

Social Skills: Helping Preschoolers Make Friends

Watching your 3–5-year-old make their first friend is pure joy! In Pakistan, where community is everything, social skills help kids thrive at school and family events. Here’s how to guide them.

Why Social Skills Matter

Social skills like sharing, listening, and cooperating help kids form friendships, resolve conflicts, and feel confident in groups.

Ways to Build Social Skills

1. **Model kindness:** Greet neighbors with “Assalamualaikum” or share snacks at dawats. Kids copy what you do.
2. **Practice sharing:**
 - At home, take turns with a toy: “You roll the ball, then Ammi.”
 - Praise them: “Great job sharing your car!”
3. **Teach greetings:** Role-play saying “Hi, I’m Ali!” or “Adaab” to elders. Practice eye contact and smiles.
4. **Arrange playdates:** Invite a cousin or neighbor over. Start with short, supervised play (1 hour) to ease them in.
5. **Read about friendship:** Books like *The Rainbow Fish* or Urdu stories teach kindness. Ask, “How did the fish make friends?”
6. **Role-play conflicts:**
 - Act out scenarios: “What if someone takes your crayon?”
 - Guide them to say, “Please give it back” or get a teacher.
7. **Encourage teamwork:**
 - Play group games like “Ring Around the Rosie” or desi “Kith Kith.”
 - Praise cooperation: “You all built a big tower together!”

Pakistani Context

- **Joint families:** Use family time to practice taking turns or helping younger cousins.
- **Cultural values:** Teach respect for elders as a social skill: “Say shukriya to Chachi for the toffee.”
- **Shy kids:** Desi gatherings can overwhelm. Prep them with phrases like “Can I play?” to join in.

Challenges

- **Bossiness:** If they demand toys, redirect: “Let’s ask nicely.”

- **Shyness:** Don't force interaction. Let them watch first, then join at their pace.
- **Fights:** Step in calmly to mediate: "Let's talk about what happened."

When to Worry

If your child avoids peers, hits often, or seems overly anxious in groups by age 4, talk to a pediatrician or teacher to check for social delays.

Why It Works

Social skills build your child's confidence to shine at school or a family shaadi. One friend can make their world brighter.

Set up a playdate or smiley-face role-play—your preschooler's ready to connect!