

# **Manual for Socio-Emotional Skills for children developmental problems**

## **Introduction**

Social-emotional development includes the child's experience, expression, and management of emotions and the ability to establish positive and rewarding relationships with others. It encompasses both intra- and interpersonal processes.

The core features of emotional development include the ability to identify and understand one's own feelings, to accurately read and comprehend emotional states in others, to manage strong emotions and their expression in a constructive manner, to regulate one's own behaviour, to develop empathy for others, and to establish and maintain relationships.

Typically developing children tend to make progress in their social and emotional skills in an ordered sequence, with simple skills that develop in early life, becoming more elaborated, sophisticated, and established over time. Children with intellectual disability or other neurodevelopmental disabilities have delays in social and emotional skills, commensurate with other areas of their development and behaviour.

## **About this Activity Book**

This activity book is intended for use by mental health professionals, special educators and parents for children with intellectual disability (mild to moderate spectrum), autism spectrum disorder with intellectual disability (mild to moderate spectrum), autism spectrum disorder without intellectual disability, young children with ADHD with or without intellectual disability (mild to moderate spectrum) and any other children with developmental problems affecting the socio-emotional domain. This book is based on the concept of child development and social skills development. It aims at equipping the child care/services providers with age appropriate techniques to instill social and emotional skills in these children. It also aims to enable children with neurodevelopmental disabilities to acquire skills pertaining to functional communication, emotion regulation, empathy, anger management and activities of daily living. These activities can be used for preventive and promotive purposes i.e. to nurture positive growth and development in children and prevent mental health morbidities. They can be used not only in groups with preventive and promotive objectives, but also with individual children.

While this manual was developed for children with developmental problems, it can be used for pre-school children as part of normal development to enhance their socio-emotional skills. The activities mentioned can be implemented in the order in which they have been organised for groups or even individually i.e. for example, if the need of a particular child or group of children is to teach how to communicate needs, the activities on identification and communication of needs may be selected for implementation. Additionally, the activities should also be chosen depending on the skill deficits and strengths of the child. Lastly, the activities selected have to be simplified in case of use with children having moderate intellectual disability.

# 1. FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION

## Objectives;

- Rapport building
- To teach the child how to greet people.
- To help the child in communicating needs.
- To teach the child how to speak in short sentences.

## Activity 1.1. Rapport Building

Method: Interactive

Materials Needed: None

### Process:

- Tell the children that we are going to form a circle. Take the help of any caregivers present and help the children form a circle.
- Ask the children to hold each other's' hands.
- Tell them that we are going to play a game of names.
- Tell the children that you will start the game by saying your name loudly and then the child next to you has to say her/his name and this continues till everyone is finished.
- Once everyone is finished, repeat the same in reverse order.

### Discussion:

- Remember to smile and make eye contact with the children when they say their name out loud.
- Repeat the instructions in case of confusion.
- Once the introduction is over, tell the children that learning names will help them remember each other better.
- Tell the children that now they know each other a little, they are going to work together in coming weeks, and they will get to know each other better.

## Activity 1.2. Greeting people (Adapted from 'A Manual for Psychologists', NIMH)

Method: Interactive

Materials Needed: None

### Process:

- Let the children be seated in a circle. In case the children are dispersed, help them make a circle.
- Next, tell them that we will be playing another game and you (facilitator) will start the game by looking at one child from the circle and saying 'Hi!' (wave your hand while saying hi) to her/him and that child has to repeat the gesture back to you.
- Once you have initiated the game, ask the child you chose to choose another child from the circle and do the same.
- Repeat until the children get a hang of the game.
- Include the present caregivers in the game as well.

- Once the children understand how to respond to 'Hi!', repeat the same method to teach them gestures like 'Hello', 'Goodbye', 'Namaste' etc.

Discussion:

- Remember to always positively reinforce (verbally) the children when they complete the task.
- Depending on the ability of the child, the same activity can be used to teach the use of 'Please' and 'Thank you!'. You will need a volunteer and a commonly used object (pen, toffee/candy, notebook etc.). Ask the volunteer to hold the object and then tell the children that you are going to ask the volunteer to hand you that object followed with a 'please'. Emphasize on the please when you ask for the object. The volunteer should hand you the object only after you say 'please'. Clap or say 'very good!' once the volunteer hands you the object.
- The purpose is to establish a clear association between saying 'please' and getting what you asked for.
- Repeat until the children get a hang of it.

