



Helping Children and Adolescents Succeed Socially!

The Social Skills Groups

Social Skills Groups are held at:
The Social Skills Place, Inc.
464 Central Avenue Suite 6
Northfield, Illinois 60093

Date and times:

Elementary School

Monday's 4:30PM-5:30PM
Thursday's 4:30PM-5:30PM

Middle School/Jr.High

Wednesday's 5:30PM-6:30PM

High School/College

Tuesday's 6:30PM-7:30PM

Parent Group

Wednesday's 1:00PM-2:30PM
Wednesday's 7:00PM-8:30PM

Founder:

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Visit us at:

www.socialskillsplace.com

Please Note:

We begin new groups as soon as we have enough children or adolescents to form a new group.

Dates and times of the groups are flexible.

How to have productive children who attract good activities, good things life has to offer, and good friends into their lives.

Do you want your children to be more productive this school year?

It starts with YOU as the parents. Yes it does. I have said numerous times that children live what they learn. If children live with productive parents with good work ethics, they have a good chance to follow suit. They turn to us to guide them. They watch and model our behavior.

High productivity isn't about doing, it's about being.

If you want to be highly productive, and still enjoy life, you need to look at how you live, and how you use your mind, and your time. Our children, they have a certain amount of energy. Every child is different. We need to assist them in choosing the best ways to channel that energy. We want them to make wise choices for themselves. And they need us to help them to channel their energy wisely until they can do this themselves. They model our behavior; they look to us as we set the example. It is not what we tell them to do that works, it is what we actually live and do as parents that leads their way.

Check out the following five suggestions:

1. **Make peace within.**

Often people live in a constant state of inner conflict and suffer from a barrage of negative thoughts that sabotage productivity.

When our energy is aligned, we are in a state of flow.

When we are at peace within, and immersed in the task at hand, without negative thoughts sabotaging our productivity, action becomes effortless. We are able to achieve much more in less time, and with more enjoyment.

One way to help this come about is to focus on things every day we appreciate in our lives. We need to be consciously grateful three times a day. Appreciate something when you awake, at lunch time, and then again at bed time.

2. Push yourself to your edge regularly.

Most people use only a fraction of their capacity and try to save personal energy. It is true; the more energy you spend, the more you have.

Feeling tired and lazy can signal many things. If you are healthy, it may mean that you are bored, frustrated, lack movement, or need more oxygen. Or maybe conflict within has sapped your energy? It's important to go to your limits regularly. Take up exercising regularly, five days per week, take a walk, play tennis or another activity that energizes you and gets you to move.

If you feel exhausted or lethargic, try the brisk walk in order to rev up your energy and restore your spirit.

Take action. Pursue your goals

The absence of values and goals in our lives, or more specifically avoiding to pursue our goals, makes us feel like we are stuck and ineffective. The pursuit of goals in our personal lives, with our relationships, our children's lives while in school, our work and in our careers, is a life full of passion and enthusiasm. It is the way to a productive life.

Wake up and have a productive day. You will feel so much better and so will your children.

3. Take baby steps and do small tasks at a time.

Most people lack in productiveness because they don't take action. They have dreams and even plans, but they don't make them happen and follow through. Negative thoughts (thoughts that make us feel bad. Thoughts about anger and things that upset us.) can derail action. It may be that you have doubts about your ability, or that you listen to others who doubt you.

Look at what you would like to achieve and ask yourself, "What is the smallest step in the direction of my dreams that I can take right now?" Then take that baby step.

4. Do what you love.

Think about how you spend your time. Do you enjoy your work, or is it a grind?

Yes our children have homework they may not love to do, but remind them first do the homework, then spend 30 minutes doing something they love. Perhaps playing the guitar or piano...Or shooting basketball hoops. Whatever it may be. Do both, first the homework then the thing they love.

Yes, when the boundary between work and play gets blurred, you may actually work more, but it feels like you're just having fun.

Remember, do what you love, even if it's only for ten minutes a day.

5. **Love what you do.**

We can't always do what we love. But **we are free to love what we do.** From a Zen perspective, (**Zen** is a school of Mahayana Buddhism. Zen emphasizes experiential wisdom in the attainment of enlightenment.) there is a way to turn even the dullest chore into pleasurable activity through mindfulness. (Being present in all that you do through the five senses.) When we pay genuine attention to our present experience, letting go of all thoughts and judgments, even the most mundane action can become pleasurable. Yes, that includes laundry and homework for the children. Mindfulness doesn't mean watching yourself, it means being fully present, moment by moment.

In order to become mindful, notice sensations of the moment. What sounds can you hear? How are your feet connected with the ground? What smells do you smell? What tastes do you taste?

A key question you need to ask ...

Why be productive?

I want to leave a mark upon the world. Do you? I feel I have, just by mothering my three wonderful children. And now they are all working and giving back to the world, and making their marks upon it too. But I also have been productive by helping others in the work that I do. I feel energized by accomplishing my dreams and doing what I love, working with children and families.

Mindful productivity (Mindfulness practice, is inherited from the Buddhist tradition.) will help you create a life that offers both pleasure and productivity. You will achieve more, and you will also be at peace. Our peacefulness and our smiles will light up not only your own life, but also the lives of those around you.

Simply make peace within and live each moment fully. That's all. Simply do what you enjoy while being the best parent (teacher) you can be, and the best and most honorable person you can be.

We are creatures of habit. If we can get into good and productive modes and habits, and we help our children to channel their energy wisely, well, our children will know what to do.

A true story. My daughter worked at a large design firm in NY. After only one year, she went alone and decided to give up the benefits and do it alone. I said, L., how can you go alone? You have only worked there one year? You are young. She turned to me and said, "Mom, you went alone and look how well you are doing." I got it loud and clear. She followed suit and me. My going alone and being

productive, well...it showed her the way. It gave her the confidence that she can do it too. She is doing so amazingly well. She has already been in many design publications. She had no doubt in herself whatsoever. She just wakes up and does what she loves. She designs and creates wonderful spaces.

We are now at the beginning of another school year. You must help your children get into productive routines and habits now. Sign them up for classes, and sports, and wonderful involvements. Help them establish good study skills.

Please...

And no question this will attract friends and wonderful people into their lives.

And...Have a productive and wonderful school year!

Susan Stern, LCSW is the founder of the Social Skills Place, Inc.

Many ideas from Mary Jaksch, a Zen Teacher and part inspiration for this newsletter. www.GoodlifeZen.com

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