

What is Social Skills Instruction?

Social Skills Instruction (SSI) focuses on explicitly teaching behaviors to students who show social skill deficits. Social Skills Instruction assists students in acquiring new behavioral skills, building fluency with existing skills, or generalizing existing skills to new situations. At Tier II, social skills are taught in small groups (approximately 2-10 students in each group). Social skills are taught through direct instruction and reinforced through practice during social skills groups and in natural settings.

- **Find additional information on the implementation of Social Skills Instruction here**
[Social Skills Group Presentation](#)
- **Find additional information about specific Social Skills Instruction Curriculums here**
[Social Skills Instruction Curriculums](#)

1. How does SSI link directly to our school-wide expectations?

Replacement behaviors taught during social skills instruction connect to the school-wide behavioral expectations. For example, “Respect” is a school-wide expectation. Students needing Tier II supports to meet this expectation should receive instruction in the area of following directions, friendship skills, cooperation skills, and empathy. If using a commercial social skills curriculum, then review the curriculum to tie specific skills to school-wide expectations.

2. How does SSI allow for continuous student participation?

Social skills groups will be available for students to join throughout the year.

3. How do students receive rapid access to intervention through SSI?

Once identified, students should be placed in a social skills group within 3-5 days to begin the intervention.

4. How is SSI matched to the function of the student’s behavior?

Social skills instruction will match the social skills deficit the student exhibits. For example, if a student’s behavior is maintained by getting the attention of his peers, then social skills instruction can teach the replacement behavior of self-management. If a student’s behavior is maintained by escaping peer attention, then social skills instruction can teach replacement behaviors on peer relation skills.

5. How do students receive specific feedback from staff with SSI?

Adults should provide performance feedback both during social skills instruction groups and in the natural setting. This includes providing positive feedback for displaying appropriate skills. Additionally, constructive feedback and error correction is provided for skills performed incorrectly or not at all.

6. How does SSI allow for students to practice new skills daily?

Social skills instruction programs allow students to practice new skills in a systematic format. During social skills instruction, new skills are defined, modeled, and practiced, and students receive feedback. Skills addressed should be communicated with classroom teachers for participating students; teachers can provide opportunities for practice in a natural setting and provide feedback to students.

7. How does SSI teach students what to do in different situations?

Social skills instruction programs plan for generalization and maintenance. To promote generalization of skills, students participate in role-plays using naturally occurring examples and

reinforcers. In addition, there should be programmed opportunities to practice in natural settings. Programmed opportunities include:

- Coordinating classroom lessons connected to targeted social skills
- Reinforcement of targeted skill via school-wide acknowledgement system
- Providing visual cues or prompts for students across settings (e.g. in their binder or on their desk)

8. How do families, students, and staff become oriented to SSI?

After identifying students, parents receive information about the social skill instruction and small group their child will be participating in. Students are oriented to the intervention through small group instruction. Staff are trained and supported through professional development. Staff learn about social skills instruction, teaching procedures, and leading social skills small groups.

9. How can SSI intervention be modified by data?

Data from universal behavior screeners (e.g., SRSS-IE), office discipline referrals, suspensions, attendance, academics, and teacher nomination drive the initial identification of students. Teacher rating scales (e.g. the Social Skills Improvement System, Elliot & Gresham), ratings scales completed by others (e.g. parents), and direct observations drive the identification of modification of target skills taught in the intervention.

10. How does SSI account for weekly school to home communication?

Social skills instruction includes a weekly progress report sent to parents that shares the skill the student is learning and asks parents to practice the skill at home.

11. Are there adequate resources available for SSI?

Resources used to identify the effectiveness of the intervention include student grades, attendance, office discipline referrals, school suspensions, surveys (e.g., parent, teacher, and student), and integrity of implementation checklists. Additional resources such as presentations, webinars, journal articles, curriculum guides, social skills lesson plans, and data collection forms are available online.

References

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