**Note 1:** *The child's ability should be kept in mind before trying the activity to teach them the significance of 'please' and 'thank you'.*

**Note 2:** *Since bigger numbers in one group can create confusion in children due to different attention span, it would be advisable to carry out this activity in smaller groups (preferably of 3-4) of children with a relatively same level of abilities and deficits.*

### Activity 1.3. Communicating Needs (Adapted from 'A Manual for Psychologists', NIMH)

Method: Interactive, Roleplay

Materials Needed: Edible item (apple/orange/any easily recognizable fruit)

Process:

- Start off by talking about the daily routine in simple words. Tell the children that when we feel hungry, we eat food (point to the fruit, ensure it is visible to every child); when we want relieve ourselves (use age appropriate and colloquial terms like 'sussu', 'potty' etc.), we go to the toilet.
- Tell the children that today we will learn how to indicate when we are sleepy, hungry or wanting to use the toilet.
- Ask one of the caregivers to be a volunteer and tell them that you will show how to do it.
- To communicate hunger: Instruct the volunteer to hand you a fruit when you say 'khaana', 'bhook lagi' (any colloquial term can be used, should not be more than one or two words). Once the fruit is handed to you, act as if you're eating it and smile. Repeat the same transaction in different scenarios. For instance, in one scenario make the volunteer sit on a chair and you (facilitator) walk up to him and say 'khaana' or 'bhook lagi' or make a gesture of putting a food morsel in your mouth and let him/her hand you the fruit. Try it in different scenarios. After you've demonstrated it 4-5 times, ask one child to do the roleplay with you. Ensure that every child gets a chance.
- To communicate toilet needs: Instruct the caregivers to note and record each time the child urinates or has bowel movements for at least one week. Then ask them to

use this record as reference and take the child to the toilet 3-5 minutes before the noted time. Instruct them to use one word always (e.g. sussu/potty) whenever the child is made to sit in the toilet. Reward the child each time she/he uses the toilet.

Discussion:

- Remember to always positively reinforce (verbally) the children when they complete the task.
- You can hand written instructions to the caregivers.
- The activity to learn how to communicate hunger is to be demonstrated in a group but its important to ensure that the children are positively reinforced each time they indicate hunger in their home till the skill is learned.
- The activity to communicate toilet needs has to be consistently done at the child's living space since it requires the caregiver to record child's schedule and access to a toilet. It would be easier for the child to learn this skill in space that the child is used to.

**Note 1:** Both the activities should be done separately. When teaching about communicating hunger needs, it should be done till that skill is learned. These activities shouldn't be done simultaneously.

#### Activity 1.4. Speaking in short sentences (Adapted from 'A Manual for Psychologists', NIMH)

Method: Show and tell

Materials Needed: Action pictures, pictures of a story in sequence (number of cards depending on the ability of the child)

Process:

- Ask the children to form a circle and sit.
- To start off, take a small sequence of cards depicting a story and then line them up and narrate the story clearly and loudly. Ensure that you are audible to all the children.
- Then ask the children, one by one to look at the sequence and narrate the story in small sentences. You can change the story cards with each child and encourage them to tell you the story looking at the cards.
- Verbally reinforce them (Very good, that's great, keep it up etc.) each time they speak a short sentence.
- Once every child has had her/his turn, take out an action picture. Tell them that now you're going to describe what is happening in the picture and then describe the picture in 2-3 short sentences loudly.
- Next, bring out another action picture and ask each child to describe the picture to you in one sentence turn by turn. Once you have all the sentences from all the children, combine them and repeat the story out loud. Thank all the children and give verbal reinforcement for their participation.
- Post this, you can show one or two more action pictures and ask the children to describe the picture in simple sentences.
- Towards the end, you can tell the children that now you will do some simple actions (eating, sleeping, dancing etc.) and if they wish they can tell you what they think those actions are.

- When you're closing the session, thank the children for their cooperation.

Discussion:

- While this activity can be done in one long session with a few breaks in the middle, it might be preferable to do it over 2 sessions and instruct the caregivers to repeat the activity at the child's residence between the sessions.
- Tell the children how this activity can help them talk about what they see every day and experiences that they have.

## 2. SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Objectives;

- To make the child associate the time of the day and place with a routine social activity.
- To introduce the concept of social rules.

