

Social skills: definition and related behaviours

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Agenda

- Introduction to social skills;
 - Definition of social skills;
 - Classification of social skills;
 - Dimensions of social skills;
 - Social Skills dimensions related behaviors.

Introduction to social skills

Generally speaking, friendships in childhood are associated with positive outcomes and being disliked is associated with negative outcomes (Parker & Asher, 1987).

More specifically, social skills have been linked to academic achievement, psychological adjustment, coping skills, and employment (Miles & Stipek, 2006).

Research involving social behavior has included many definitional inconsistencies; thus there have been many attempts to define and conceptualize social behavior in children and adolescents



Social skills definition

By integrating the core concepts of several definitions of social skills, Merrell and Gimpel (1998) offer a comprehensive definition, suggesting that “... social skills are learned, composed of specific behaviors, include initiations and responses, maximize social reinforcement, are interactive and situation-specific, and can be specified as targets for intervention”.

This definition conceptualizes social skills as adaptive behaviors, whereas the failure to use social skills has been commonly described as social skill deficits. Additionally, behavioral excesses can have an effect on social skills deficits.



Social skills definition (2)

For example, some externalizing behavioral excesses (e.g., aggression) are often effective at gaining social reinforcement, and some internalizing behavioral excesses (e.g., depressive statements) can also be reinforced by social attention.

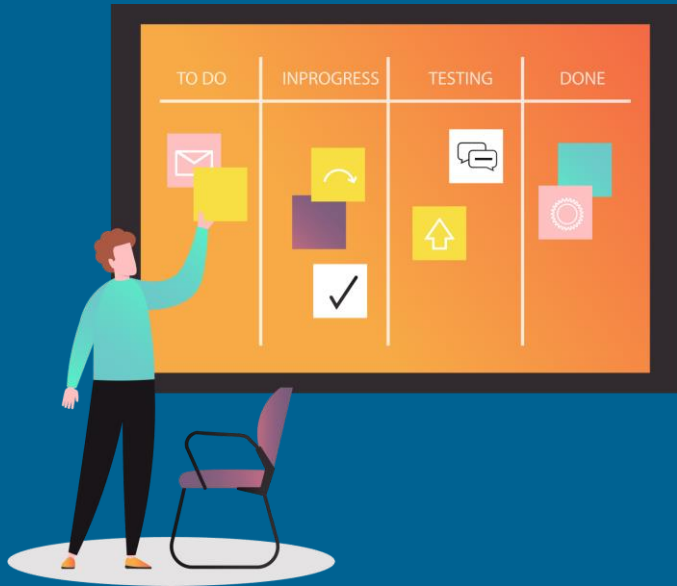
That is, social behaviors include both adaptive social skills and the other behaviors that influence social functioning.



Social skills definition (3)

An other approach to social skills involves describing social skills with behavioral terms. Using behavioral definitions, social skills are considered to be situation-specific behaviors that are more likely to be reinforced and less likely to be punished (Elliott & Gresham, 1987; Gresham, 1986)

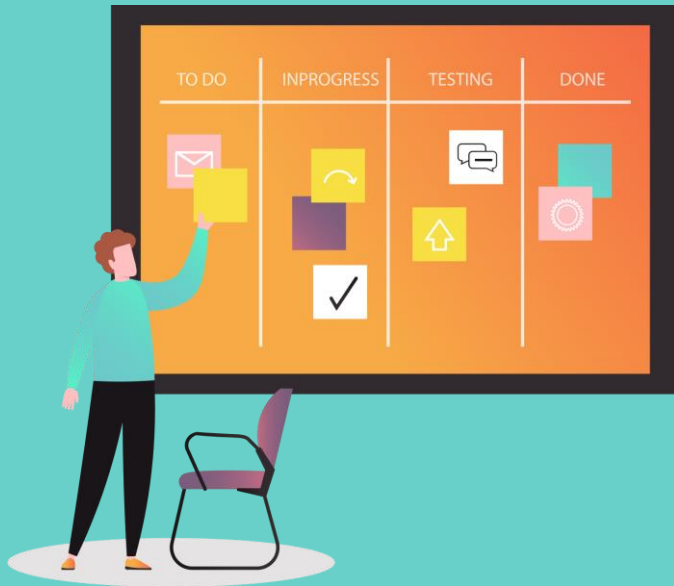
Walker, Colvin, and Ramsey (1995) add that social skills are behaviors that assist the child in coping with and adapting to increasingly demanding social environments.

