

## SOCIAL FOUNDATION SKILLS OBSERVATIONAL POINTERS



CATEGORY	<i>Use these questions to guide your observations.</i>
<b>Social Orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Does your child show an awareness and interest in other people? Is there any difference if those people are family members, children his own age, older and younger children, babies, familiar adults or adult strangers?</i></li> <li>● <i>How do you know he is aware of others? How does he give attention to others? Does he look at others, reach out to touch them, move towards or turn his body towards them, smile, giggle, stand nearby or try to start an interaction? Describe exactly what you see your child do.</i></li> <li>● <i>Does he look tend to look at people's faces, at what they are wearing, physical features (lips with lipstick, beards, shaved heads etc) or is it difficult to tell what he is focusing on?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does he give attention spontaneously? Does he naturally pay attention to people who enter the room, make an interesting sound, or come nearby? OR Do other people need to purposefully try to engage him to get his attention?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does he keep paying attention to others, or is his attention fleeting (lasting a couple of seconds or less)?</i></li> <li>● <i>How long does he maintain attention in a typical interaction?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does he notice people from a distance (e.g. across a playground) or does he need to be close by others to notice them?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does your child pay more attention when the other person is doing something that interests him?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does he show more awareness and interest in particular people? If so, what is it that attracts him to these people? Is it their physical characteristics, personality, communication style etc? E.g. long hair, beards, loud speech, animated style, age, or size? Does he prefer quiet or outgoing people?</i></li> <li>● <i>How does he show that he wants to be close to others or indicate that he wants to be alone?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does your child show better social awareness depending on what he is doing? For example if he is highly engaged in what he is playing with is he oblivious to others or is his awareness heightened?</i></li> </ul> <p><i>If you get the chance to watch your child in a group situations consider the following observational pointers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Does your child look at the leader or a facilitator at the front of a group?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does he shift his attention when other people in the group take turns?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does he pay attention to what most other children in the group attend to?</i></li> </ul>

<p>Imitation &amp; Joint Actions</p>	<p>Functional imitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Does your child imitate <u>functional</u> actions? Functional imitation occurs when a child copies another person's actions in order to meet his own needs and wants. He may copy what another person does in order to obtain a desired item, undertake an action he likes but doesn't know how to do, or get rid of something he doesn't want. E.g. If you show him how to open a container that contains an item of interest, does he copy you? If you show him how to make a toy work, does he copy you? If you show him how to pack away or throw away an item, does he copy you?</i></li> </ul> <p>Social imitation</p> <p><i>Social imitation occurs when a child copies another person purely for social purposes, i.e. to relate, connect with or be similar to another person. In other words, he will receive nothing more than social attention and a sense of connectedness from the act of imitating.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Does he imitate, single words, phrases or sounds you make? If so, what are the sounds and words he imitates? Will your child imitate these same sounds and words if other people make them? Does he watch your mouth, or does he tend to imitate just as well if he can't see you? Is your tone of voice imitated? Is he more likely to imitate if you use a dramatic vocal style?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does he imitate facial expressions or different mouth positions (e.g. poking out your tongue, rounding or protruding your lips)?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does he imitate hand, leg and whole body actions? (E.g. clapping, hi five, tapping, drumming, stamping, jumping, turning in circles). What actions is he more likely to imitate? Why do you think these actions are more effective?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does he imitate actions that involve objects better than actions that don't?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does he seem to enjoy imitating others?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does he show an interest in watching others when they imitate a leader?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does he imitate better in certain situation, with particular people, or doing particular actions etc?</i></li> <li>● <i>How long does he maintain imitation interactions?</i></li> <li>● <i>Is there a difference between his imitation skills in-group and one-on-one situations?</i></li> <li>● <i>If you change actions during an imitation game, does your child adapt to copy the next action? (If you change actions quickly, does he keep up?)</i></li> <li>● <i>Does your child show awareness that other people are copying him (i.e. when he is the leader in an imitation activity?)</i></li> <li>● <i>Does he imitate actions better when music or an obvious rhythm is involved?</i></li> </ul> <p>General imitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Does he imitate his favourite personalities and characters on TV and DVDs</i></li> <li>● <i>Does he imitate environmental sounds or melodies?</i></li> </ul>
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Adjusting  
behaviour to  
coordinate  
with others

Co-ordinating parallel roles

● *Does your child undertake and adjust his behaviour in a variety of activities, games and tasks that work better when two people to do the same action at the same time (i.e. taking parallel roles)? Some examples are:*

▶ When you are walking together, does he slow down if you slow down, quicken if you quicken your pace, stop when you stop etc? If your answer is 'yes', do you need to hold his hand, or will he do whatever you do without holding hands? Do you need to give him tell him to do so, or does he adjust his behaviour by himself?

▶ If you are singing together or playing with musical instruments, does he get louder if you get louder, softer if you get softer, stop when you stop, start again when you do so? Do you need to give him tell him to do so, or does he adjust his behaviour by himself?