### Activity 2.1. Routine Social Activities (Adapted from 'A Manual for Psychologists', NIMH)

Method: Show and Tell

Materials Needed: Pictures of various times of the day (sun, moon), Pictures of various activities (eating, sleeping, playing, studying, watching TV), Pictures of various places (home, school, garden/playground)

Process:

- Ask the children to be seated in a circle. Select cards for one time of the day, activity associated with it and the place and keep it aside.
- Once you have chosen one set of cards, tell the children that today you will be talking about the different things that we do daily. You can further explain by giving examples like 'we study in school', 'we play in the playground/garden', 'we eat dinner at home and then sleep'.
- After giving the examples, you can take one card out for e.g., a card depicting a playground. Then ask the children about what they see in the picture. Tell them to raise their hands if they have an answer. Once you ask one child to answer, reinforce the child for giving the right answer (if the child can't answer correctly, you can prompt the child to answer till she/he answers correctly).
- Next, take out the picture which is associated with the playground i.e., kids playing. Encourage other children to describe this card to you. Ask them to raise their hands if they have an answer. Let one child answer your question. Once the child answers, give reinforcement and repeat what she/he said.
- Following this, take out the third picture which is associated with playing i.e., evening. Use the same method to ask the children to describe what time of the day is it.
- Once the set is complete, keep the three pictures together and say loudly, "This is a playground where children play at evening.". Keep the sentence simple and short.
- Repeat the same for other sets of cards.

Discussion:

- Once the activity finishes, you can tell the children about the differences between activities we do at home vs what we do at school, activities we do in the night vs in the day.
- Cite examples like how we sleep when it's night and wake up when it's daylight, we study in the school and play in the playground.
- Give them concrete examples of how it's important to do routine activities at the correct place and time, for instance how playing and running in the bedroom can lead us to getting hurt.

**Note 1:** Since the activity consists of multiple instructions and scenarios, it would be best to break this activity into sub sessions and use one session to teach association between one time, place and activity. Appropriate permutations and combinations can be formulated depending on the needs of the child and implemented over a course of multiple sessions.

**Note 2:** Instructions should be given in a simple manner and should be kept short and should match the child's ability.

## Activity 2.2. Understanding Social Cues

Method: Roleplay, Discussion

Materials Needed: None

Process:

- Ask the children to sit in a semi-circle. Tell them that you will show them some situations from everyday life by acting them out.
- Then ask another adult to help you with the demonstration. You (facilitator) will act as if you're on the phone talking and the volunteer has to act as child who comes and starts tugging at you and demanding to talk to you while you're on the phone. You have to forcibly cut the call and you scold the volunteer mildly.
- Enact this scenario in front of the children.
- After you're finished acting, ask one of the children to describe what happened in simple words. Encourage the children to answer.
- Then explain to the children that anyone will feel bad if she/he is made to do something forcibly (in this case: cut the phone call).
- Repeat this activity with different scenarios (two adults talking, shopping in the market, waiting in line outside the house etc.)
- Give them examples of socially acceptable behaviours and reiterate.
- Encourage them to give you examples of behaviours which are appreciated by everyone. (Prompt them if necessary: remind them about how it's nice to say 'thank you', 'please')
- Appreciate their efforts and reinforce verbally ('good job', 'well done', 'keep it up').

Discussion:

- After closing the activity, you can encourage them to tell you in simple sentences about what they learned from this activity. Encourage them to give personal examples if possible.

**Note 1.** This activity should be simplified for children with moderate level intellectual disability. The instructions should be kept short (1-2 sentence at once). The level of

participation with this group may be lower than the others, so it's important to keep in mind to give concrete examples and demonstrate them if possible.

### 3. EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Objectives;

- To help the children identify and report their own emotions.
- To help the children identify others' emotions.
- To help the children manage their anger.

#### Activity 3.1. Identifying and Reporting Emotions (Self)

Method: Identification (naming) & Role play

Materials: Pictures depicting basic emotions (Happy, Sad, Angry)

Process:

- Ask the children to sit in a circle.
- Tell the children "We are going to play another game today, I will show you some pictures and you have to tell me what the person in the picture is doing".
- One by one, take the pictures out and ask the children to describe it in a simple, short sentence to you. Give each child a chance.
- Repeat it for 3-4 rounds.
- After this, tell the children that you will make faces (like from the pictures) and they have to guess what they think it is.
- Ask the children to tell you one by one as you keep making faces.
- Repeat for 3-4 rounds.
- Next, tell the children that everyone including them feels happy, sad or angry in different situations in day to day life.
- Give them some examples of what makes a person happy/sad/angry (For e.g., when someone pushes me, I get angry; when my mother makes my favorite food, I'm happy; when someone yells at me, I'm sad).
- Encourage them to give personal examples of when they feel happy or sad or angry accompanied with a happy/sad/angry face.
- Repeat for 2-3 rounds and then close the session by summarizing it.