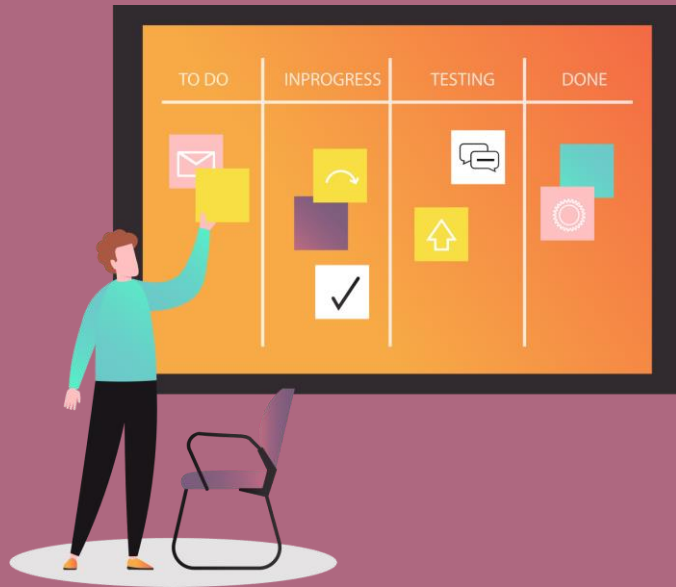


Social skills definition (4)

Melting these two perspectives, social skills can be considered as a set of behaviors externally-oriented, and involve features of the environment people interact with, like social outcomes, including acceptance by others, school adjustment and psychological adjustment.

This means considering the the social significance dimension of behaviors, at three different levels: social significance, social importance, and social acceptability (Wolf, 1978; Gresham, 1986).





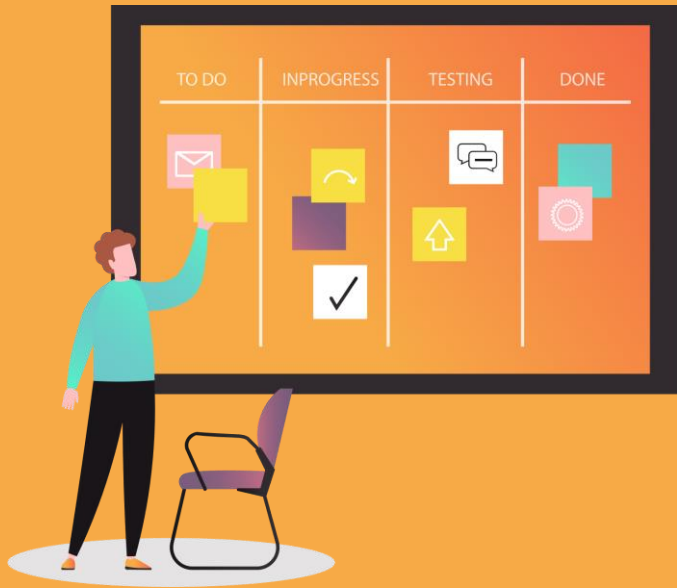
Social skills classification

One approach to classification of social skills focuses on the type of social skills deficit. Following a social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) of social skills deficits.

1. More specifically, Gresham (1998; 2002) describes three types of social skills deficits. First, acquisition deficits involve the lack of particular social skills. That is, in an acquisition deficit, the child does not know how to perform the targeted social skill, regardless of the social situation. This type of deficit is often described as a “can’t do” problem;

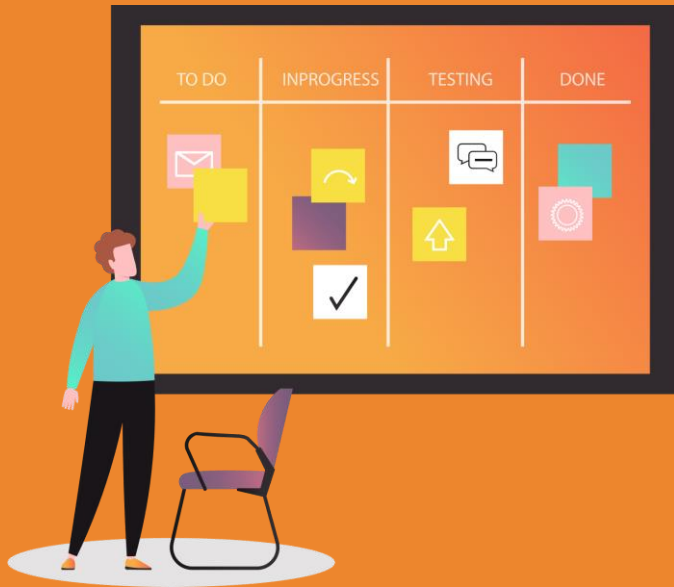
Social skills classification (2)

