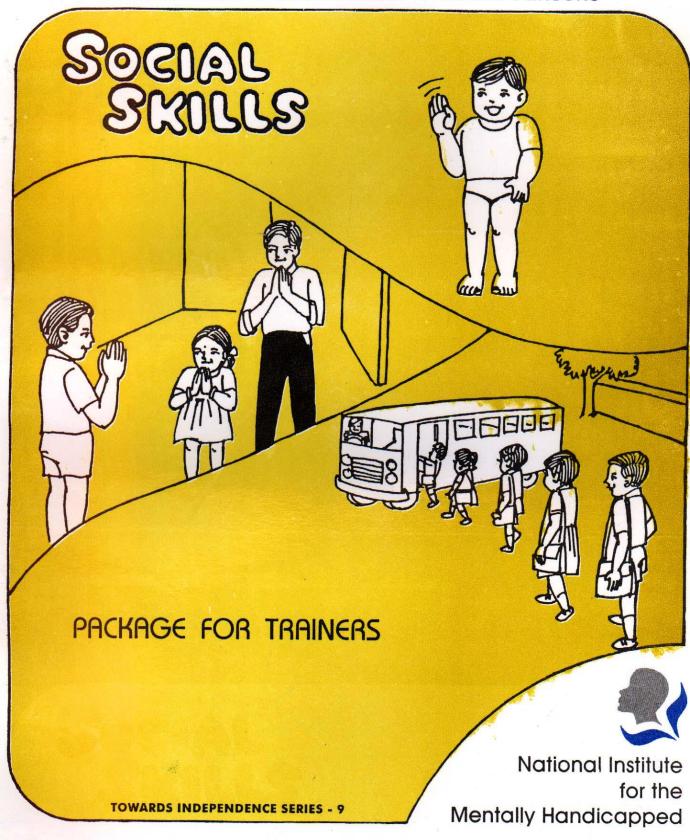
SKILL TRAINING IN THE MENTALLY RETARDED PERSONS



Towards Independence Series - 9

SKILL TRAINING IN THE MENTALLY RETARDED PERSONS

A PACKAGE FOR TRAINERS

SOCIAL SKILLS

(Funded by UNICEF)

National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped

(Ministry of Welfare, Govt. of India)

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Other titles in the series:

- ※ Gross Motor Skills
- ※ Fine Motor Skills
- * Eating Skills
- * Toilet Training
- ※ Tooth Brushing
- * Bathing
- ★ Dressing
- * Grooming

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ABOUT THE BOOKLET

This book is one among the series of books developed for the benefit of the parents and trainers of the mentally retarded and developmentally delayed children. activities in which these children are to be trained for independent living are very many. Among them, feeding, toiletting, brushing, grooming, bathing, dressing, gross and fine motor activities and socialization are some of the basic and important skills. This series of books provide in a step by step manner, procedures for finding out the delay or deficit in the child and the steps in training them. Simple language is used with appropriate illustrations so that parents and other trainers can easily follow the steps. It should be remembered that the activities listed are some of the basic ones. Common sense and imagination of the trainers will be of great assistance in enhancing the skill in the child. hope that the trainers find these booklets useful to them.

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CONTENTS		PAGE
Introduction		1
Need for social skill training		2
When to start ?		2
Where to start ?		2
Social skills - Activities checklist		3
How to train?		4
Activities for social skill training	•••	5

INTRODUCTION

Appropriate social behaviours are necessary for any person to be an acceptable member of the society. Every human being is expected to follow certain standards of social behaviour, set by the society according to the cultural norms and age level of the individuals.

In case of mentally retarded persons, intensive training is needed to cultivate appropriate social behaviours. Instead of keeping them away from the society, giving them chances to mix in the society from the childhood itself will lead them towards gaining social competency. The training should be started very early in life. The family, the relatives, neighbours, friends, and the society at large are responsible for the social skill training of the persons with mental retardation.

This social skill training package explains those activities which would help the trainers to decide the level of functioning of the child and to select the activities and methods of training for various social situations. This booklet contains training programmes for selected basic social skills only and not all the social competency necessary for successful living in the community. Many of the mentally retarded children have undesirable social behaviours which can be corrected by specific techniques. For the details, the users are requested to refer to 'Managing problem behaviours in children - A guide for parents' by Ms. Reeta Peshawaria, Lecturer in Clinical Psychology, NIMH.

The need for Social skill training

- * Normal children learn social skills as they grow. In case of children with mental retardation, the more the chances for training and exposure to social situations, the better they learn the skills.
- * If they are not trained, usually they will be left in the house and be deprived of outings and participating in social functions.
- * If they are able to behave appropriately in a group situation, they will be accepted by the group.

