

# Promoting Social Success: A Curriculum for Children with Special Needs (AAC)

Gary Siperstein Ph.D., Emily Rickards M.A.

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"Students have become more aware of others' feelings."

"She has begun to socialize much more and initiate contact with her peers."

"One student was being teased by others... He was able to come up with different strategies for dealing with it."

These are the voices of real-life elementary school teachers who have used this research-based curriculum to reach a crucial goal: improving the social skills of students with mild to moderate disabilities and their peers. Field-tested with 400 elementary school students, this curriculum focuses on developing the cognitive skills behind appropriate social behavior rather than teaching children a set of specific behaviors to enact. Along with a thorough overview, teachers will get 66 activity-based lessons on social skills, organized around topics that build on each other. Students will learn to

- assess their own emotional states and develop new coping mechanisms
- identify and interpret social cues and other interpersonal dynamics
- set appropriate social goals, generate problem-solving strategies, and think about the consequences of their actions
- consider characteristics of good friendships and explore ways to improve their relationships

Each 30– to 45–minute lesson provides a list of materials, descriptions of the activities, variations for more advanced and less advanced students, and suggestions for reinforcing the skills throughout the school day. To help them implement the lessons effectively, teachers will also find student handouts, helpful illustrations, parent newsletters, and lists of additional children's books and videos. This inventive curriculum will enhance children's cognitive abilities to help them become socially successful — both inside and outside the classroom.



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