Discussion:

- Encourage each child to show a happy/sad/angry face.
- Appreciate their efforts and reinforce them ('good job', 'well done', 'great').

#### Activity 3.2. Identifying Others' Emotions

Method: Demonstration & Roleplay

Materials Needed: None

Process:

- Ask the children to be seated in a circle.

- Take help from an adult volunteer. Tell the children that you will be playing a game today in which you and the volunteer will enact different scenarios and after you finish, they have to guess (by turn) about how each of the actors are feeling.
- Scenario 1: Fight (Enact a verbal disagreement between you and the volunteer over a small issue; cutting you in a line, accidentally pushing you while walking, bargaining over a product)
- Scenario 2: Winning a prize (Enact a situation where you've won a prize and the volunteer announces and hand you a prize)
- Scenario 3: Being scolded (Enact a situation where you are being scolded by the volunteer for doing something you were told not to do.)
- Perform these scenarios with adequate breaks in the middle.
- After enacting each scenario, ask the children to tell you how both the actors were feeling (ensure the children do this by taking turns) and why.
- If the children feel shy or confused, you can encourage and prompt them in identifying the right emotions.
- Repeat for 2 rounds and then summarize and close the session.

Discussion:

- Appreciate the children for making efforts in identifying emotions.
- Provide verbal reinforcement for each child.

**Note 1:** Since acting scenarios may not be enough to generalize this skill, it's important to ensure that the caregiver practices at the residence with the child. This could be done by taking real time examples of situations from daily life and asking the child to identify other's emotion and reinforcing the correct responses and appreciating the child's efforts even when she/he don't get it right.

**Note 2:** This activity can be done in multiple sessions depending upon the child's ability. If finishing one scenario takes a long time, it would be preferable to do this activity over multiple sessions.

### Activity 3.3. Managing Anger (Adapted from Natasha's Module)

Method: Storytelling

Materials Needed: None

Process:

- Greet all the children and ask them sit in a circle.
- Tell the children the today will tell them a short story and then you will ask them some questions based on the story.
- Story of Tucker, the turtle: Hi children! I am Tucker, the turtle. I like to eat and play. I like making new friends. But I have a problem. I get angry very easily and fight with everyone. So, no one wants to be my friend. (Act angry when you talk about anger and sad when you talk about having no friends).
- Once you are sure all the children have listened to the above short story, you can begin the question round.
- Ask the children, "Do any of you ever get angry?" (Wait for the kids to respond, encourage them if they are feeling stuck or shy).
- You can put them at ease by telling them that feeling angry is normal and everybody gets angry about something.



- Once you have the answers, ask them next about what they do when they're angry (It would be helpful to have a list of undesirable behaviours that the kids engage in when angry, taken from the caregivers before the session. You can use these behaviours as examples to tell children that some people engage in these behaviours other than them).
- Again, encourage responses from the children. If the children answer then agree with them by telling them that you also used to do the same. If the answers are scarce then you can use the pre-obtained list and speak of those behaviours as something Tucker the Turtle used to do.
- Once you are finished with this question round, tell the children in simple words that no one wanted to be your friend because of these behaviours and then you found magic!
- Emphasize on 'Magic!' and encourage them to ask you about it.
- Following this, tell them that after you learned the magic you started to identify when you are angry.
- Tell them that when you're angry, you think about a big red board which has STOP written on it and it makes you stop.
- Then when you stop, you go to your mummy/daddy/caregiver and sit and take 3 long breaths.
- After taking long breaths you feel a little calm and if you don't then you take some more deep breaths. Like a turtle you go inside your shell and only come out when you're feeling better.
- But sometimes when you are so angry, you take some paper and tear it up, or take a soft pillow and hit it and you feel better.
- Reiterate that feeling angry is not a 'wrong/bad' thing, it is normal to feel angry but when we fight with people it becomes harmful for us.
- Repeat the abovementioned steps while discussing them with the children.
- Summarize the session and close it.

Discussion:

- Encourage the kids to participate and appreciate their efforts. You can tell them that anger can be controlled and encourage them to do so like Tucker the turtle.

**Note 1:** Just like the other activities, this activity can be done multiple number of times with adequate alternative activities in the middle, till the skill is learned by the children.