

SOCIAL MILESTONES

ARE MY KIDS ON TRACK?

With David Thomas & Sissy Goff

Social Milestones Overview

There are four social milestones children need to reach:

1. Awareness
2. Reciprocity
3. Ownership
4. Boundaries

There are three guiding principles for social development for kids:

1. Prioritizing a child's emotional development will help their social development.
2. Kids are experiential learners.
3. Every child develops at their own pace.

TIP: Use books and movies. Pause to ask your child what they think a character will do next based on what they've observed so far.

Social Stumbling Blocks

Boys' Stumbling Blocks:

1. Blame
2. Avoidance
3. Denial

In general, when something goes wrong in a boy's world, he blames someone else.

In general, when something goes wrong in a girl's world, she blames herself.

As parents of boys, we can't care more about something for them than they care about it themselves. We must let them experience natural consequences and learn to problem-solve on their own.

In general, boys have a hard time respecting boundaries.

In general, girls have a hard time setting boundaries.

Girls' Stumbling Blocks:

1. Hints
2. Mind Reading
3. Going Out on the Dock (and hoping someone follows them)

When we participate in a child's hints, mind-reading, and going out on the dock... we are reinforcing insecurity, manipulation, and passive-aggressiveness.

Big Picture:

As parents, we must decide to value our children's character over their happiness.

Next Steps:

1. Think about a situation where you valued your child's happiness over their character.
2. Think about a situation where you valued their character over their happiness.
3. Think about the outcome of each situation.

Social Building Blocks

As parents, building blocks we can use are:

1. Enforcing
 - Create boundaries—boundaries create security in kids.
 - Give kids consequences, mixed with the truth of who they are.
 - Trust your gut.
2. Teaching and Empowering
 - Help kids mix strength and kindness.
 - Ask really good questions.
 - Teach healthy ways to work through conflict.

Addressing conflict:

1. Affirm the relationship.
2. Use "I" statements.
3. State your contribution to the conflict.
4. Come to a resolution.

TIP: Check out *Are My Kids on Track?* for 40 practical ideas to help kids reach social milestones.