

Social Skills IEP Goals — Kindergarten – 2nd Grade

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

The Social Thinking framework's "expected vs. unexpected" language works better than "appropriate vs. inappropriate" because the same behavior can be expected in one setting (loud at recess) and unexpected in another (loud during silent reading) — write goals around the situation, not a blanket rule.

TURN-TAKING & GAME PLAY

1. [student] will take turns with peers during a structured game or activity, waiting for their turn without prompting, in 8 of 10 observed opportunities.
2. [student] will follow the rules of a simple group game, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.
3. [student] will demonstrate good sportsmanship (accepting winning or losing) without the target behavior, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.

CONVERSATION SKILLS

4. [student] will initiate a conversation with a peer using a greeting and a question, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.
5. [student] will stay on-topic during a conversation with a peer for at least 3 exchanges, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.
6. [student] will wait for a pause before speaking during a conversation, without interrupting, in 8 of 10 observed opportunities.

JOINING & MAINTAINING PLAY

7. [student] will use an appropriate phrase to ask to join a peer group or activity, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.
8. [student] will share materials or take turns with a peer during a cooperative activity, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.
9. [student] will respond to a peer's idea during play by agreeing, building on it, or offering an alternative appropriately, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.

RECOGNIZING SOCIAL CUES

10. [student] will identify whether a behavior is “expected” or “unexpected” for a given social situation, with 80% accuracy across 4 of 5 trials.
11. [student] will use whole body listening (eyes, ears, and body facing the speaker) during group instruction, in 8 of 10 observed opportunities.
12. [student] will identify a peer's emotion based on facial expression or tone of voice, with 80% accuracy across 4 of 5 trials.

CONFLICT & PROBLEM-SOLVING WITH PEERS

13. [student] will use words to resolve a minor peer conflict (over a toy, a turn) instead of the target behavior, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.
14. [student] will accept “no” from a peer without the target behavior, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.
15. [student] will apologize or make a repair attempt after a social conflict, with adult prompting, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.

FRIENDSHIP SKILLS

16. [student] will identify at least 1 peer as a friend and state 1 reason why, in 4 of 5 opportunities across the school year.
17. [student] will give a compliment or show interest in a peer's activity, in 4 of 5 observed opportunities.

Using These Social Skills Goals at Kindergarten – 2nd Grade

Expected and unexpected depend on the setting

The same behavior — talking loudly — can be expected at recess and unexpected during silent reading. Teach the concept, not a fixed rule.

Whole body listening is observable and countable

Eyes, ears, and body facing the speaker gives staff something concrete to rate, instead of a vague “pays attention” goal.

Sportsmanship is a teachable skill, not a character trait

Accepting winning and losing without a blow-up is a specific behavior that can be modeled, practiced, and measured.

A repair attempt matters as much as the apology

Teaching a student to fix a social mistake — share the toy back, invite the peer back in — builds more than a scripted “sorry.”

Like behavior, social skills have no universal benchmark chart. Set every “4 of 5” or 80% from this student's own baseline, observed across a few different peers and settings.

Tired of rebuilding these forms every year?

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