



himaya, in collaboration with Moms & To Be, aims to break the silence on children abuse which is still considered a taboo. This section is to help you recognize different forms of abuse and stop them from happening to ensure the safety and welfare of a child.

I WANT MY CHILD TO BE SOCIABLE

"I want my kids to be happy and well-integrated. What can I do to help them develop the social skills they need for life?" ask parents, as they complain about their children being timid and unsociable.

Some mothers fear that their husbands will be disappointed in their children if they aren't a part of a football team or not hitting on girls in their class. On the other hand, mothers tremendously struggle to get their daughters to attend birthday parties and stare at them from across the room thinking: "Why isn't she hitting the dance floor like everybody else?". However, it seems that our own understanding of sociability greatly affects what we

expect of our children and of ourselves. Let's break this social concept down together.

An incorrect definition of sociable

A child is perceived as being sociable if he has many friends, he loves to go to birthday parties and throws the cake at someone's face, he loves to play in teams and pull many of his friends' legs, almost bullying them. A child is perceived as sociable if he loves hitting the dance floor and makes funny faces and gestures.

Although they punish their children for getting caught jumping across the fence at school, parents smile and tell the story with pride within their circle

of friends and neighbors. However, this behavior shouldn't necessarily be labelled as sociable, it is rather "attention seeking" behavior, with little to no social skill.

What is a sociable child

Labeling a child is easy but defining the word "sociable" depends on context. To simplify the matter, a general definition for "sociable" could be talking effectively and being able to interact with strangers when needed. A sociable child might know how to start a conversation, know when to listen, know how to get along with others, be responsible for his/her own behavior, understand

how to make and keep friends, be able to deal with uncomfortable situations (e.g. teasing, bullying and unpopularity), empathize with others and be nice to them. It is having a small dose of each, knowing that functioning on one coping strategy is by itself alarming. For example: being a full-time bully needs follow up.

What is an unsociable child

It is important for parents to have a basic understanding of normative developmental skills appropriate for different age groups, so they can determine whether their child needs help.



In general, a child who is incapable of communicating with a waiter at 13 years old, or lacks any close friends, or doesn't show any empathy when others are hurt or rejected or acts bossy and insists on having things their way or uses a louder voice than most children to express themselves, or seems constantly ignored and victimized by other children, requires a special attention. Social skills aren't necessarily the end goal, it is rather the ability to communicate in a clear, considerate, and effective manner. In other words, for a child to be able to understand what they want and be able to ask for it without getting into trouble or hurting others.

How to teach my child how to become more socially skilled

For your child to acquire certain social skills, small practice exercises are helpful. Encourage them to look into people's eyes when having conversation as it establishes trust and assures the person they

are speaking to that they are being heard. Tell them to have confidence when communicating and to express themselves clearly. Play games like the "staring contest" or let them tell you, or their toys, stories while maintaining eye contact.

Disappointment, joy, anger, excitement, weirdness, nervousness, tiredness, and fear are all human feelings, and children need to understand that it is alright to experience these feelings, just like anyone else. Play "guess the emotion" game as it helps them differentiate emotions and express what they feel. Remember that, as a parent, you set an example, and the game should start with you expressing your own emotions.

Create a communication schedule. Set a specific place and time to engage your children in conversations and discussions. Children may need help interacting with others. Tell them that they are free to talk and communicate their needs and ideas.

Activities that teach them how to become more comfortable with social situations, such as mingling, are a great idea. Give your children the chance to interact with different types of people and have access to chill time. Add hobbies, playgrounds, and sports/fun classes to the menu.

Teach your child attention and respect for others: don't let them hurt people. Make sure to give them the coaching they need to become kind adults. Do not label them as shy, even if they are. Instead, try to understand their feelings and teach them to be more confident. Help them realize that they will eventually overcome the situation by reminding them of previous situations they handled with success.

How to accept the uniqueness of our child

The general rule is to accept a child's anxiety as a part of normal life. Anxiety affects most people.

Projecting our own fears on the child vs. dealing with them

Relax and don't constantly try to interpret the actions of your child. Chances are they will be fine, unless something alarming or out of the ordinary occurs. Most of our fears as parents come from projecting our own childhood and teenage struggles onto our children. But our children are not us, and they do not live in the same world we did. Our children do not have to resemble or behave like other children; all children are unique and have their own sets of qualities and flaws. Embrace your children's individuality and help in their development. Teach them how to become someone who is socially valued. Everyone has something to contribute to society, all it takes is a little confidence and a little investment.