Facts versus Opinions (Respecting Others' Opinions) **Response Ratio**
34. Sharing Your Friend **Response Ratio**
35. Getting Attention in Positive Ways **Frequency or Response Ratio**
36. Don't Be the "Rule Police" **Frequency or Response Ratio**
37. Offering Help **Frequency or Response Ratio**
38. Keeping Secrets and When to "Tell" **Frequency or Response Ratio**
39. Modesty (Do Not Brag) **Frequency or Response Ratio**
40. Asking Someone Out on a Date **Frequency or Response Ratio**
41. Appropriate Touch **Frequency or Response Ratio**
42. Dealing with Peer Pressure **Response Ratio**
43. Dealing with Rumors **Response Ratio**
44. Calling Someone on the Telephone **Frequency or Response Ratio**
45. Answering the Telephone **Frequency or Response Ratio**

### Emotion Management Skills

#### Self-Regulation

46. Recognizing Feelings **Frequency or Response Ratio**
47. Keeping Calm **Frequency or Response Ratio**
48. Problem Solving **Frequency or Response Ratio**
49. Talking to Others When Upset **Frequency or Response Ratio**
50. Dealing with Family and Relationship Problems **Response Ratio**
51. Understanding and Dealing with Anger **Frequency or Response Ratio**
52. Dealing with Making a Mistake **Response Ratio**
53. Trying When Work Is Hard **Response Ratio**
54. Trying Something New **Response Ratio**

#### Empathy

55. Showing Understanding **Frequency or Response Ratio**
56. Cheering up a Friend **Response Ratio**

#### Conflict Management

57. Asserting Yourself **Frequency or Response Ratio**
58. Accepting No for an Answer **Response Ratio**
59. Dealing with Teasing (and Acts of Aggression) **Response Ratio**
60. Dealing with Being Left Out **Response Ratio**
61. Avoiding Being "Set Up" **Response Ratio**
62. Giving Criticism (in a Positive Way) **Response Ratio**
63. Accepting Criticism **Response Ratio**
64. Having a Respectful Attitude **Frequency or Time Sampling**

Social Skill Menu for age 14 through adulthood  
From Preparing for Life (Baker, 2005)

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Person Completing Form: \_\_\_\_\_

**Non-verbal behaviors**

1. Welcome versus unwelcome
2. Interest versus boredom
3. Sarcasm versus genuine expressions
4. Listening position
5. Respect personal space and others' belongings
6. Personal hygiene
7. Dealing with odd motor mannerisms.

**Dealing with anger/frustration**

8. Understanding your anger
9. Identifying triggers to your anger
10. Altering the triggers to your anger
11. Better ways to think about and deal with the triggers to your anger
12. Calming when angry
13. Talking versus acting out feelings
14. Keeping a daily journal of how you manage your anger

**Dealing with anxiety**

15. Dealing with anxiety and fear: Understanding the alarm reaction
16. Dealing with unpleasant intrusive thoughts and compulsive behaviors
17. Dealing with social fears
18. Dealing with new feared situations

**Conversation**

19. Greetings
20. Introducing yourself and others
21. Interrupting
22. Maintaining and joining a conversation
23. Starting Conversations with people you know
24. Getting to know someone new
25. Poster summary of starting and maintaining conversations
26. Conversation repair strategies
27. Shifting topics
28. Sensitivity to the listener's interest/Don't talk too long
29. Ending conversations
30. Answering the telephone
31. Calling a friend on the telephone

**Building and maintaining friendships (and dealing with roommates)**

32. Where to find friends
33. Don't try too hard too soon
34. Sharing friends
35. Avoiding sensitive topics and insults
36. Complimenting

37. Respecting others' opinions
38. Don't be the rule police
39. Modesty
40. Dealing with peer pressure
41. Dealing with Rumors
42. Empathic Listening
43. Showing caring for others' feelings
44. Deepening friendships; sharing personal information
45. Conflict Resolution/Asserting yourself
46. Dealing with teasing
47. Dealing with losing
48. Getting attention in positive ways

#### **Dating**

49. Where to find a date
50. Asking someone out on a date
51. Reading the signals: when to pursue a romantic relationship
52. Sexual harassment
53. Do's and don'ts on a date
54. Communicating clearly to meet each other's needs

#### **Dealing with school and family demands**

55. Asking for reasonable modifications
56. Dealing with frustrating work
57. Accepting no or waiting for what you want
58. Asking nicely for what you want, negotiating and accepting no
59. Working cooperatively in a group
60. Dealing with mistakes and correction
61. How to respectfully disagree with teachers, parents, or supervisors
62. Dealing with stressful living situations

