

Social Skills IEP Goals — Middle School

17 measurable goals written to IDEA standards. Replace [student] and [date]; adjust criteria to the student's baseline.

Middle school social skills increasingly happen online — a goal bank that only covers in-person interaction misses where a lot of the actual conflict and skill-building happens now.

NAVIGATING PEER GROUPS

1. [student] will identify at least [X] different peer groups in their school setting and describe expectations for interacting with each, with 80% accuracy across 4 of 5 discussions.
2. [student] will engage appropriately with a peer group during an unstructured setting (lunch, passing period) without the target behavior, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.
3. [student] will recognize signs of peer exclusion or conflict and respond appropriately (report, walk away, use words), in 4 of 5 documented opportunities.

READING SOCIAL CUES

4. [student] will identify nonliteral language (sarcasm, idioms, jokes) in a peer conversation, with 80% accuracy across 4 of 5 trials.
5. [student] will interpret a peer's body language or tone of voice to infer their emotional state, with 80% accuracy across 4 of 5 trials.
6. [student] will adjust their own communication style based on the listener (teacher vs. peer vs. familiar friend), with 80% accuracy across 4 of 5 observed opportunities.

CONVERSATION & GROUP COLLABORATION

7. [student] will maintain a conversation with a peer across multiple topics, using reciprocal questions and comments, for at least [X] minutes, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.
8. [student] will contribute equitably to a group project, completing an assigned role without excessive prompting, across 4 of 5 group tasks.
9. [student] will give constructive feedback to a peer during a group activity, using appropriate language, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.

FRIENDSHIP & CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

10. [student] will maintain at least 1 peer friendship across a semester, with support fading, as reported by self, teacher, or family observation.
11. [student] will use a taught strategy to resolve a peer conflict independently before it escalates, in 4 of 5 documented opportunities.
12. [student] will set and communicate a personal boundary with a peer appropriately, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.

PERSPECTIVE-TAKING & SELF-MONITORING

13. [student] will explain how a peer might perceive their own words or actions in a given scenario, with 80% accuracy across 4 of 5 trials.
14. [student] will self-monitor their own social behavior in a group setting using a checklist, with 80% agreement with staff observation, across 4 of 5 sessions.

DIGITAL & ONLINE SOCIAL SKILLS

15. [student] will identify appropriate versus inappropriate content or behavior to share online or via text with peers, with 80% accuracy across 4 of 5 discussions.
16. [student] will recognize signs of cyberbullying or online conflict and identify an appropriate adult to report to, with 80% accuracy across 4 of 5 discussions.
17. [student] will maintain appropriate online communication with peers (a group chat, a collaborative document) without the target behavior, across 4 of 5 observed instances.

Using These Social Skills Goals at 6th – 8th Grade

Nonliteral language is a specific, teachable skill

Sarcasm, idioms, and jokes can trip up students who read literally — naming this as its own goal targets the actual barrier instead of a vague “social skills” label.

Code-switching between listeners is a real skill

Talking to a teacher, a close friend, and an unfamiliar peer all call for different registers — middle schoolers who haven't learned this often get labeled instead of taught.

Digital social skills need their own goal line

A lot of peer conflict at this age starts or escalates in a group chat — a goal bank that only covers in-person interaction is missing where the actual problems happen.

Boundary-setting is a skill, not just an outcome

Teach the specific words a student can use to say no or ask for space, then measure whether they use them.

Digital communication norms change fast and vary by school policy — confirm what platforms and rules actually apply to this student before writing a goal around them.

Tired of rebuilding these forms every year?

IEP Goal Writer also drafts your PLAAFP and progress notes from the same student profile — free to try at iepgoalwriter.pro