

# When the Going Gets Rough...

in Social Skills & Relationships

Preparing the child for situations  
in and outside the home

# Parents teaching children with social skill deficits need great WISDOM

*James 1:5*

*“If any of you lacks wisdom , he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.”*

- ◆ Wisdom to see the child as God sees him/her.
- ◆ Wisdom to determine between willful disobedience and social skill deficits
- ◆ Wisdom to know how to teach what is usually just acquired
- ◆ Wisdom to know when our own heart is not correctly responding to a child who is unable to perform
- ◆ Wisdom to cry out to God for help

## Parents teaching children with social skill deficits need great PATIENCE

### Proverbs 19:11

A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.

- ◆ Patience with yourself, your child & others who interact with him
- ◆ Patience to teach & then re-teach
- ◆ Patience to allow your child to do what would be faster for you to do yourself
- ◆ Patience to wait on God to produce the character of His Son in both you & your child

# Expect a Reward: His Love Poured into Your Heart

Romans 5: 3-5

...we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance, perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us.

# Children with Learning Difficulties...

**Show a significant difference between achievement in academic areas and overall intelligence.**

**Show difficulties in one or more of five general areas:  
spoken language, written language, arithmetic, reasoning, memory**

# Students who struggle in learning...

◆ Symptoms are not only seen in the child's academic performance, but can effect other life interactions.

Think of the ramifications of these symptoms:

slow processing speed,  
difficulty with time concepts,  
poor organizational skills,  
poor abstract reasoning,  
poor memory,  
awkwardness,  
hyperactivity,  
distractibility,  
impulsivity,  
low tolerance for frustration,  
etc...

## **Social skill deficits generally manifest in the following behaviors:**

- ◆ Dislikes independent activities
- ◆ Doing and/or saying inappropriate things
- ◆ Having no understanding of “rules” that govern social settings
- ◆ Not appropriately judging their own “body space”
- ◆ Very gullible; easily led by others
- ◆ Impulsive; no thought before action
- ◆ Inappropriate, often excessive display of affection
- ◆ Failure to understand consequences for behavior
- ◆ Difficulty making transitions; not able to adapt
- ◆ Poor ability to make decisions
- ◆ Have less tolerance for frustration and failure
- ◆ Use immature, less concise or meaningful language

# Behaviors have consequences

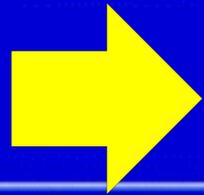
We are guilty of responding negatively!  
Although it is not their fault, these children:

- ◆ *Are more likely to be rejected or isolated by peers*
- ◆ *Are more often the target of criticism*
- ◆ *Are more likely to be judged negatively by adults*
- ◆ *Receive less affection from family*

# Not Meeting Expectations

## Discipline should be for correction and training

- ◆ These children often do not understand what is wrong concerning their behavior
- ◆ They are punished without learning what behavior needs to be corrected or how to correct it
- ◆ They begin to see themselves as “bad” because they perceive they are being punished without reason or ability to change



# Video Suggestion

Look for it in your library or ask your librarian to get it!

- ◆ *Learning Disabilities & Social Skills:*  
**Last One Picked...First One Picked On**  
with Richard Lavoie produced by PBS

—

Or go to the website: [www.ldonline.org](http://www.ldonline.org)

- ◆ Although its application is a school setting there is valuable info to apply in any arena

# **The biggest mistake we make is assuming social competence will be “caught.”**

**We must intentionally teach skills for social competence in order to avoid:**

- ◆ Anger & frustration in the child and those with whom he/she interacts.
- ◆ Embarrassment
- ◆ Blame
- ◆ Rejection
- ◆ Isolation & depression

# *Social Autopsy* as suggested by Richard Lavoie

## A Teaching Strategy

- ◆ The adult comes alongside the socially deficient child to examine a social error
- ◆ Purposing to improve social skills
- ◆ By questioning, one leads the child to discover and then analyze the errors they have made
- ◆ Finally, help the child design alternative behavioral strategies



# *Social Autopsy*



- ◆ **IT IS NOT:** \* a punishment
- ◆ \* negative
- ◆ \* “one time cure all”
- ◆ \* a lecture by the parent
- ◆ **IT IS:** \* a supportive, constructive strategy to foster social competence
- ◆ \* a problem solving technique
- ◆ \* an opportunity for the student to participate
- ◆ \* a provision of immediate feedback

# Think of a situation...

- ◆ Take 2 minutes to share with your neighbor a difficult behavior/situation you encountered this week. How did you handle the situation? How could you have performed a social autopsy?