- 2. *Performance deficits*** involve knowing how to perform a social skill without exhibiting it appropriately. A performance deficit is often described as a “won’t do” problem. That is, the child is failing to exhibit the desired behavior in the appropriate situation despite the presence of the skill in the child’s behavioral repertoire

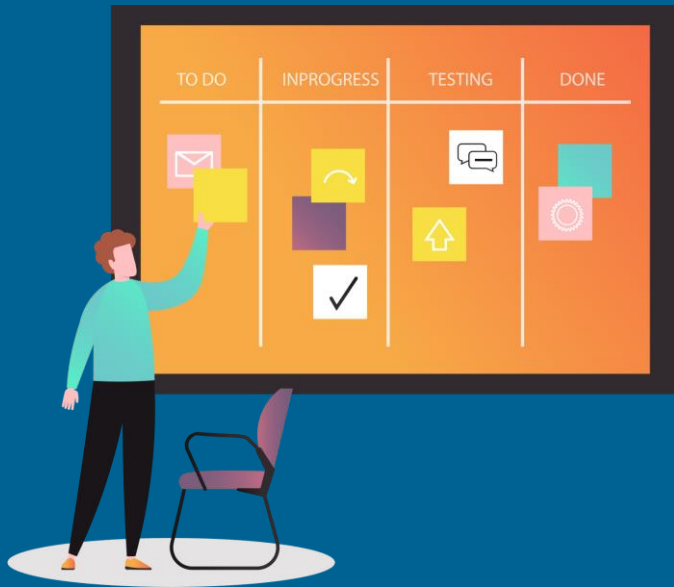


Social skills classification (2)

- 3. *Fluency deficits*** describe an acquired skill that is being used in an awkward manner. The child may have had insufficient modeling or opportunities to exhibit and practice the behavior.

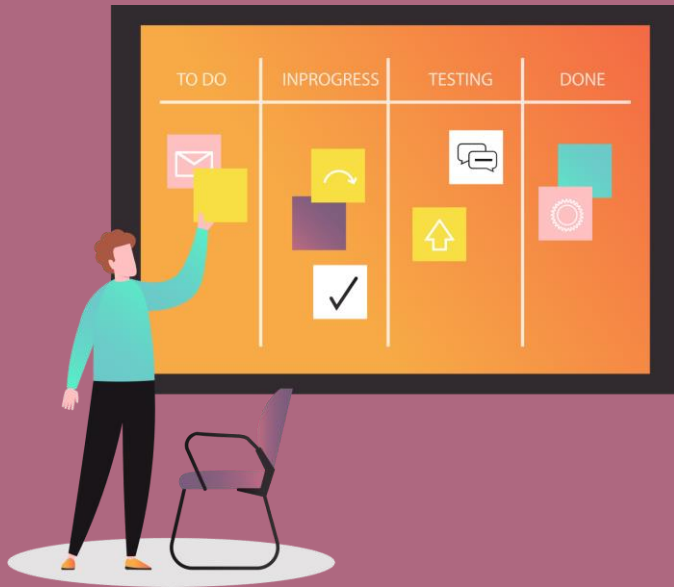


Social skills dimensions



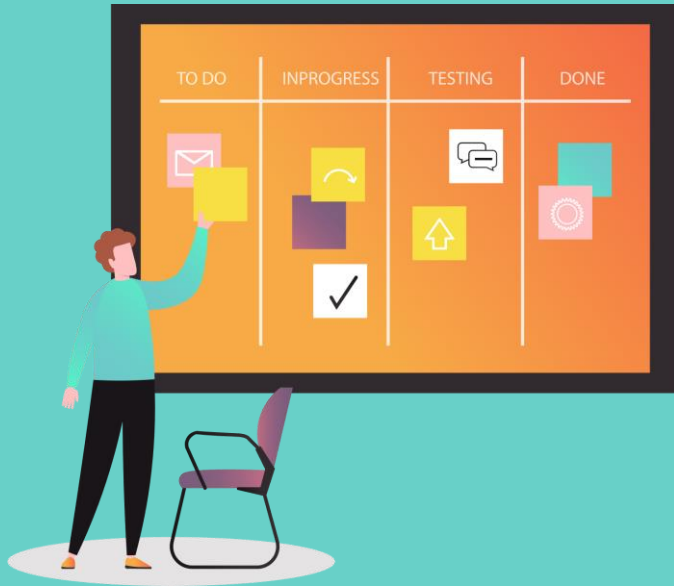
Dimensions	Skills
Peer Relations	Social interactions, Prosocial, Interpersonal, Peer preferred Social behavior, Empathy, Social participation, Sociability-Leadership, Peer reinforcement, General, Peer sociability.
Self Management	Self-Control, Social Convention, Social Independence, Social Competence, Social responsibility, Rules, Frustration Tolerance
Academic	School adjustment, Respect for Social rules at school, Task orientation, Academic responsibility, Classroom compliance, Good student
Compliance	Social Cooperation, Competence, Compliance
Assertion	Assertive social skills, Social initiation, social activator, Gutsy

