



Rifka Schonfeld STRATEGIES

THE NEWSLETTER FOR OPTIMUM SUCCESS

TIPS ON SOCIAL SKILLS FOR ADULTS & CHILDREN

CHILDREN STILL NOT SETTLED IN SCHOOL?

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SOCIAL SKILL COACHING

Stresses and anxieties related to social skills are among the most compelling components affecting both the success and the contentment of children. Klal Yisrael is therefore fortunate to have these matters presented so effectively by renowned expert, Mrs. Rifka Schonfeld. She has produced yet another resource to provide guidance in vital areas of interpersonal skills in the spirit of a genuine Torah perspective.

RABBI SHMUEL YAAKOV KLEIN
Torah Umesorah

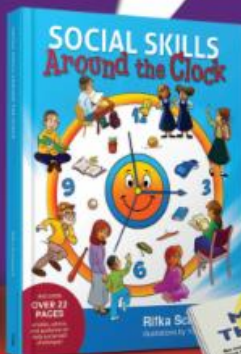
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Dear Readers,
This week's newsletter includes a question on the topic of settling our children into school.

Rifka Schonfeld
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QUESTION:

My teenager daughter seems to quickly switch from one mood to another. She might be very happy and relaxed at the dinner table and then suddenly for no apparent reason, she gets frustrated and angry. I know mood swings are normal for this age, but I wanted to know how much anger is too much?

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ANSWER:

First, let me preface this answer by saying that it is completely normal for children to have trouble adjusting to a new classroom and new teachers. We ourselves might find it difficult

The first half of the book, has cartoon characters on one side of the page being disagreeable/ unhappy/ afraid and on the corresponding page the problems are solved. This helps the children understand the situation in a colorful fun way and then work on the solution.

The second half of the book is a guide for parents, teachers and therapists, with tips for successfully addressing the issues in the first half.

Children will enjoy reading this book with Mom and Dad, because it is a fun way to bring home important life points.

NAOMI MAUER
Publisher, The Jewish Press.



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when put in new social or professional situations. That being said, after a few weeks, this anxiety should subside and your child should begin to feel comfortable in her new environment.

There are, however, several ways that you can help ease the transition into the new school year:

Create a connection with another student.

Your daughter will feel more secure if she has one child in the classroom with whom she feels a special connection. Ask your daughter who she is spending time with in school and then invite the child over for a playdate. If you aren't sure that she will enjoy a full playdate, suggest going to pizza after school with that girl and her mother and even inviting the whole family over for a *shabbos* meal. Within minutes, your daughter will be happily playing with her friend. Then, when she enters the classroom, she will have a mini-support system.

Pay attention to her anxiety.

Ask your daughter what the cause of her anxiety is – social, academic, or separation from you. If the cause is social, you already are working to fix that by helping her bond with another student. If the stress is academic, perhaps it is a good idea to speak to the teacher. Your daughter might need remediation or special attention. Lastly, in the chance that she is having trouble separating from you, reassure her that, “Mommy always comes back.” With these words in her mind, she will feel more settled and comfortable in the classroom.

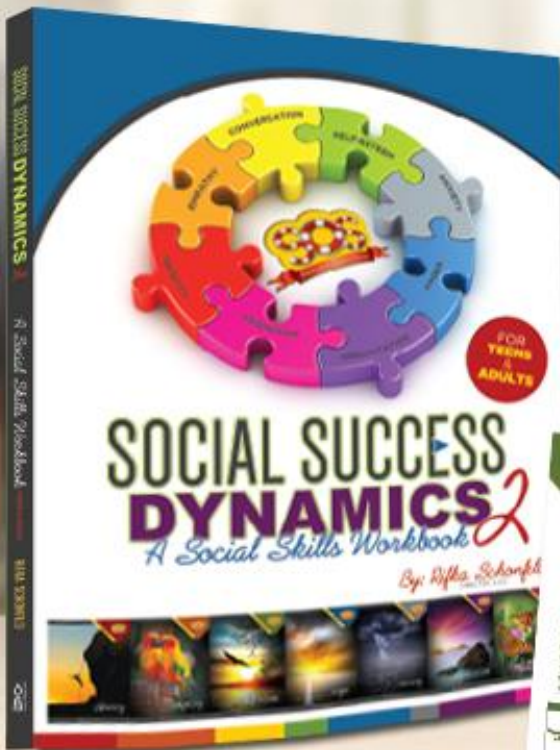
Get to school early for pick-up.

If your daughter is anxious about being in school, she will be watching the door (or the carpool line) for you to show up. If you are late, her anxiety will always rise. Therefore, coming a few minutes early to ensure that she can see you immediately will reinforce the idea that school is a safe, but temporary place for her.

Ensure she gets enough sleep.

When children need to be woken in the morning, it means that they are not getting enough sleep. It also means that morning routines are can get rushed and harried. In turn, these children will not have enough energy reserves to deal with goodbyes or potentially stressful classroom situations. Start bedtime early by having your daughter read in bed – you will get the bonus of improved reading along with a well-rested child.

The above suggestions should help if your daughter experiences mild anxiety when dealing with school. But, if she is extremely resistant, kicks and screams before school, and shows signs of generalized panic, I would look into the possibility that she has school phobia. What's school phobia? That's a topic for a whole other column!



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