

PATCH 'Ohana Network



PATCH - Supporting Hawaii's Child Care Needs



SOCIAL COMPETENCY: Fostering Your Child's Lifelong Success

Studies have shown that the single best predictor of how a child will adjust to life as an adult is — how well they get along with others. It's not the I.Q. score, or grades in school, or how a child behaves in school. Social skills are the single best predictor of adult success.

Learning social skills begins at birth. We are born with the need to interact. It starts out with children bonding with their parents, then broadens to children playing with siblings and friends, and eventually going to school and becoming part of a larger community. Social competency involves the ability to have positive relationships with people, engage well with others, and the ability to emotionally handle the "ups" and "downs" in life. Social skills are learned and take time to mature. Social competency grows and changes over a person's lifetime.

Along with children's social developmental, other key developmental growth (social, physical, emotional, language, cognitive) is occurring at the same time. All of these developmental areas are connected and affect one another in some way. For example, as children's language skills increase, so does their ability to express their feelings and to play more cooperatively with others.

What Are Positive Social Skills

Most parents would agree that they want their children to be happy, liked by others and to get along well with others. Being able to feel good about themselves, having positive relationships and being part of different groups involves several developmental skills. All of these qualities are a part of social development and parents will see their children go through different stages and become skillful in how they engage with other people throughout their growth.

How a child behaves in different situations will vary. There are several influences on child's behavior, such as cultural background, family patterns, a child's personality or temperament, and specific events going on in a child's life. To decide how socially-skilled a child is, you need to observe overall patterns of the child's interactions with and reactions to others over time. You also should know what is going on in a child's life that may affect their behavior. This observation and assessment needs to happen over time, and in various situations, not just one observation.

"Social skills are the single best predictor of adult success".

Continued on Page 4

What's New at PATCH?

Classes for Parents

PATCH offers over 100 Free Child Care Workshops, many of which are great for parents! The current training catalog is available on our website: www.PatchHawaii.org. Look in the Training Tracks Newsletter for classes



marked with the parent symbol (pictured at left), and register now for a class in your area.

Check out our new website:
www.PatchHawaii.org

PATCH's website has a new look; one that we hope provides easier navigation and a better guide to all



of our services. New features include: individual Neighbor Island pages, a News Room, easy links to Training, Newsletters, Scholarships and all PATCH programs and services.

Information for parents is available in the newly formatted Families section.

Please tell us what you think: we're happy to hear your thoughts about site content and accessibility.

Early Childhood Community Resources

Local

Preschool Scholarships: Contact DHS on O'ahu (808) 587-5254 or on Neighbor Islands call (toll free) 1-800-746-5620. Download forms at www.PatchHawaii.org.

The Parent Line:

Oahu: 526-1222

Neighbor Islands: 1-800-816-1222.

Aloha United Way - 211:

Available Monday-Friday, 6am-9pm, it's fast, free and confidential. Call 211 now to GET or GIVE HELP. Or visit www.auw.org/211/.

Online News

Daily Parent: Visit www.childcareaware.org/dailyparent.

KidSource OnLine: Visit www.kidsource.com today!

National

National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRA): Visit www.naccrra.org/parent/index.php.

Born Learning: Visit www.bornlearning.org.

Healthy Habits for Healthy Kids - A Nutrition and Activity Guide for Parents: Visit www.wellpoint.com/healthy_parenting/index.html.



A Whole New World

During the preschool years you have perhaps the greatest impact on your child's perceptions and attitudes about difference than at any other time during her childhood.

The manner in which you treat and discuss others based on similarity and difference - and the manner in which you respond to your child's natural curiosity about these matters - provides the blueprint for her reactions to them.

Biases that you and other adults convey, both positive and negative, tell her who is safe and who is dangerous, who is strong and who is weak, who is beautiful and who is ugly. These messages have the power to turn her "how" and "why" questions into judgment statements. Left unchecked, such judgments can become precursors to poor self-esteem and social interactions based on prejudice or bias.

