



**Social Skills for Children**  
**Parent Workshop – 11/6/09**

Clinical psychologist Dr. Peter Murphy and associate Julia Solarz, M.A have developed a relationship-based approach to complex adult-child dynamics, and conduct workshops and social skills groups for challenging children, adolescents, their siblings & parents at their Encino practice. Parents and their kids can educate themselves about who they are and their relationships to one another as a key to their growth.

**LABELS ARE LIMITING**

Although he specializes in treating those with social skills challenges, learning, attention, & mood disorders, such as Autism, Aspergers, ADD & ADHD, Dr. Murphy stresses that “Labels are limiting.” Focusing on the child’s strengths and making a huge investment in what they do well will pay off far more than reminders of a child’s weaknesses or delays.

“We know that if kids can do something, they will do it. Stubborn behavior, for example, is more about flexibility. It’s also a way to manage anxiety. Stubborn behavior serves a function. It protects them.”

Kids are inconsistent. They may be very smart & advanced in one area and lagging in another. Instead of labeling our children, we need to be curious about WHY they are inconsistent, and create situations where parents can help set up their child for success. We need expectations in our homes that fit what our children are developmentally able to do.

School demands are so high these days. What children are asked to do academically sometimes “surpass developmental abilities.”

**MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING**

If your child is lagging in recognizing social cues, for instance, understand that non-verbal communication is 65-80% of all communication. In this case, parents can help narrate for their kids what is happening. Pave the way for them.

“Kids have to understand themselves. Or they feel flawed.”

Develop coping strategies with your child to help him/her calm down and develop the ability to monitor their own thoughts – to recognize the ones that go with the beginnings of anxious feelings, for example.

You can ask them, “On a scale of 1 to 10, where are you feeling now?”

When they are calm, ask them again. This will help them make them aware of what they are going through.

“It’s all about self-regulation. Regulation of focus, emotions, mood & behavior.”

Remember: Time is your ally. Some brain development, like Executive Functioning (planning and organization) is not fully formed until the late teenage years.

A.D.D.

Attention Deficit Disorder is a disorder of focus & motivation.

When considering Medication for ADD, keep in mind that the medication for ADD has been around for about 100 years. It does not remain/build up in the child's system.

It's a question of Quality of Life. Can your child use their intellect, etc. to compensate and manage themselves, or is their condition taking a toll on the child's self esteem?

***THANK YOU***

Thank you parent participants for such a thoughtful Social Skills Workshop, and thank you Dr. Murphy and Julia Solarz for your sympathetic approach to the needs of those present & to the needs of children in general.

*Notes by Eve Hill*

**Dr. Peter Murphy & Associates**

Adults \* Adolescents \* Children \* Families

17337 Ventura Boulevard, Suite 320, Encino, California 91316

(818) 990-2966 \* (818) 388-1526