

Social Skills for Siblings: Asking to Play

SOCIAL STORY

Siblings have unique and complex relationships. We can help them navigate these relationships by teaching them helpful social skills. Sometimes it's easy to think *they should know how to do that*, but children will often use whatever “skill” seems to work for them—even if it's a hurtful or undesirable skill. Our job is to teach children healthy, prosocial skills for even the most basic interactions.

This “Asking to Play” story provides specific procedures and visual reminders for the processes of getting someone's attention and asking to play together. It also provides positive choices for what to do when a sibling says, “No.”

The more children encounter helpful skills in a variety of different contexts (modeling, teaching in the moment, literature, skills cards, songs, etc.), the more likely they are to adopt the desired skill. Better social skills equal fewer conflicts, greater cooperation and healthier sibling relationships.

How to Use this Story

Help siblings internalize the steps for asking to play together by reading this story to them both individually and together as a group. Pause after each page to ask or answer questions, and roleplay using recent events. After you have read the story several times, begin to refer to it during times of potential conflict. “You want to play with big sis. We have a story about asking to play together! What do you remember from that story that could help you now?”

When children are struggling with a particular skill, it will be helpful for them to see themselves being successful at it. Coach the children in acting out each step in the story so you can take photos. Print the photos and glue them to the book's pages so your children become the featured characters. Visualizing themselves being successful is a powerful motivator for change.

A Note About Social Stories

Social stories originated as a means for exchanging concepts and skills with people with autism. However, the ten defining criteria for social stories are extraordinarily helpful in the teaching of skills to *all* children. This sibling skill story employs many of the features of a true social story.

Social Skills for Siblings: Asking to Play



Created by Julie Ruffo, Conscious Discipline Publishing

I am a sibling! That means I'm not the only kid around here.



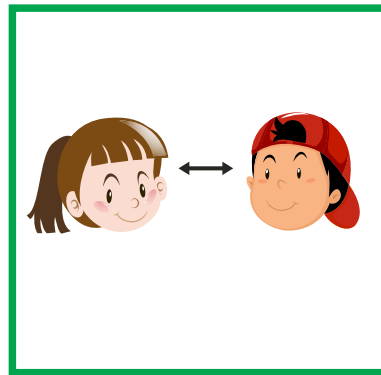
Being siblings is a lot of fun, but sometimes we have trouble getting along. Social skills show us helpful ways to do things like asking to play. I'd rather be helpful than hurtful!



**One of the most important social skills
is getting someone's attention.
To get someone's attention, I tap,
look and say their name.**



I tap them gently.



I look at them.

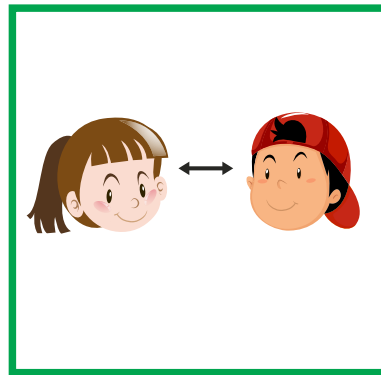


I say their name.

If they don't look back at me,
I can wait a few seconds and try again.
I tap, look at them and say their name.



I tap them gently.

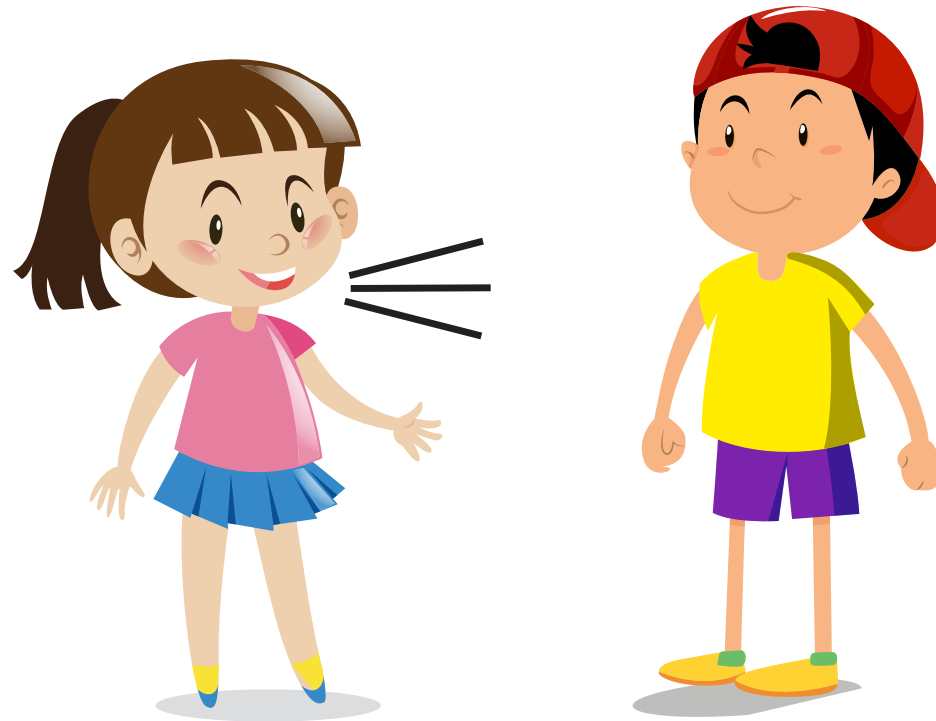


I look at them.



I say their name.

When they look at me, I can talk to them.





I did it!