#### **Employment skills**

63. Choosing job or career directions
64. Conducting a job search
65. Writing a resume and cover letters
66. Scripts for networking and job inquiries
67. Interview skills and disclosing about a disability
68. Handling Rejection
69. Do's and Don'ts to maintain employment
70. Responding to criticism, accusations and complaints
71. Exiting a job

#### **Money Matters**

72. Managing Money

#### **Preparing for Emergencies**

73. Dealing with emergencies and emergency workers (including police, firemen, and hospital workers)

#### **Transportation**

74. Negotiating public and private transportation

## Sample Parent Letter to Help Parents Generalize Skill Goals

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s):

Based on your input, teacher feedback, and our observations, we have prioritized a small set of social skills for your child to work on for the first part of this school year. Those skills are enclosed on page 2 of this letter. Research shows that if we work on a small set of goals for long period of time, we will get better results than trying to work on too many goals in a short period of time.

To help your child use these skills, we ask that you:

1. **Remind your child before school each day** to use the skills during the day by reading them over with him or her.
2. **Review each day after school** how well he or she was able to use the skills. Praise your child for using the skills. If he or she was unable to perform the skills, try to determine what got in the way.

Thank you for taking the time to help us serve your child better. If you have any questions you can call me at \_\_\_\_\_ or email me at [jandbbaker@aol.com](mailto:jandbbaker@aol.com).

Thank You,

## Sample Memo to Teachers to help generalize skills

YOUR STUDENT \_\_\_\_\_ IS WORKING ON THE  
FOLLOWING SKILLS IN OUR SOCIAL SKILLS SESSIONS:

1.

2.

3.

4.

IF YOU SEE HIM/HER DO

\_\_\_\_\_, YOU CAN REMIND

HIM/HER TO \_\_\_\_\_.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CALL OR EMAIL ME  
AT \_\_\_\_\_.

## Sample Permission Letter For Parents of Peer Buddies

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s):

We are offering students in your class the opportunity to be a special peer buddy in their school. Peer buddies will help play with other students who maybe shy or need help learning to play with peers. Your child's participation would involve once or twice a month acting as a coach or buddy during playtime for another student.

The benefit to your child may be both enhanced self-esteem and social skill development. We find most students who take an active role in helping to teach social skills become more socially skilled themselves.

Participation is voluntary and space is limited, so students will have to take turns being a peer buddy. If you would like your child to participate, please sign the permission slip below.

Please feel free to call me at \_\_\_\_\_ if you have questions.

Sincerely,

---

### Permission Form

I agree to have my child \_\_\_\_\_ participate in the peer leader program during the 2007/2008 school year.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Please sign here



## Skill Rating Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Based on your observations, rate each student's use of the following skills according to the scale below:

- 1 = Student **never** uses the skill
- 2 = Student **rarely** uses the skill
- 3 = Student **sometimes** uses the skill
- 4 = Student **often** uses the skill
- 5 = Student **almost always** uses the skill

Skills	Dates			

## Social Skills Action Plan (Prepared by Jed Baker, Ph.D.)

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Social Skill Goals.** (Assess what do they do too much of or too little of on a daily basis that interferes with social functioning. Use the social skill menu and get parental input to articulate no more than 3 goals to work on at a time.)

**Measurable Objectives/how will we measure progress?** (Do they have an aide who can take observable data, or will we rely on teacher, parent and student ratings.)

**Modifications** (to support new skills and reduce problem behaviors).

**Where will skills be taught?** (In the classroom, a pull out group, and/or individually.)

**How will skills be taught?** (Using structured learning, picture books, video modeling, social stories, cognitive picture rehearsal, ABA methods, incidentally.)

**How will skills be generalized?** (Primed through cue cards or behavior charts; coached at what point during the day; reviewed through charts, cue cards or self-monitoring.)

**Reward/Loss program to increase motivation?**

**Is peer sensitivity a part of the plan because they are isolated or teased? How will we implement?**

### Individual Daily Behavior Chart

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please rate this student in each target area for each period using the following scale:

- 1 = try harder
- 2 = good
- 3 = excellent

Target Behaviors	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5	Period 6	Period 7	Period 8
<b>Tries When Its Hard</b> Tries it, asks to watch first or asks for help, asks for break, tries again								
<b>Accepts Imperfection</b> Asks for help to learn from mistake								
<b>“Social Skill of the Week”</b>								

Average daily points earned during baseline: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Points needed to earn basic privileges: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Points in savings needed to earn special privileges: \_\_\_\_\_