Too often, we label children's questions and observations about differences as impolite. Rather than seizing them as teachable moments, we ignore or discourage such remarks because they make us uneasy. But seizing these moments as learning opportunities can help your child get past stereotypes and prejudicial images and into a deeper understanding of the world around her.



5 TIPS: THE PRESCHOOL YEARS

1. **Be honest.** Don't encourage children not to "see" color or tell children we are all the same. Rather, discuss differences openly and highlight diversity by choosing picture books, toys, games and videos that feature diverse characters in positive, non-stereotypical roles.
2. **Embrace curiosity.** Be careful not to ignore or discourage your youngster's questions about differences among people, even if the questions make you uncomfortable. Not being open to such questions sends the message that difference is negative.
3. **Broaden choices.** Be careful not to promote stereotypical gender roles, suggesting that there are certain games, sports or activities that only girls can do or only boys can do.
4. **Foster pride.** Talk to your child about your family heritage to encourage self-knowledge and a positive self-concept.
5. **Lead by example.** Widen your circle of friends and acquaintances to include people from different backgrounds, cultures and experiences.

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SOCIAL COMPETENCY: Fostering Your Child's Lifelong Success

Continued from Page 1

As with all major areas of developmental growth, there are typical skills and patterns children show in their social development. With social and emotional skills, sometimes milestones are hard to detect because a lot of the development is inward (self-awareness, self-regulation). Yet, there are visible signs to look for as your child behaves with others, reacts to people and situations, and handles frustration and changes.

What do parents use to determine if their child is developing healthy social skills? Ask yourself the following questions:

- Does my child show compassion? Empathy?
- Does my child cooperate with others?
- Does my child voice his needs and stand up for himself?
- Does my child show an interest in what is going on around her?
- Does my child pick up on social cues?
- Does my child know how to become part of a group?
- Is my child able to problem-solve as part of a group?
- Does my child have a sense of independence?
- How does my child handle conflict, rejection, or other 'negative' feedback?
- Is my child responsible?
- Does my child show self-control?
- Is my child able to soothe himself and calm himself down?



All of these are needed to maintain healthy and positive social skills and help children manage their world.

Difficulties in social skill development is often not seen until children reach school-age. Developing friendships and being accepted by peers is very important during the school-age years.

Promoting Children's Social Skills

Children's social competency is essential to their successful adjustment as adults. With this knowledge, in what way can parents and caregivers support and encourage children's social development? Parents and caregivers provide a great deal of guidance in children developing positive social skills.

Children learn to connect to others first through their parents and providers; this is the beginning of enjoying the company of others and the lifelong path of developing social competency.

Here are some specific suggestions to engage and foster children's social skills:

- Talk to and engage your baby in the "give and take" of conversations.
- Participate in pretend play with your young children, making suggestions to encourage cooperation.
- Work on projects with your child, such as planting flowers, making jewelry, making a photo collage.
- Encourage you child to play with other children in the neighborhood if there are no siblings to play with.

Continued on Page 5

SOCIAL COMPETENCY: Fostering Your Child's Lifelong Success

Continued from Page 4

- Model social skills when you are engaging with others.
- Include your child in social gatherings with other people (picnics, family gatherings, neighborhood socials).
- Put your child into small group activities with other young children (classes, library reading times, play-groups).
- Give suggestions to your older child on how to approach other children, to join children's activities, and to have good social manners.
- Observe your child's interaction with other children and adults. See how your child is accepted by others, and if your child has any difficulties with friends. Note whether your child has at least two good friends.
- Talk to your child care provider or your child's teacher to get feedback on how your child does socially in their program or school.
- Note any difficulties your child has socially. Help your child by practicing social interactions, providing opportunities to be with other children of various ages, and with any issues that may be of importance to your child in relation to his social skills.



These suggestions and more are what parents most likely do naturally. If you suspect your child may be having extra difficulties 'fitting in' or getting along with other children, ask your child's doctor about it. Most likely your child will go through "ups" and "downs" in her friendships. You'll learn when it is important for you to help your child

and when it is better to step back and allow him to figure out what works and what doesn't for him.

