



Social Skills Correlated with Improved Education, Employment, and Independent Living Outcomes

What is the level of evidence?

This predictor of post-school success has been labeled by NTACT at a Promising level of evidence, based on one *a priori* correlational study regarding education, employment, and independent living and one *a priori* correlational study four exploratory correlational studies. *More information on NTACT's process for identifying effective practices is available here: [NTACT's Effective Practices](#).*

What is the predictor?

Social skills are behaviors and attitudes that facilitate communication and cooperation (e.g., social conventions, social problem-solving when engaged in a social interaction, body language, speaking, listening, responding, verbal and written communication).

What are the essential characteristics?

1. Integrate social skills instruction across the curriculum (e.g., general education and community).
2. Use a direct instruction curriculum to teach communication, interpersonal, conversational, negotiation, conflict, and group skills in context.
3. Provide opportunities for students to practice communication, interpersonal, conversational, negotiation, conflict, and group skills in context.
4. Assist students to use problem-solving skills when difficult interpersonal situations arise in context.
5. Provide parent and school staff information and training in supporting age-appropriate social skill development for their child, taking into consideration the family's cultural standards.
6. Use augmentative communication (AC) and assistive technology (AT) devices to encourage communication for students who use AC/AT.
7. Use ecological assessments to identify the social skills students will be expected to perform in each context.
8. Provide opportunities for students to practice social skills that foster authentic social interactions that foster the development of friendships.
9. Teach students to self evaluate their use of social skills in the appropriate context.

10. Teach students the social expectations for various environments (e.g., church, school, work, recreation).

Where is the best place to find out how to do this practice?

The Division on Career Development and Transition of the Council for Exceptional Children developed a Fast Fact on Social Skills available here:

https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/SPED/34aee1c1-7ded-4d59-af82-da4af08d5fc4/UploadedImages/Fast%20Fact%20Sheet-%20Social%20Skills_FINAL.pdf.

References used to establish this evidence base:

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Test, D. W., Mazzotti, V. L., Mustian, A. L., Fowler, C. H., Kortering, L., & Kohler, P. (2009). Evidence-based secondary transition predictors for improving postschool outcomes for students with disabilities. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 32*, 160-181.

Reference used to define and identify characteristics of this predictor:

Rowe, D. A., Alverson, C. Y., Unruh, D. K., Fowler, C. H., Kellems, R., & Test, D. W. (2014). A Delphi study to operationalize evidence-based predictors in secondary transition. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals, 38*, 113-126.

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