

Module 4 Background Information – Engaging in Social Interactions

Social communication: the way people use _____ within social situations.

The three components of social interaction:

_____ - the ability to use language for different purposes, including greetings, conveying information, and requesting items.

_____ - the ability to change language depending on the context of a situation. Examples include the way you may talk to a baby vs. an adult, or talking to a close friend vs. a supervisor.

_____ - the ability to understand appropriate social rules and be receptive to certain verbal and non-verbal cues during social interaction. This can include taking turns in conversations or standing at an appropriate distance from others. These can differ between cultures and even families.

Where to Start:

Below is a list of common social communication skills. Utilize the list below to identify skills you may choose to work on with your child or come up with some of your own.

****Note:** this list is not exhaustive and does not apply to everyone! This is merely a general list of skills commonly identified by families of children with PWS or neurodevelopmental disabilities.

- The ability and willingness to initiate activities or conversations with other people
- Willingness to join an activity with other people
- The ability to continue a conversation without too many distractions
- The use of appropriate assertiveness to communicate needs, desires, beliefs, and ideas
- The use of appropriate greetings
- Understanding non-verbal signals from others
- Displaying appropriate non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions and eye contact
- Participating appropriately in group situations, not being too passive or aggressive
- Being aware of the personal space of others.

Below are the steps for building social communication skills, along with an example of how to implement them:

1. Pick one social communication skill to begin working on.

- Sarah has trouble making friends at school because she is unsure how to begin speaking to them. She wants to work on her ability to initiate conversations with other people.

2. Practice the skill at home with people your child feels comfortable with.

- Sarah's mom suggests that she ask her siblings about their day at school each day this week. Therefore, Sarah can practice this skill at home in a comfortable environment.

3. Practice the skill in another situation outside of the home.

- Sarah begins to implement the skills she learned with her siblings at home with her peers at school. She asks a classmate how her weekend was.

The PRETEND Program works on these skills by working through scenarios that incorporate these skills in pretend play. Below are a few story stems that may be helpful when working on practicing social skills during pretend play. Feel free to use the space below to come up with more of your own!

- A child's first day of school
- A child having a playdate
- _____
- _____
- _____