

WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD BE SUCCESSFUL PLAYING OUTSIDE

DAUPHIN COUNTY MH/A/DP
JULY 2019 RESOURCE SHARING

Summer is a great time to get outside and play on playgrounds and in your neighborhood. Sometimes children with attention issues and other special needs face challenges in this setting. Below are some common problems your child may encounter on a playground or playing with children outside, along with some tips on how to help. Summer is a great time to work on these areas with your child and prepare them for school.

1. ***Being bullied or witnessing bullying*** - Bullying is repeated name calling, insults, threats, exclusion and even physical violence, which can escalate over time. ***How to help:*** Explain what bullying is and make sure your child knows she can come to you (or a trusted adult) if she experiences it or sees it. Tell her it's okay to walk away if she feels unsafe.
2. ***Being too aggressive with other children*** - Children with special needs may act without thinking or filtering what they say. They may not realize they are being too forceful with others. ***How to help:*** Set ground rules and consequences for behaviors. Encourage him to use his words. Have him practice asking for a turn.
3. ***Dealing with winning or losing*** - It's not always easy to win or lose graciously. ***How to help:*** Point out that if your child makes others feel bad they may not want to play with them. Remind them playground/neighborhood games are just games. Teach phrases that show good sportsmanship, such as "good game".
4. ***Not being able to handle playground equipment*** - Children with motor skills issues may have a hard time using playground equipment. ***How to help:*** Practice when the playground is free. You can help her break down the steps and practice doing what she likes best.
5. ***Not taking turns or following directions*** - Playing involves sharing, taking turns and communicating with others. This can be hard! ***How to help:*** Model taking turns and sharing. Practice the language your child needs to know such as "my turn", "your turn" or even "listen to me!" Let your child know it's okay to ask a peer or adult to clarify and break down the rules.
6. ***Not wanting to play with other children*** - Your child may not be sure how to start a conversation or ask to join a game. This can make it hard to develop friendships. ***How to help:*** Practice what your child can say to other children such as "Hi, I'm Sam, what's your name?" and "Do you want to play on the slide with me?" You can also help your child figure out when it's okay to join a large game without specifically asking.
7. ***Taking risks*** - Sometimes children with attentions issues have trouble with impulse control and may act before they think. This can result in risky behavior. ***How to help:*** Talk to your child about taking a breath and thinking before she acts. Visit playgrounds that have sand, wood chips or turf and make sure your child is supervised. Set rules on where your child is able to go in the yard or neighborhood.
8. ***Teasing*** - Children can have a hard time telling the difference between teasing that is good natured joking around and that which is just mean. ***How to help:*** - Explain the difference between the two. Show your child the body language, tone of voice and facial expressions that go with each. You can also help your child practice what to say when he is teased, such as "I didn't like that." or "It hurt my feelings."

Excerpted from:

<https://www.understood.org/en/friends-feelings/child-social-situations/playgrounds-playdates/8-common-playground-problems-and-how-to-help>