

# Raising Social Children

## Checklist & Resource Guide



Written & Illustrated By

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## Introduction



Donna Just, EdD

Dr. Just is a reading specialist who teaches graduate Exceptional Student Education courses at Nova Southeast University. She is a national presenter as well as teacher coach with a passion for innovation and best practices in education.

*Social development is such an important part of early childhood learning and development. A child's ability to love, trust, and be a good citizen all depend on healthy social development. Darleen Claire Wodzinski is committed to promoting healthy development of all children to ensure they have happy and productive lives. The work she does with The Orchard Human Services, Inc. is important for parents and educators who want the best for their children and students. This guide is simple to use, easy to understand, and practical to put into use.*

*Dr. Donna Just*

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## ***Chapter 1***

### **Introduction:**

### **Is Your Child Social Enough?**



**Parents may feel unsettled or uncertain when their child acts sad and withdrawn in social settings.**

Have you ever wondered whether your little one is social enough? Does your school age child pull back from others when in public? Is your child intensely shy or withdrawn? If so, parents are wise to question whether their child's socialization development is on track.

Socialization is a key developmental domain of childhood. While social skills and capacities are acquired over time, some children are particularly challenged in this area. When a child does struggle with socializing with others, parents and educators must step in to provide some valuable guidance and support. Even if your child's social development is right on track for chronological age, parents can help children expand and deepen their social skills through practical and common sense activities at home and in the community.

Use this simple **Socialization Checklist** to figure out if whether your child's social skills are developmentally appropriate based on chronological age. Following the checklist, explore effective ways to promote socialization no matter your child's age!

Social skills can be developed at any time in a child's life, but the early years are when the brain is experiencing a flurry of neural activity. Childhood is a window of opportunity when your child will be able to develop social skills and awareness much easier and faster than at any other time in life. The sooner children begin to establish developmentally appropriate social skills, the greater the likelihood that they will continue to function effectively as a social being who communicates, interacts, and cooperates with others. Social skills are fundamental to a child's capacity to become a lawful citizen and effective adult.

Children develop social skills at their own pace. Some skills may be early, other delayed, and still others at the anticipated time. Evaluating your child's developmental process is a wonderful way for parent to focus on what is completely unique about their child. Just as some children learn to walk at 10 months, others at 12, and

still others as 14 months, children will begin to demonstrate social competencies at various stages of early childhood development. Social development involves a wide variety of important skills that include noticing the emotions of others, reading facial expressions, matching behavior to a social situation, showing compassion, caring for others, language and communication, and non-verbal communication.

Parents who take their children's social development seriously are more likely to provide the enrichment and stimulation that will allow for healthy and effective social development. Benefits of social development include good communication, ability to follow rules, impulse control, good behavior, and excellent relationships. The first critical relationship a child has is with his or her parents, but quickly the little ones begin to expand their horizons and interact socially with others. Peek-a-boo is an early childhood game that promotes social development. This checklist and intervention guide will help parents provide enriching social stimulation to ensure that their child develops the most effective social capacities possible.



## ***Chapter 2***

# **Early Childhood Socialization Checklist**

**(For Toddlers to 5th Graders)**



Children with a delay or interruption of social development may be shy and reluctant to interact with peers, neighbors, and even family members.



**1) Does your child communicate important information through speech?**

Assess how well your child is able to ask you for things. Toddlers can typically make simple requests like "Milk please" while preschoolers and kindergarteners are able to ask questions like "Can I go outside for a while?". Elementary school age children should be able to communicate more complex ideas such as "I would like to sleep over at Mark's house on Friday night."

**2) Does your child look into people's faces as they speak with others?**

Next time you chat with your child, notice if s/he is looking into your eyes while you speak. Humans share a great deal of critical information through facial expressions. Looking at others while in conversation is a developmentally necessary task. Toddlers may only glance your way while preschoolers start to focus on others' faces while speaking. By elementary school, children should be able to respectfully gaze into people's eyes and read their facial expressions when communicating.

**3) Does your child correctly identify the emotions and moods of others?**

Pay attention when your child communicates with you or someone else during an emotional time, whether happy, sad, mad, or glad. Evaluate whether your child is correctly identifying the emotion or mood being expressed by the other person.

## ***Meet the Author***



Darleen Claire Wodzinski is an educational, child development, and mental health expert who specializes in brain-based and multiple intelligence-oriented psychoeducational strategies. In addition to writing and developing training programs, Darleen Claire is a Teacher Trainer, Parent Educator, and Clinical Mental Health

Counselor. She enjoys music, tennis, and roller skating with her husband, Steve, and their children and grandchildren. She is the Program Developer for [The Orchard Human Services, Inc.](http://TheOrchardHumanServices.com), which is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that supports healthy learning and development of children, families, and adults. All proceeds of book purchases go to support the nonprofit's good works.

Read more about Darleen Claire at her website

<http://DarleenClaire.com>



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