When to start?

- * A mentally retarded individual needs stimulation, repeated chances, supervision and training to develop proper skills.
- * Social skill training starts as early as possible in his life.
- * During infancy the child should get maximum stimulation from the family members. Talk to the child whenever possible, even if he does not talk.
- * During childhood, give him chances to play with other children.
- * Continue the training through adolescence and adulthood in necessary social skills.

Where to start?

* Use the activity checklist for social skill training. After checking what he can do, select the activities which are most important in daily life and start training in those specific activities.

Social skills - Activities checklist

SI. No.	Activities	Achieved/ Not achieved	Date of achievement
-		140t acmeved	acmevement
1.	Smiles in response		
2.	Reaches/goes to the familiar persons		
3.	Waves good bye		
4.	Responds to own name		
5.	Waits for needs to be fulfilled		
6.	Plays with peers sharing objects		
7.	Greets others		
8.	Obeys commands	†	
9.	Says 'Please', 'Thank you',		
	'Sorry' appropriately		
10.	Helps parents in household tasks		
11.	Asks permission		
12.	Takes turn		
13.	Participates appropriately		
	at meal time		
14.	Dresses and grooms appropriate		
	to the situation		
15.	Visits relatives and friends		
16.	Participates in social functions		
17.	Behaves appropriately with		
	the opposite sex		
18.	Respects the privacy and		
	property of others		ļ
19.	Returns borrowed materials		
20.	Identifies human service persons	 	
	and community helpers		
21.	Engages in useful activities		
	during free time		
		<u> </u>	

How to Train?

Give chances to learn the skills through regular selected activities.

Gradually reduce the number of repeated instructions and observe his performance in natural environments.

Include him as a family member, in all family get togethers.

Give him chances to participate in social and religious functions. Outings help in enhancing social skill training.

Accept the mentally retarded child as a member of the family and the community.

ACTIVITIES FOR SOCIAL SKILL TRAINING



1. SMILES IN RESPONSE

1. Smiles in response to mother/caretaker

Get the eye contact of the child. If needed, hold his head, bring closely to your face, look at his face, talk to him pleasantly and smile. When he smiles in response appreciate him by giving him a kiss/hug/talking to him.

2. Smiles in response to other children

Tell the brother/sister (siblings) of the child to go near him, call his name, look at his face and smile. When the child responds tell him/her to appreciate the child by talking to him/giving him the object/toy of his choice. It is good to involve the brother/sister of the child in training the child. By this they would also start feeling responsible for the child's development.

3. Smiles in response to familiar persons

As the child learns to smile in response to the family members train him to smile at other familiar persons. As explained above, let the frequent visitors call the child by name and smile at him so that the child also can smile in response.



2. REACHES FOR/GOES TO FAMILIAR PERSONS

1. Reaches for/goes to the mother/caretaker

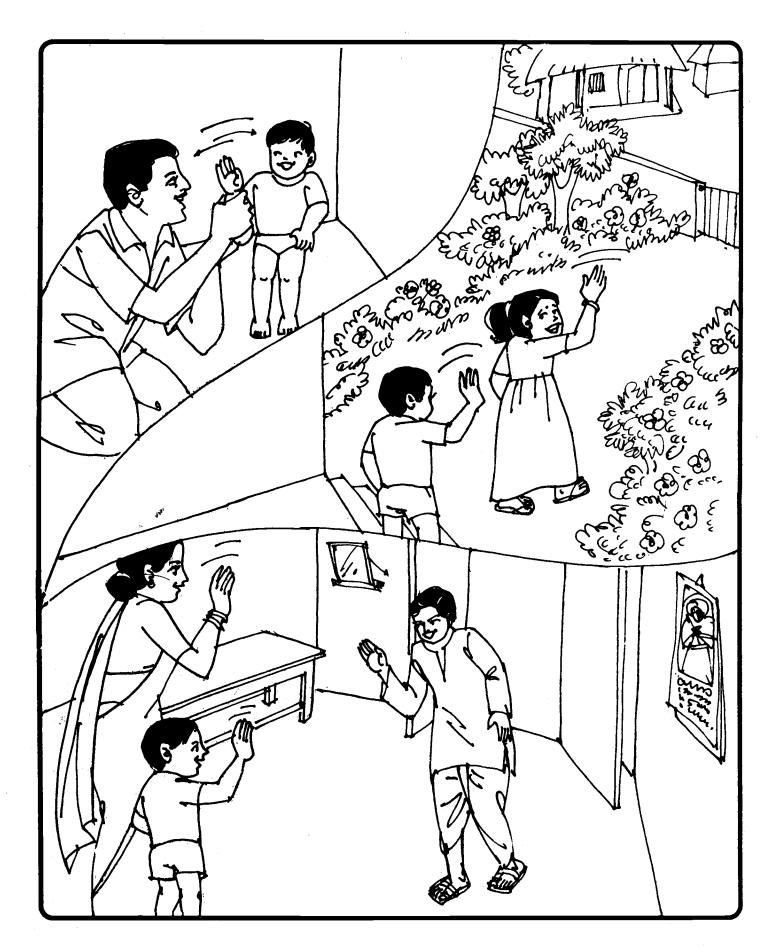
Touch the child's shoulder, call him by name, take a step backwards and stretch your hands towards him with a smiling face. If he responds by stretching his hands/moving towards you, appreciate him and take/hold him. Do not force the child if he is unwilling. Repeated efforts now and then will help in gaining child's cooperation.