You are your child's best role model and coach. As you become more aware of your child's social skills and abilities, you will be better able to foster the strong ones and increase the skills that need more attention. Because social skills are ever-changing, the ways you support your child in her social competency will change as well.



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Oahu Family Child Care Business Association (OFCBA)

Meet to address the issues and concerns of our child care businesses and try to find reasonable and workable solutions to issues affecting them. We encourage networking and sharing our personal experiences to help others in our profession.



To become a member, or for more information, call Debbie: (808) 627-0783



It's shocking news for many that cardiovascular disease is the number one killer of women across the nation, including here, in Hawaii. Go Red for Women helps to raise awareness about heart disease and stroke, to empower women to band together to fight! Join the cause today by registering at www.goredforwomen.org to learn more and to receive your free red dress pin in support of this worthy cause.

We also urge you to help spread the word about Go Red for Women, which builds awareness about the risk of heart disease and stroke in women, and encourages them to take action to live a healthy lifestyle. There are many free resources on the website, including a 12-week physical activity program guide, healthy recipes, newsletters and much more.

Thank you for making a difference in your workplace, your community and with your family. Together we can help save lives – perhaps even the life of a friend – by educating women about their risk of cardiovascular disease and stroke.

You can find local information about the American Heart Association by visiting www.heart.org/hawaii or call Oahu: 538-7021, Maui: 244-7185 or Hilo: 961-2825.



New Special Services for Families of the Navy and Marines

Starting in February 2009, PATCH will launch a new respite care program for families of Navy and of Marines stationed at Navy bases, who have special needs children. If eligible, you can receive up to 40 hours per month of FREE respite care for your children.

PATCH will train child care providers who will be paid by the Navy directly to give your family the respite care it needs. Eligible families must be part of the military's Exceptional Family Member Program.

Check back soon for updates on our website, www.PatchHawaii.org, under Special Services for Military Families, or call 839-1988.

For ALL MILITARY Families (except Airforce): On Active Duty? Deployed? Remember, we can help with special referral services to quality child care programs. Contact your PATCH office today.

PATCH Offices Statewide

Let PATCH assist you in finding licensed child care services across the state. Call one of our offices or visit our website for information on how to choose a quality child care provider, child care financial aid and much more!

In addition, PATCH can connect you to other early childhood resources that are available in your community.

PATCH-Oahu

650 Iwilei Road
Suite 205
Honolulu, HI 96817
Phone: 808-839-1988

PATCH-East Hawaii

305 Wailuku Drive
Suite 4
Hilo, HI 96720
Phone: 808-961-3169

PATCH-Maui County

95 Mahalani Street
Suite 28-2A
Wailuku, HI 96793
Phone: 808-242-4786
Lanai & Molokai: 1-800-498-4145

PATCH-West Hawaii

73-4354 Mamalahoa Hwy.
Suite 208
Kailua-Kona, HI 96740
Phone: 808-325-3864

PATCH-Kauai

4485 Pahee Street
Suite 124
Lihue, HI 96766
Phone: 808-246-0622

Mahalo to the State Department of Human Services, Benefit, Employment and Support Services Division.



Visit our website at www.PatchHawaii.org

- Online child care referrals
- Sign up to receive email news & updates
- Early childhood development resources
- Child care subsidy information
- Much more!

PATCH is a local 501c(3) resource and referral agency created in 1976. Our mission is to support and improve the quality and availability of care for the young people of Hawaii. PATCH has not investigated the resources listed and makes no warranties, express or implied, regarding the nature and quality of goods or services rendered by said resource providers.

Please Join Us for the

PATCH 2009 Annual Meeting & Benefit Dinner

Where: 3660 On The Rise, 3660 Waiialae Avenue, Honolulu

When: Saturday, March 7th, 2009, 5:00PM - 8:30PM

(Annual Meeting to begin promptly at 5:00PM. Dinner, Guest Speaker & Entertainment from 6:00)

Featuring: No-host cocktails, live entertainment, buffet, silent auction & prizes.

Keynote speaker: Mervlyn Kitashima, 2003 National Mother of The Year

For details, contact Virginia Lord at Tel: (808) 791-2121 email: VLord@Patch-Hi.org



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