

INSIGHTS

by Michael Grose - No. 1 parenting educator



Coaching kids in social situations



"Kids are born with L plates when it comes to social skills. Boys, in particular, need a little help and prompting about how to act appropriately around other kids."

A mum approached me after a recent seminar with an interesting question about her son's behaviour amongst his peers.

She said her son is lovely but loud. He was a little too enthusiastic with his friends. So much so, that his buddies felt downright uncomfortable around him and sometimes gave him the cold shoulder. He also liked to be the boss, and didn't like being a follower in social situations.

Here was a perfect opportunity for this mum to do some coaching to help her son negotiate social situations.

Sure, it's great to get excited but kids from 2 to twenty-two need to learn that they have to **tone their enthusiasm down around certain people and in certain situations**. That's what the socialization process requires. Besides, popular children generally know when to follow the lead of others, how to share their possessions and that they won't always have their own way. This ability to share comes with maturity, but sometimes children need some gentle parental help in this area.

Here are three techniques to use to help your child to behave well around others, and maintain friendships as well.

- ✓ **Remind:** Be pre-emptive with your teaching. Before they visit their friends give them a couple of pointers that are relevant to them about their behaviour. *"Remember, to say hello quietly and ask them if they'd like to play with you."*
- ✓ **Rehearse:** It's useful to practise with kids how they should act in social situations. *"Okay, Jeremy tell me what you will say when you go to Grandma's. Let's practice saying hello."*
- ✓ **Revisit:** Give kids feedback after the event but keep it positive and upbeat. *"That was great the way you let the other kids lead the way. Your friends love it when you let them be boss."* Kids benefit from being told what works well in terms of their social behaviours, even if their attempts at being good only approximate what you are after. **It takes a little time for some kids to get things right!**

Effective parents are teaching parents. A lot of the lessons kids pick up from their parents are through mimicry. That's why modeling is one of your greatest allies. They need to spend some time with you so they can pick up good manners, the

importance of sharing and other social niceties. Boys, in particular, need a little help and prompting about how to act appropriately around other kids.

There are times when parents need to make sure their lessons hit home and that includes when you coach kids how to be social and consider the needs of others.



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