2. Reaches for/goes to the family members

As explained above, train him to reach/go towards the family members when they call or stretch the hands towards him. Do not be upset if the child does not respond. Try at different situations. Be friendly with the child.

3. Reaches for/goes to the familiar friends and relatives

During the visit of relatives and friends, take the child to them. When they carl/stretch their hands towards him, motivate him to respond by reaching/going towards them. Do not hide the child from them because of his deficit. Repeated exposure to situations helps him in developing social awareness.



3. WAVES GOOD BYE

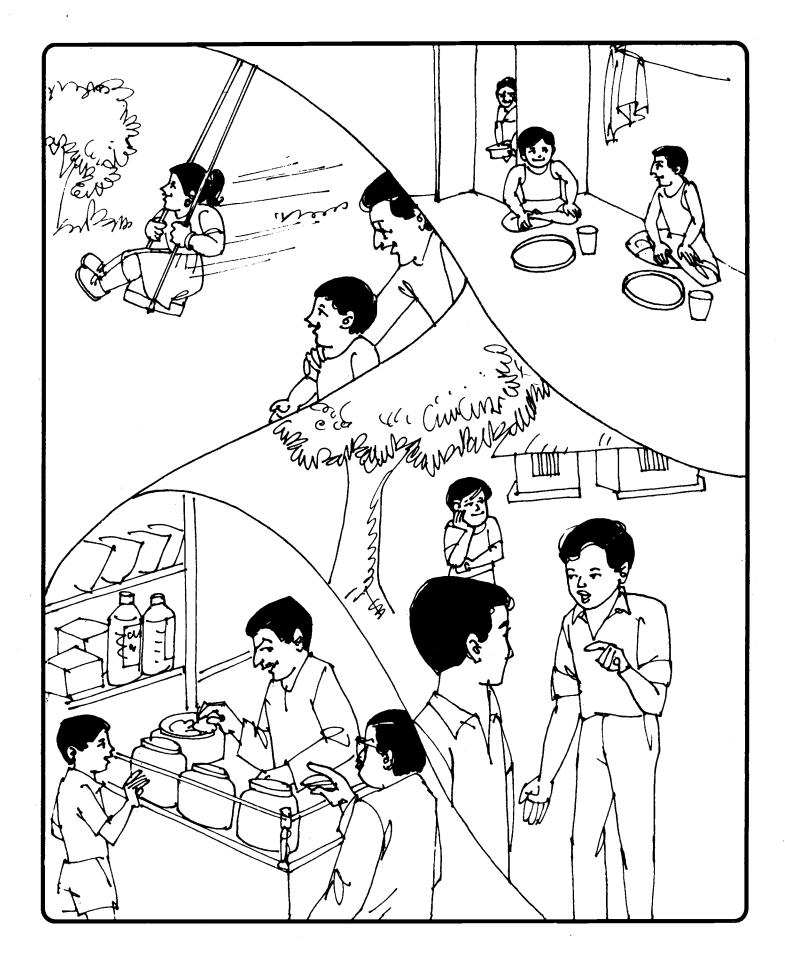
- 1. When the child's father goes to work, let him make it a practice to go near the child, take his hand, and make him wave bye. Gradually, the child would learn to wave and say bye if the father does it consistently.
- 2. When the siblings of the child go to school, tell them to go to the child and wave good bye to him, so that he also does so.
- 3. When friends/relatives leave after visiting, take the child with you and let him watch when you wave good bye. Let him also wave good bye to them with a smiling face.
- 4. When the child is taken to visit relatives and friends, let him wave good bye while leaving their house.

Initially hold the child's hands and assist him. Gradually let him wave good bye by himself. Appreciate him, for his attempt.