▶ Can he lift and carry a small table or heavy bag with you? Carry mats /mattresses out or air? Does he lift the item, walk in the same direction and put down the item when you do so?

▶ Can he make or strip the bed together (pull up sheets/ blanket together)?

● *Is it you or your child taking the lead in parallel role activities? (i.e. the lead starts, stops, changes pace, direction and loudness while the follower adjusts). Does he tend to lead, follow or is happy to do both?*

Co-ordinating complementary roles

● *Does your child undertake and adjust his behaviour in a variety of activities, games and tasks that work better when two people to do a different action at the same time (i.e. taking complementary roles)? Some examples are:*

▶ While packing away groceries or other items: if you take items out of the bag and hand them to him, can he put the items on the shelf? (Can he swap roles, i.e. he takes the groceries out and you put away?)

▶ Will he continue holding a bag open while you tip in items? Can he bring the dustpan towards the broom and hold it steady as you sweep in the dirt? Does he recognise when you have finished doing something together and look to you to see what happens next?

▶ During spray and wipe cleaning, will he spray then wait for you to wipe before moving on to do more spraying?

▶ During teeth cleaning if you show you are ready to squeeze the toothpaste will he bring his toothbrush to the toothpaste to co-ordinate?

● *Does your child show awareness that he is doing something in a coordinated manner? (Does he look to check the other person, pause, change what he is doing etc?)*

● *Does your child show emotional engagement while coordinating with others? (Does he smile and show joy, get annoyed at you when you take the lead etc?)*

<p>Emotional expression and attunement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>How would you describe your child's general temperament?</i></li> <li>● <i>Is it obvious to most people the way your child is feeling?</i></li> <li>● <i>How can you tell your child is in pain, is sick, is feeling angry, happy, excited, wary, bored, confused, frustrated etc?</i></li> <li>● <i>Who is your child affectionate with?</i></li>   <li>● <i>Does your child's behaviour reflect how he is feeling internally? Does he giggle when he is stressed rather than look concerned?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does he seem to laugh for no apparent reason?</i></li> <li>● <i>Are his responses appropriate to the situation? E.g. Does he laugh when it is a stressful situation or giggle when another person is upset?</i></li> <li>● <i>Is the scale of his response appropriate to the situation (is it too big, too little or flat)?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does your child get stuck in an emotion and can't seem to move on?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does your child react or show awareness of other peoples' emotional reactions?</i></li>   <li>● <i>How does your child handle planned and unplanned separations from key people?</i></li> <li>● <i>Is your child soothed/calmed by others when upset? Does he prefer to be by himself when upset?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does your child actively share his emotions with others?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does your child have ways to cope with his emotions by himself? What does he do to calm himself?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does your child attempt to make you react with a particular emotion? (e.g. Does he manipulate your mouth to smile when you are frowning? Bring you items to share because you usually become excited and he likes that experience to be repeated?</i></li>   <li>● <i>Does your child have emotional meltdowns? What causes these meltdowns? How long do they last? What do they look like?</i></li> </ul>
<p>Joint Attention</p>	<p>Expressive Joint Attention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Does your child hold out, give or point to objects in order to share and show?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does your child bring you objects?</i></li> </ul> <p>Receptive Joint Attention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Does your child look to see what others are looking at (follows the path of your gaze to see what you are looking at)?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does your child look at the main point of interest that most others in the vicinity are looking at?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does your child look at what you are pointing to (then check to see what your reaction is)?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does your child check out what you are commenting about? And then return their gaze to you?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does your child shift his gaze between people and objects depending on what is happening?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does his gaze shift from looking at your face, immediately to the item of interest, then immediately back to you?</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>If there are 2 people, does your child look from the object to the 1<sup>st</sup> person, then immediately to the 2<sup>nd</sup> person then back to the object?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does he show enjoyment when sharing the same point of interest?</i></li> </ul>
Turn Taking Interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>How does your child respond to other people's attempts to interact with him?</i></li> <li>● <i>Is he more likely to respond when people behave or talk in a particular way? What works best to encourage him to respond?</i></li> <li>● <i>Some children take a little time to respond. How long does your child take to respond?</i></li> <li>● <i>What happens when other children his age approach your child?</i></li>   <li>● <i>Does your child take turns in short interactions that follow a predictable sequence (e.g. peek a boo, chasings) Can he swap roles in these interactions?</i></li> </ul> <p><i>If you have had the opportunity to watch your child in a group situation, note whether he can take turns when a variety of structured turn taking strategies are used (e.g. moving left to right as everyone takes a turn, handing/passing along an object from one person to another, showing a person's picture or calling a child's name in relation to turn taking etc)?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Does your child take turns when it is explicitly announced and guided? (e.g. "mummy's turn, Suzi's turn" as object is passed)</i></li> <li>● <i>Does your child show anticipation as his turn comes closer?</i></li> <li>● <i>Does your child show interest in other people when it is their turn?</i></li> </ul>