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# Strategies in Social Skills

There are different strategies available to help develop social skills for pre-teens and teens with ASD, such as:

## Interactive

### Role-Play

Giving ASD youth the chance to practice real-life scenarios can better prepare them for interactions in various social engagements. For example, they can rehearse giving compliments, accepting criticism, asking a classmate to make plans, etc. You can have your youth practice role-playing with friends and family members they feel comfortable around.

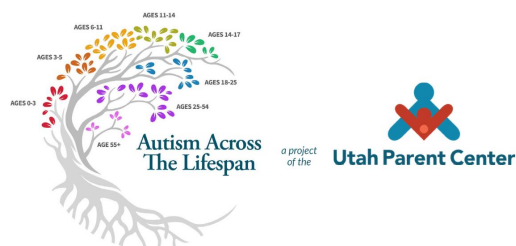
### Self-Management Techniques

Self-management involves learning how to regulate and control behavior through purposeful practice in interactive environments. Your youth can choose a particular social skill they want to improve and take note or tally every time they successfully use it. Over time this skill will start to feel more natural and automatic.

### Social Groups

Social groups are great options for a teen or pre-teen who wants to meet other kids their age with ASD. This allows them a space to share experiences while surrounded by a community they fit into. Groups can be picked based on interests and hobbies, which provides comfort when socializing about a shared interest. Here they can make friends and practice their social skills.

Social groups don't only have to be with other ASD youth. If this option isn't available in your community, then any social group will work. However, there should still be structure and some form of social skills building, such as fostering self-awareness, working in teams, etc.





## Visual, Written & Communicative

### Comic Strip Conversations

Drawing comic strips can be a great way for artistic pre-teens and teens with ASD to practice their social skills. They can draw stories with conversation bubbles and detail what the interaction should look like. Their drawing can include non-verbal communication by taking into consideration facial expressions. It also addresses verbal communication by creating conversation between characters in the story.

### Personalized Teaching Stories

Information presented visually to youth with ASD can be easier to understand and learn. Using booklets, electronic devices, or photos as a visual aid to present different social situations can help your youth understand expectations within each interaction. For example, photos can be used to show someone's level of interest through non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions. This can be beneficial when presenting a story regarding an upset classmate to help your youth recognize what they are feeling. Then, they are more prepared in their interactions when these situations arise in real life.

### Prompt Cards or Social Scripts

Using prompt cards or scripts can provide additional support to your youth as they navigate social interactions. They can carry cards or a sheet of information that clearly displays how to read and respond to different social encounters. By providing examples and references, such as how to start and end a conversation, youth with ASD can be better prepared for social engagements. As they become more comfortable, they can reduce their reliance on the prompt or script.

### Social Stories

Social Stories can be used as a tool to help your youth see different perspectives. You can have them practice trying to step into someone else's shoes by creating stories surrounding social scenarios. First, ask them to think about how they would feel in that story, followed by how a friend or family member might feel in the same situation. You can also use events throughout the day to help encourage your youth to think about your feelings. Express what happened and ask them questions such as "how do you think this makes me feel?" You can look for more information here about how to structure a social stories <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/>



## Video-Modelling

You can either find pre-made videos, or work with your youth to make them yourselves. The purpose of the video is to model behaviors or skills and have your youth copy what they see. This method can also be used to aid in their ability to recognize and understand non-verbal communication, such as body language and facial expression. Ideally, mimicking these interactions will help your youth integrate learned social skills into real-life social interactions.

## Tech & Media

### Computers and Other Technology

This type of training involves using videos, software, and virtual-reality programs to teach ASD youth how to recognize and respond to emotions associated with non-verbal communication. This includes facial expressions and tone of voice.

### Social Media

Social media can be used as a positive social skills tool when monitored. It gives youth with ASD the opportunity to connect with family and friends without the pressure of having immediate interactions. With social media, they can take time to become comfortable with social situations and think about how they want to respond. Most importantly, it takes away the challenge of recognizing non-verbal communication. This often encourages more participation in social interactions.

### Watching TV Programs

TV programs can provide positive information about how to handle and respond to social interactions. Select a TV show that you and your youth are familiar with and pause it periodically to discuss what to do next in each specific situation.

### References

- Autism Speaks  
<https://www.autismspeaks.org/social-skills-and-autism>
- Interactive Autism Network  
[https://iancommunity.org/cs/what\\_do\\_we\\_know/social\\_skills\\_interventions](https://iancommunity.org/cs/what_do_we_know/social_skills_interventions)
- The Australian Parenting Website  
<https://raisingchildren.net.au/autism/communicating-relationships/connecting/social-skills-for-teens-with-asd>
- Understood  
<https://www.understood.org/en/friends-feelings/common-challenges/following-social-rules/social-situations-to-role-play-with-your-middle-schooler>