4. RESPONDS TO OWN NAME

- 1. When the mother/caretaker attends to the needs of the child consistently let her call him by his name. For example, "Gopi, eat this", "Gopi, look at mummy", "Gopi, I will change your clothes", "Gopi, take this toy".....
- 2. As the child recognizes his name, train him to respond to his name. For example when the mother/caretaker, is busy with some activities, let her make him sit near by, and call him by name. If he does not respond, call his name again, simultaneously turning his head to look at you. Praise him or show appreciation on the face.
- 3. As he learns to respond by turning his face and looking at your face, encourage him to respond verbally.
- 4. Next step is to teach him to respond to other family members and familiar persons when they call by name. Above steps can be used for training.
- 5. Lastly, let him recognise his name at any situation and to respond to his name appropriately. Give chances to respond to his name in different situations (at home, in the playground, during outings) when his name is called by different people (familiar and unfamiliar) for different purposes.



5. WAITS FOR NEEDS TO BE FULFILLED

- 1. List out some activities which provide chances to train the child to wait for his needs to be fulfilled.
- 2. Initially simulate situations to make him wait for needs to be fulfilled for a shorter period of time.
- 3. Gradually increase the time of waiting in the simulated / actual situation.
- 4. Finally, train him to wait in an actual situation : play time, meal time, conversation, shopping,

While doing so, explain to him in a friendly manner that you are busy doing something and that you would attend to his needs shortly. Make sure that he understands. When you go to attend to him appreciate him for having waited. This would strengthen the child's behaviour and it is likely that he would accept the situation and wait when the need arises again.

List of activities:

- * Play time: Waits for the swing while another child is swinging on it.
- * Meal time: Waits for the food to be served, when mother is busy.
- Conversation: Waits for his turn to talk in a group situation.
- * Knocks at the door and waits for the response.
- * Shopping situation: Waits till the shop keeper settles the accounts with a customer who is ahead.



6. PLAYS WITH PEERS SHARING OBJECTS

List out activities where the child has to share.

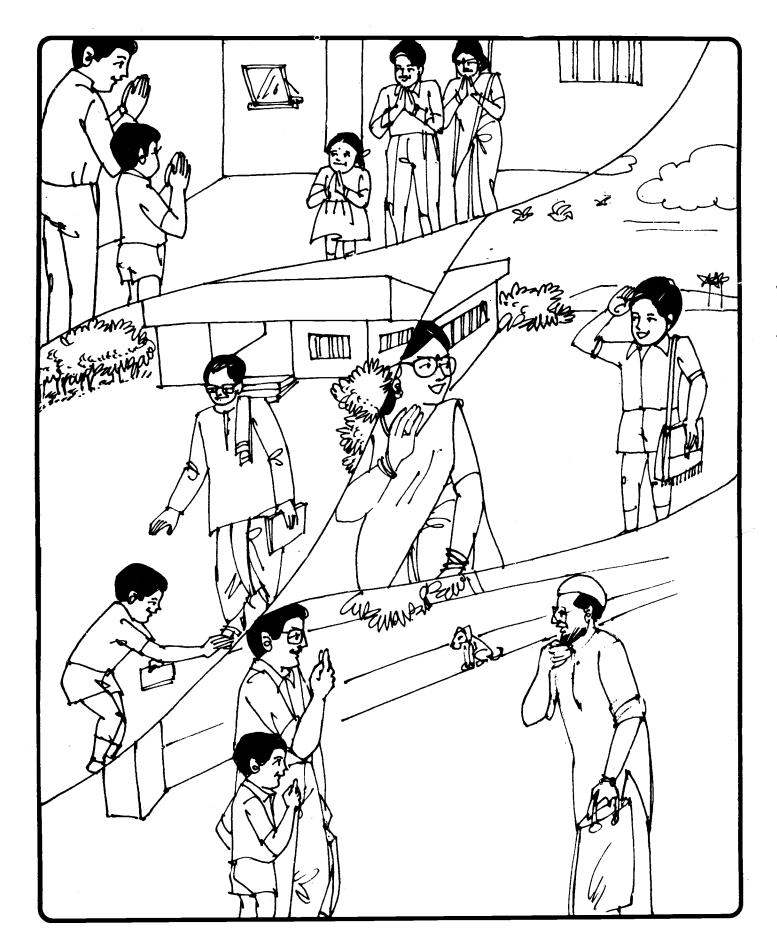
Play time: When the child plays with a ball, let another child join him to share and play with the ball after requesting him.

When he plays with toys like blocks and beads let other children also share and play with him, after requesting the child.

Meal time: Give him opportunities to share food/snacks with other family members and friends.