Social Skills dimensions related behaviors



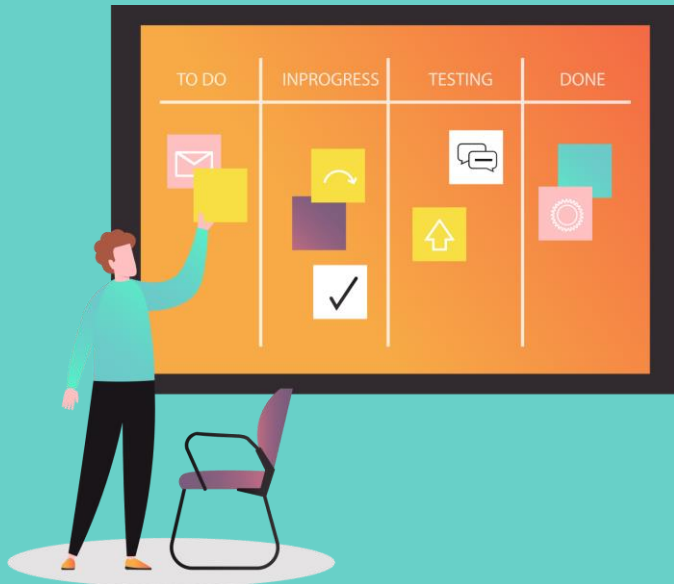
Dimensions	Behaviors
Peer relation skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compliments/praises/applauds peers;• Offers help or assistance to peers when needed;• Invite peers to play/interact;• Participates in discussions, talks with peers for extended periods;• Skillfully initiates or joins conversations with peers;• Has sense of humor, shares laughter with peers
Self Management skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follows rules, accepts imposed limits;• Receives criticism well, accept criticism from others;• Cooperates with others in a variety of situations;• Remains calm when problems arise, controls temper when angry;

Social Skills dimensions related behaviors



Dimensions	Behaviors
Academic skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accomplishes tasks/assignments independently, displays independent study skills;• Completes individual seatwork/assigned tasks;• Listens to and carries out teacher directions;• Produces work of acceptable quality for ability level, works up to potential;• Ignores peer distractions while working, functions well despite distractions;
Compliance skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follows instructions/directions;• Follows rules;• Appropriately uses free time;• Responds appropriately to constructive criticism or when corrected;• Finishes assignments, completes tasks.

Social Skills dimensions related behaviors



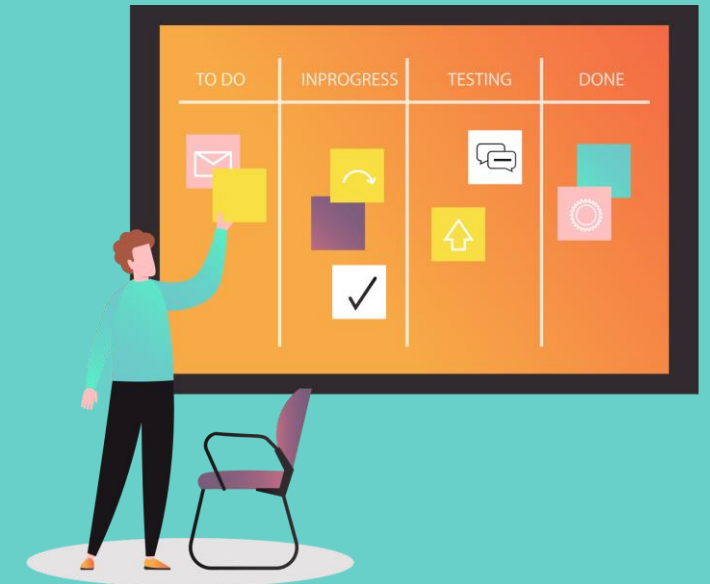
Dimensions	Behaviors
Assertion skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initiates conversations with others;• Acknowledges compliments;• Invites peers to play, invites others;• Says and/or does nice things for self, is self-confident;• Makes friends;• Questions unfair rules;• Introduces self to new people;• Appears confident with opposite sex;• Expresses feelings when wronged;• Appropriately joins ongoing activity/group .

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