



# Social Skills

By Dr Andrew Wicking

---

'Social Skills' is one of 9 domains measured by Resilient Youth Australia's Resilience Survey.

Social skills are the abilities that young people need to interact with others in their world, including peers, parents, teachers and other adults. The development of social skills includes building friendships, navigating cultural differences, and resolving conflicts peacefully.

## **Plan celebrations**

Facilitate regular activities such as festivals of friendship, festivals of ideas or kindness week.

## **Use play to foster social skills**

Check out PLAY, a Resilient Youth Australia program designed for students in Grade 5 and 6 that uses the natural love that students have for playing to foster social interaction between all year levels during lunchtime and recess:

<https://resiliencyouth.org/play>

## **Be a role model**

The most powerful way of building relationship skills is by role modelling. The way adults treat each other and young people at school provides a powerful tone and helps set a positive culture for the school. Increase the amount of observable positive interactions between staff.

## **Greet all students every morning and afternoon**

Don't forget the importance of greetings. The way students are greeted as they enter classrooms also communicates expectations about civilized behaviours and relationship skills. Some schools have taken on a project of exuberant greetings around their school to great effect.

## **Drama and debate**

Increase the opportunities for students to engage in constructive conversations in classroom. Debates, discussions, enquiries and informal chats are all valuable. The drama teacher can play a powerful role in this area. Combining drama, theatre sports and literacy activities powerfully engages students and also teaches social skills.

## **Teach a lesson about "How we behave towards each other"**

Use the free lesson resource "How we behave towards each other", available on the Resilient Youth Australia website.

## **Develop Peer Skills**

As the majority of young adolescents turn to their friends for advice, equip them with key "Peer Skills" such as active listening, not giving advice, and knowledge of when to refer to issue to an adult.

**Please feel free to copy and distribute this information.**

Copyright © Resilient Youth Australia Pty Ltd, 2020. ABN 19 636 065 711  
[www.resiliencyouth.org](http://www.resiliencyouth.org)

### **Teach a lesson about teamwork called 'Human Train'**

Use the free lesson resource about teamwork 'Human Train', available on the Resilient Youth Australia website.

### **Social skills 101**

Encourage students to practice meeting and mixing with new people as much as possible, and to know that just as you are not going to like everyone you meet, not everyone you meet is going to like you. It is ok!

### **Handling behaviour issues in a supportive way**

When you need to talk to a student about their inappropriate behaviour you might say:

- "Hey Jim, can I talk with you in private?"
- "I was a bit surprised about what I saw/heard because I didn't expect this of you";
- "What's caused this?"
- "Do you think you might have handled this differently";
- "What should we do about it?";
- "Thanks for talking with me".

### **Stay in touch with Resilient Youth**

To inquire about our surveys and programs or to join our newsletter:

<https://resiliencyouth.org/home>

For more Free Resources or to download our free eBook '101 Resilience Building Ideas':

<https://linktr.ee/ResilientYouthAustralia>

Follow Andrew on LinkedIn:

[www.linkedin.com/in/andrew-wicking-52354b28](http://www.linkedin.com/in/andrew-wicking-52354b28)

*Dr Andrew Wicking is the Founding Director of Resilient Youth Australia Pty Ltd, Adjunct Research Associate at the University of South Australia and alumnus of the Stanford Business School Executive Non-profit Leaders Course.*

[This article is a modified and updated extract of Wicking A., Fuller A., Wicking P., 'The Resilient Youth E-book', © RYAL 2013.]