Sharing of personal items:

- * Incase, siblings and peers need objects from him (pencil, eraser....) guide him to help giving objects and get them back after use.
- * When friends and relatives come to his house, create situations so that the child can share his objects.
- * Create situations where he requests other children for sharing their objects, as well as, he is requested by others for which he obliges.



7. GREETS OTHERS

At home

- 1. Give the child chances to see when family members greet others. Let the child also join them.
- 2. Introduce the words which are used for greetings, Namaste, Vanakkam, good morning, good afternoon and good evening.
- 3. Also introduce the appropriate bodily gestures that would go with the greeting.

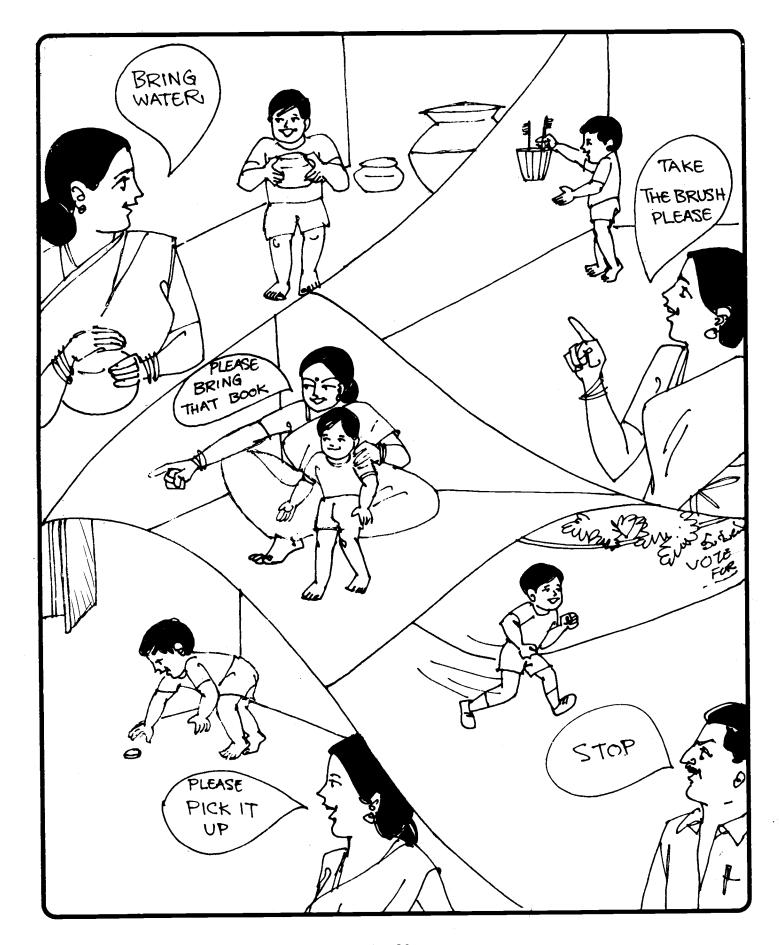
At school

- 4. If the child goes to school, train him to greet his friends when he meets them.
- 5. Take him to the teacher, and demonstrate how to greet him/her when the child meets him/her, first in the morning.
- 6. Train him to greet other teachers and elders in the school.

Generally children learn to greet in the school because they observe all the other children doing so and they tend to imitate others. Provide opportunity for observing and imitating.

In the community

- 7. When you take the child for outing, let him observe, how you greet others. Take time to train him also to greet the elders and friends he meets on the way.
- 8. When he visits friends and relatives, train him how to wish them, when he enters their home.
- 9. If he forgets, you wish first so that he would remember to do so. Giving such clues are better than scolding the child for not doing an activity.



8. OBEYS COMMANDS

- 1. As the child learns to follow instructions train him to obey his family members. Initially select simple commands which the child likes to do (to call some one, to play with a toy, to bring something which he likes,). Appreciate him immediately when he obeys.
- As he learns to attend to his personal needs such as brushing, toiletting, bathing, dressing and grooming, give commands related to his daily routine so that he will develop the habit of doing it on time.
- 3. As a next step, give him instructions related to household activities. If he has problems in understanding, demonstrate and ask him to do by watching you. Initially appreciate him for his near correct attempts.
- 4. Gradually start giving commands related to proper social behaviour. For example if he unnecessarily shouts/runs/smiles tell him to stop. If he does not obey, ignore him, but do not yield to his demands. When he is ignored, make sure that he does not have any objects around him that would hurt him. If consistently followed, this would help in developing obedience in the child.



9. SAYS 'PLEASE', 'THANK YOU' AND 'SORRY'

As the child starts to follow instructions and communicate needs, it is time to use the words 'Please', 'Thank you' and 'Sorry'. These three words are called 'the magic words' as they lead to instant acceptance by others.