**I got someone's
attention!**



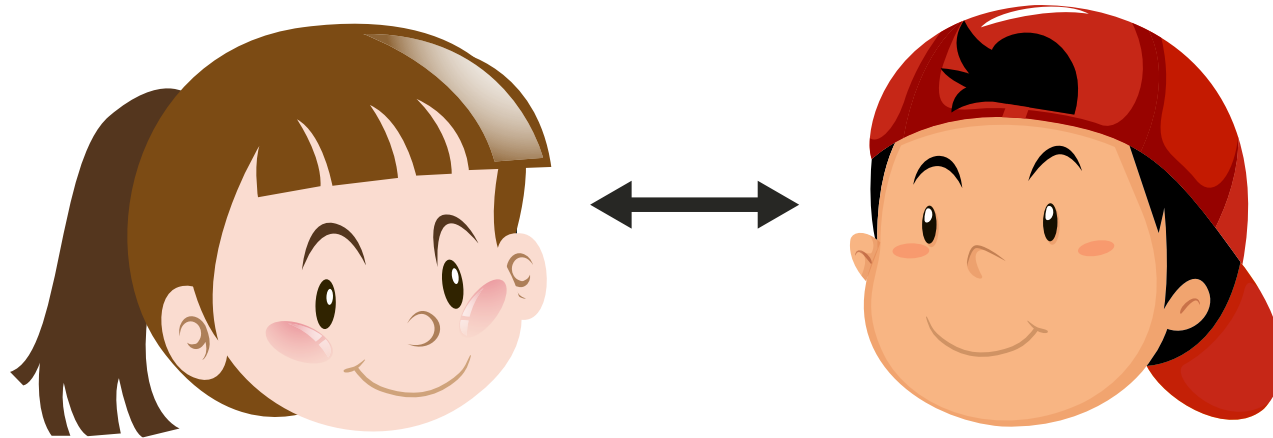
Sometimes I want my sibling to come play with me or to join in what they're playing. When I want to play I can tap, wait, ask.



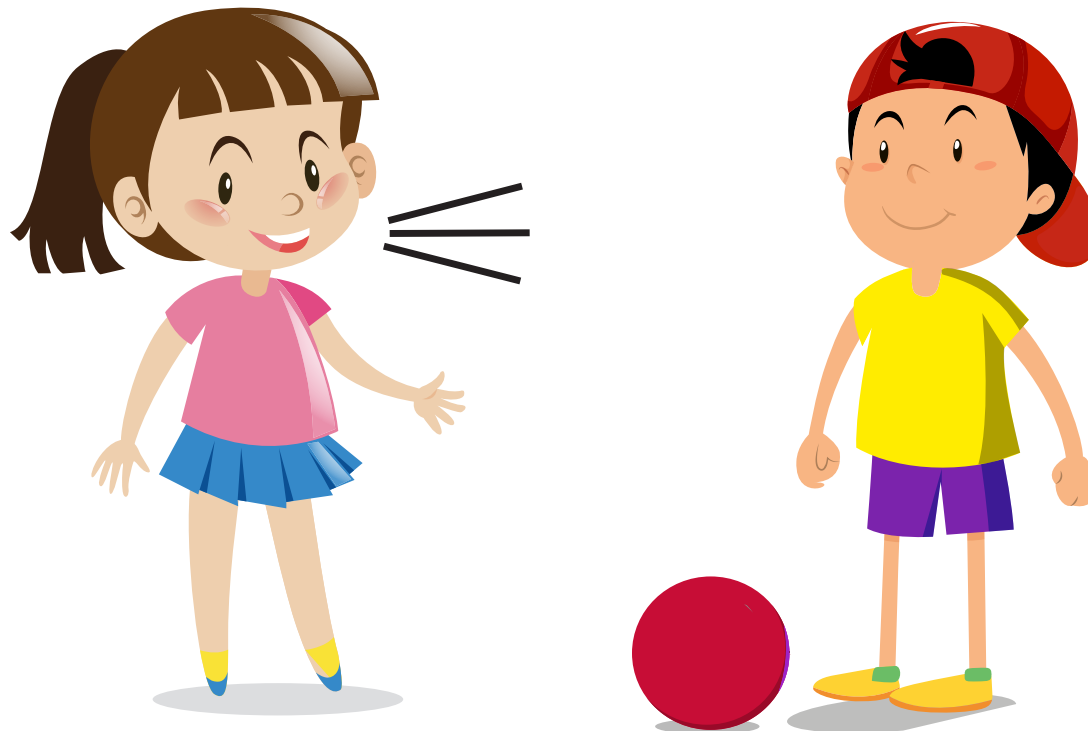
I **tap** my sibling's shoulder.



I look at them and **wait** for
them to look at me.



**Then I ask if they want to play.
“Can we play together?”**





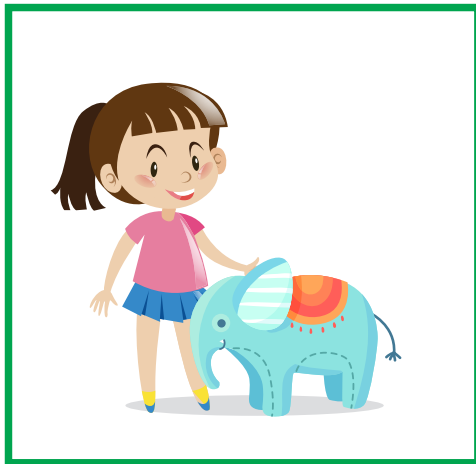
I did it!
**I asked my
sibling to play!**



**Sometimes my siblings don't want
to play. When a sibling says, "No,"
I have choices!**



When my sibling isn't ready to play with me,



I can play by myself.



I can ask someone else to play. "Would you like to play?"



I can ask for help from an adult. "Please help. I don't know what to do next."



I did it!

**I made a helpful
choice!**



Being siblings is a lot of fun. Social skills show us helpful ways to do things like asking to play. I'd rather be helpful than hurtful!