### Instructions for Using Individual Behavior Chart

1. Each student has a daily behavior chart and gets rated for each period on three different target behaviors.
2. This chart follows the student from class to class and must be filled out by the student’s teacher or his or her aide each period.
3. During the first week of classes, the chart is to be filled out each day to get a one-week baseline. We can then determine the average daily points each student gets.
4. Based on the average daily points students receive, we can determine how many points to expect students to get each day. The average daily point value, plus or minus 5 points, can be set as the “points needed to get daily privileges.”
5. When a student gets the “points needed to get daily privileges,” he may receive daily privileges in school or at home. Daily privileges in school may include a homework pass, snack, and free time during the last period. At-home daily privileges may include TV, computer, and going outside to play.
6. Any points in excess of “points needed to get daily privileges” can go into savings for special privileges. Savings can be accumulated over weeks and months and might be recorded by a number posted on the refrigerator at home, a jar filled with pennies or any other means the student and parent may desire. Special privileges might include material items like music CDs, computer games, or going to movies.
7. If possible, this program should be coordinated with parents so students receive their daily and special privileges at home for points earned in school. If parents are willing to participate, the daily student rating must go home every day and be presented to parents in order for the child to receive their privileges. Student failure to give the sheet to the parent is the same as not getting enough points for privileges that day. This prevents the potential for a child to hide the ratings from a parent who wants to participate.

## References

- Attwood, T. (1998). Asperger's syndrome. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Baker, J. E. (2008). No more meltdowns. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons, Inc.
- Baker, J. E. (2007). Social skills training and frustration management. 4.5 hour DVD. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons, Inc.
- Baker, J. E. (2006). The social skills picture book for high school and beyond. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons, Inc.
- Baker, J. E. (2005). Preparing for life: The complete guide to transitioning to adulthood for those with Autism and Aspergers Syndrome. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons.
- Baker, J. E. (2001). Social skills picture books. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons, Inc.
- Baker, J. E. (2003). Social skills training for children and adolescents with Aspergers syndrome and related social communication disorders. Shawnee Mission, Kansas: AAPC.
- Bellini, S., Peters, J., Berner, L., & Hopf, A. (2007) A meta-analysis of school-based social skills interventions for children with autism spectrum disorders. *Remedial and Special Education*, Volume 28, number 3, p. 153-162.
- Bellini, S., Peters, J. (2008). Social skills training for youth with autism spectrum disorders. Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America, vol. 17, pgs 857-873.
- Goleman, D. (1997). Emotional intelligence. New York: Bantam Books.
- Greenspan, S. & Wieder, S. (1998). The child with special needs: Encouraging intellectual and emotional growth. Reading, MA: Addison Wesley Longman.
- Gray, C., Dutkiewicz, M., Fleck, C., Moore, L., Cain, S.L., Lindrup, A., Broek, E., Gray, J., & Gray, B. (Eds.). (1993). The social story book. Jenison, MI. Jenison Public Schools.
- Gresham, F.M., Sugai, G., & Horner, R. H. (2001). Interpreting outcomes of social skills training for students with high-incidence disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 67, 331-344.
- Grodon, J., & LeVasseur, P. (1995). Cognitive picture rehearsal: A system to teach self-control. In K. A. Quill (Ed.), Teaching children with autism (pp.287-306) Albany, NY: Delmar Publishing.
- Gutstein, S. E. & Sheely, R. K. (2002). Relationship development intervention with children, adolescents and adults: Social and emotional development activities for asperger syndrome, autism, PDD, and NLD. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers Ltd.
- Hughes, C. & Carter, E.W. (2008). Peer buddy programs for successful secondary school inclusion. Brookes Publishing, Baltimore.
- Hunsberger, M.B. (2001). Transitioning at its best. In *Families: The family support magazine*, Volume 10, Number 2, pages 1-4. Published by the New Jersey Developmental Disabilities Council.
- Klin, A., Volkmar, F. R. & Sparrow, S. (Eds.). (2000). Asperger syndrome. New York: Guilford Press.
- McGinnis, E., & Goldstein, A. (1997). Skillstreaming the elementary school child: New strategies and perspectives for teaching prosocial skills. Champaign, IL: Research Press.
- Mateson, J., Mateson, M., & Rivet, T. (2007). Social skills treatments for children with autism spectrum disorders: an overview. *Behavior Modification*; 31(5), pgs. 682-707.
- Wagner, S. (1998). Inclusive programming for elementary students with autism. Arlington, TX: Future Horizons, Inc.
- White, S., Keonig, K., Scahill, L. (2006). Social skills development in children with autism spectrum disorders: A review of the intervention research. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 37, 1858-1868.
- Evidence for PBS: <http://www.apbs.org/files/101007evidencebase4pbs.pdf>