



THE JEFFRAS' PROGRAM THAT PROMOTES
A HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT
FOR STUDENTS WITH SPINA BIFIDA

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Social development for all people begins at birth and continues throughout life. School years provide a tremendous and vital opportunity to develop qualities and skills that promote social progress. During these important years, children learn to interact in a broadening arena of school and community activities. Each child's temperament will affect their social development. The specific ways that SB and hydrocephalus influence social development are not yet fully understood, but school interactions are a vital and often challenging part of that growing process. Similar to children without disabilities, some children with SB are passive, and may require encouragement to get involved in activities; while others will need guidance and help to interact at an age appropriate level in group settings.

Successes in developing social skills in children with SB:

- Learning to strike up a conversation
- Knowing how to behave to make & maintain friends
- Learning to listen. Many children need extra help
- Developing a positive attitude
- Learning to interact in groups
- Learning to discuss SB with others

Encouraging social skill development:

- Give child feedback and positive messages
- Seek opportunities for participation in structured activities, including extra curricular programs
- Involve the child in mainstreamed education as much as possible
- Expect child to take responsibilities & be accountable
- Offer opportunities for the child to succeed and fail as a normal part of life experiences
- Offer opportunities for the child to "give back", by volunteering or other community activities

Factors that bolster social skill development:

- A variety of ways to interact, in & out the home
- Treating the child the same as non SB sibling.
- Participation in age appropriate (chronological and developmental) social groups
- Good hygiene
- Learning to deal with negative situations
- Frequent, open, honest communication between the school and parents

Factors that challenge social skill development:

- Frequent illness and/or hospitalizations, surgeries
- Fatigue
- Learning problems
- Difficulty understanding social interactions
- Limited mobility
- Restrictive environments due to either inaccessible areas or over-protectiveness
- Continence/hygiene issues
- Transitioning into new schools or classrooms
- Being shunned, self imposed feelings of being an outsider, too much time alone
- Difficulty with problem solving or using good judgment; making decisions that put the child or teen at risk for injury, exploitation or abuse

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Precocious Puberty Health Information Sheet](#)
[Men's Health Information Sheet](#)
[Women's Health Information Sheet](#)
[Preparations.org](#)

