

HOW TO HELP YOUR TODDLER

to develop good social skills



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT DURING PANDEMIC

Social development is an important part of each child's development. When we talk about social development we mean the set of skills that is needed for a child to function well in a society, to understand verbal and non verbal clues, to adjust to social situations, to know what to and what not to say and when, to understand social concepts, be able to make friends, build relationships and find themselves as a part of a society. Social development, just like any other part of a child's development should be nurtured and developed. We start as early as birth, when the child first has to make sense of the world around them, understand who their parents are, siblings then the extended family. This is every child's first step to understanding of social hierarchy. After that the child discovers the outside world- other children, neighbors, carers, doctors, people working in the shops and so on and so forth. Every social group has it's own rules of interactions- for example we wait in a queue in the shop etc. we are not born knowing all those rules, they have to be taught and practiced and this is what we call a social development- learning how to take turns, how to react in certain social situations, how to share, wait, how to talk or even how to argue. All of that its a complicated skill for a toddler to master as they do not have ability to do so straight away. Unfortunately, due to pandemic and all the social restrictions, many toddlers weren't given opportunities to experience social interactions, to be able to be a part of a bigger group, to go on holidays, to a restaurant or even simply to attend a birthday party. This is why this is more important than ever to help our children to develop their social skills.

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



- **Make opportunities for social interactions: play groups, playgrounds, mother and toddler groups etc**

- **Teach turn taking by taking turns with you and your child, use words like: its your turn now and now its my turn. Play with a toy for a little bit and return it saying and now its your turn etc. You can start by taking a toy of only for few seconds, so your toddler will learn that you will return it.**

When you only have one child at home, it is easy to just give in and let them have a turn all the time, not ask them to share, but this way they will struggle when they go to a group of peers



SHARING IS CARING...

*** Look for opportunities to share things, lead by example, say things like: I will share my cookie with you will you share your grapes with me? Thank you for sharing etc**

**• Remember that there are things that you wouldn't share with others, so you need to respect that your child may not want to share everything so set up clear rules of what to do if sharing is not an option:
FOR EXAMPLE If you enter a room with other people and you have a packet of jellies you will need to share it with them, however if you don't want to share your jellies that's fine but then you have to keep them in the kitchen until everyone is gone.. This way you are giving them a choice, you explain a social concept that it's rude to eat in front of others without sharing but yet you do not force them to share**



SET CLEAR RULES

- **Make clear boundaries as of what is and what isn't acceptable when interacting with others, being in public and other social situations: when we go to the restaurant, we all sit at the table , we are quiet in a library- do not accept that your kids already know it if they haven't been in a situation like that before. Social interactions are a long learning process so be patient and explain!**