Says 'Please':

- 1. Use the word 'Please' when you ask the child or someone to do a favour. For example, "Please, bring that plate", 'Please cut the vegetables', 'Please wait for a minute' and so on.
- 2. Give him chances to use the word 'Please'. If he does not speak let him gesture the expression. Whenever he asks for a favour, insist, on his saying or gesturing 'please' before you fulfil it.

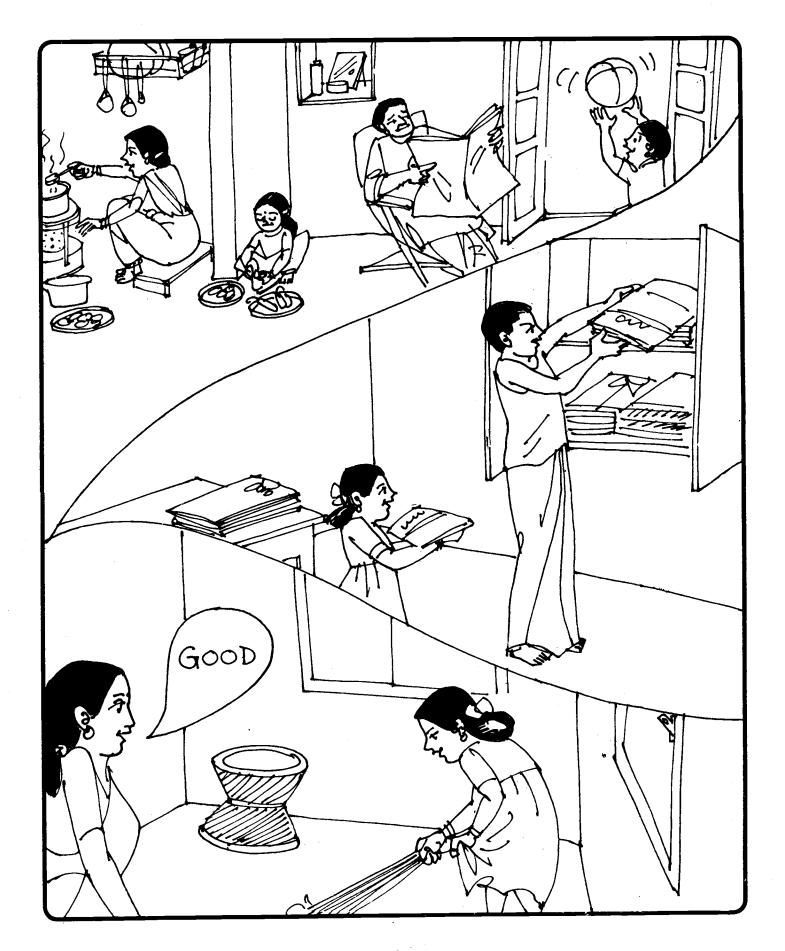
Says 'Thank you':

3. Let the child observe and listen when you use the word 'Thank you'. Create situations for the child to use 'Thank you' or gesture the expression whenever he receives objects or help from others.

Says 'Sorry':

4. The concept of 'Sorry' can be taught only when the child is able to understand that he has done something wrong. Explain and train him to use the word 'sorry' when he misbehaves or forgets to do what he was told to do or when he hurts others unintentionally or intentionally.

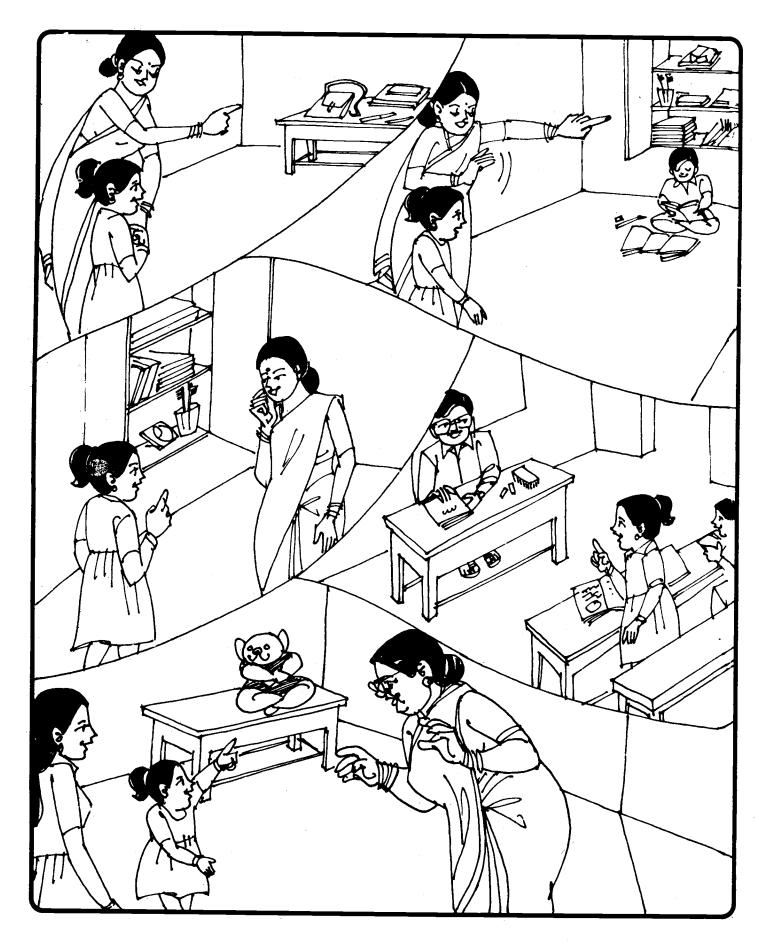
Appreciate him when he uses the words Please, Thank you, and Sorry appropriately. When the child forgets to use the word remind him by saying 'Where's the magic word?'