# ★ *Social Autopsies* ★

Should be performed in both successful and unsuccessful situations

- ◆ To help the child pause and think
- ◆ To help the child practice
- ◆ To give immediate feedback
- ◆ To promote positive reinforcement
- ◆ To enable the child to see cause/effect

## Observe Your Child's Strengths and Weaknesses

### Give help in ...

- ◆ **Identifying feelings** -They may think they are angry when they are jealous, hungry or embarrassed.
- ◆ **Asking for help** -They may not be able to identify their needs or be able to formulate a question.
- ◆ **Reading body language** - Facial expressions, feelings & attitudes
- ◆ **Understanding their own manifestations** -Stares; avoidance of eye contact; standing too close; touching inappropriately
- ◆ **Reading voice cues** - sarcasm, tone, volume

## *While teaching:*

- ◆ Work on one social skill at a time
- ◆ Provide the child with choices whenever possible
- ◆ Encourage empathy for others
- ◆ Assist in making transitions
- ◆ Model the behavior you are teaching
- ◆ Encourage the patience of others

## Psalm 119:73

*“Your hands made me and fashioned me; give me understanding that I may learn your commandments.”*

Pray together for the ability to understand God's ways.

- ◆ Use Biblical/and other story examples to model the outcomes of wise & unwise choices.
- ◆ Lead the child to discover application in their own life.
- ◆ Never assume they can take this step on their own.

# Use every opportunity as a TEACHING MOMENT

## Teach Social Information That Most People Acquire

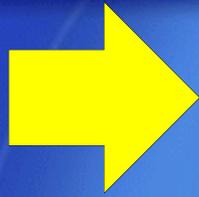
- ◆ How streets are numbered
- ◆ When mail is delivered and how
- ◆ Days in a week, month, year...sequence of seasons
- ◆ Where milk comes from

*Look for every gap in thinking & every opportunity to teach...*

*Have the child teach you all he knows about...*

*Ask the child to explain how he reached his conclusion*

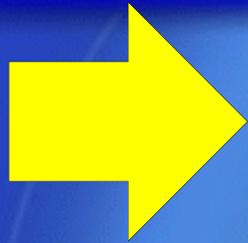
# Prepare the Child for the Situation



## Never Assume

- ◆ Tell the child what to expect
- ◆ Give social information- personal titles, format, schedules, expectations
- ◆ Go over the physical layout of a new place
- ◆ Role-play scenarios
- ◆ Work out a signal you can give to help as a cue when behavior is inappropriate

# Prepare the Situation for the Child



## Anticipate

- ◆ Talk with those in authority concerning what may be difficult for the child
- ◆ Give hints about what may be helpful-  
example: have child *repeat instructions*
- ◆ It may be helpful to invite consistent caregivers to watch Lavoie's video & join you in giving *social autopsies*

# Praise & Encouragement

## The Best Motivators

- ◆ Praise should be realistic and a response to behavior that reflects improvement, accomplishment, or effort. It is given when the child is successful.  
Too much or insincere praise becomes ineffectual.
- ◆ Encouragement is even better than praise, it is not based on what must be earned. Encouragement can be given even when the child is experiencing failure or frustration.

# Helping Your Child Understand

*God has a purpose and a plan for your life and the difficulties you are experiencing*

- ◆ Help students know what is “wrong”
- ◆ Let them know you will not leave them alone in the struggle and neither will God
- ◆ Bring them into the goal setting process so they do not feel that you are doing something to them but that you are working together
- ◆ Tell them it will require hard work
- ◆ Give them hope that things can change

# Pray for Your Child's Ability

- ◆ To be better able to communicate feelings and emotions
- ◆ To exhibit a greater level of frustration tolerance
- ◆ To accept responsibility.
- ◆ To feel capable of influencing another's opinions or behavior in a positive way.
- ◆ To have confidence in approaching new material/situation
- ◆ To communicate positive feelings about themselves
- ◆ To possess a sense of inner control
- ◆ To become more independent
- ◆ To have greater faith in their own judgment

## Remember: We Are Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

*There is great hope for change...*

- ◆ We are destined for change- the brain was not created to remain static
- ◆ Our brains have a great capacity to grow and restructure
- ◆ It can learn to replace dysfunctional patterns
- ◆ It can build a new foundation upon which future perceptions, memories and cognition will be based
- ◆ It happens little by little...