10. HELPS PARENTS IN HOUSE HOLD TASKS

- . 1. In the initial stage, let the child watch when the family members are involved in different house hold tasks. Motivate him to join you. Appreciate his willingness and attempts.
- 2. Depending on the age and ability level of the child list out some house hold activities in which he can help the family members: bringing water, helping to wash, drying and arranging utensils, helping to arrange clothes in an almirah, cleaning vegetables, watering plants, making beds and so on. Let his involvement be minimal and in easy tasks in the beginning. Appreciate him for his assistance. Gradually increase the duration and difficulty of task.
- 3. As he learns, list a few activities in which he can regularly help the family members. Make sure that you do not choose activities beyond his capabilities or too easy and boring.

Appreciate and reward his attempts and success. Highlight his help when all family members are present. This will motivate him to help you further.



11. ASKS PERMISSION

At home

- 1. Show the child his belongings at home: clothes, books, bag, tooth brush, slippers and so on. Explain to him that they are HIS/HER belongings.
- 2. Similarly, show the belonging of others and tell him/her that they belong to so and so.
- 3. If he wants to use anything which is not his, tell him that he should ask permission from the respective person.

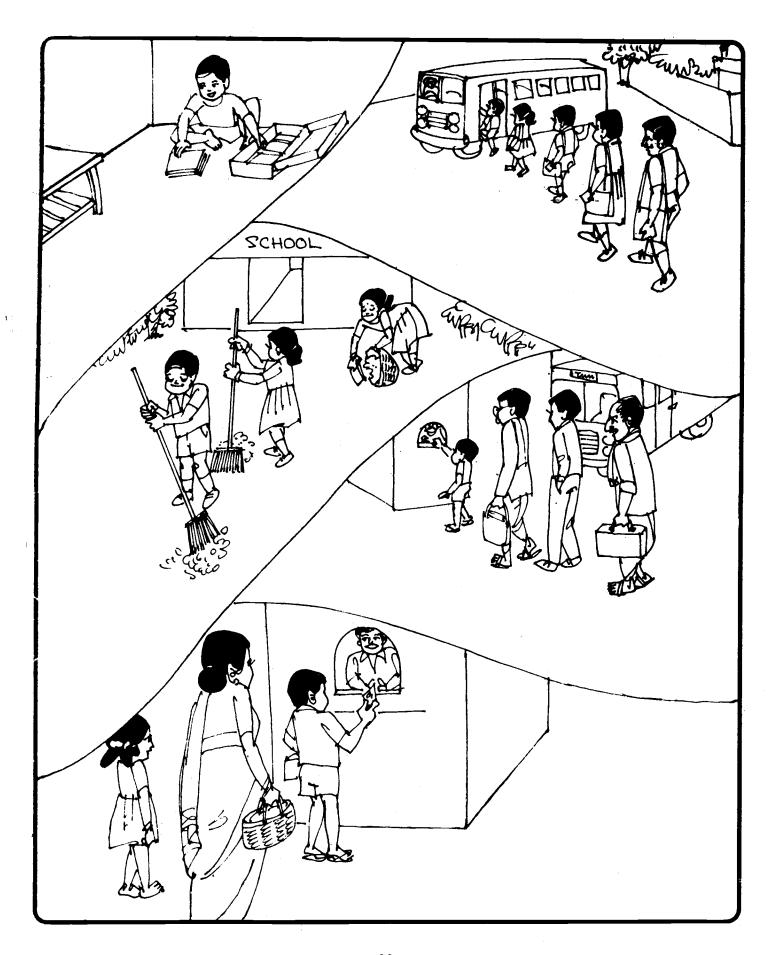
When you use the belongings of others including the child's ask for permission and allow the child to watch. Let all the family members follow this so that the child is more likely to do so and thus learn to ask for permission. Is it not a good habit for us also?!

At school

4. If the child attends school, give him chances to ask permission. For example, in case he wants to borrow a toy/a pencil/a book, let him ask politely for permission and use the words 'please' and 'thank you' appropriately.

In the community

5. When the child visits friends and relatives, make sure that he does not take anything without permission. Encourage him to ask permission to take a toy to play, to see an album and so on. Explain to the friends and relatives that he is being trained in asking for permission so that they also cooperate and assist in the training.



12. TAKES TURN

List out occasions where he has to take his turn.

1. At home

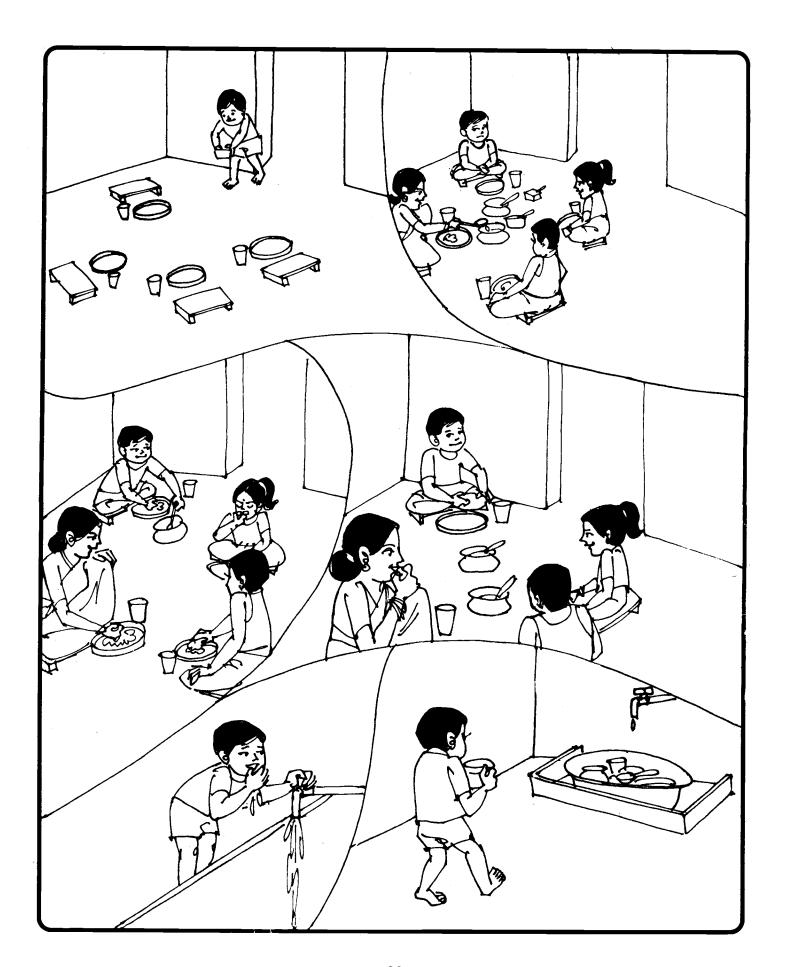
* Assign duties to the family members. Let him to do the work when his turn comes, -waiting for bathroom to be vacant for bathing, waiting to use the wash basin or washing area for brushing and so on.

2. At school

- * To get into the school van, expose him to the queue system and let him wait to take his turn.
- * Assign duties to the children cleaning, arranging, taking messages, and so on. Explain when his turn comes and how to perform his duty.
- * Waiting for his turn at lunch time, in singing song, in group game situations and other such activities must be encouraged.

3. In the community

- * At a bus stand, where he has to stand in queue to get the ticket and get into the bus, provide actual experience.
- * In a public milk booth, show how people wait and take their turns. Give him chances.
- * Take him with you to banks, railway stations, cinema houses and such other areas where waiting for one's turn is necessary.



13. PARTICIPATES APPROPRIATELY AT MEAL TIME

Setting table

Take the child's help to set the table and/or arrange dishes as per the family customs.

Depending on the number of family members tell him to get enough plates and tumblers. Tell him to get food items like water, curd and pickles which are not hot, from kitchen and keep on the table/dining area. Initially physically assist him so that he does not drop them down.

Serving in a family setting

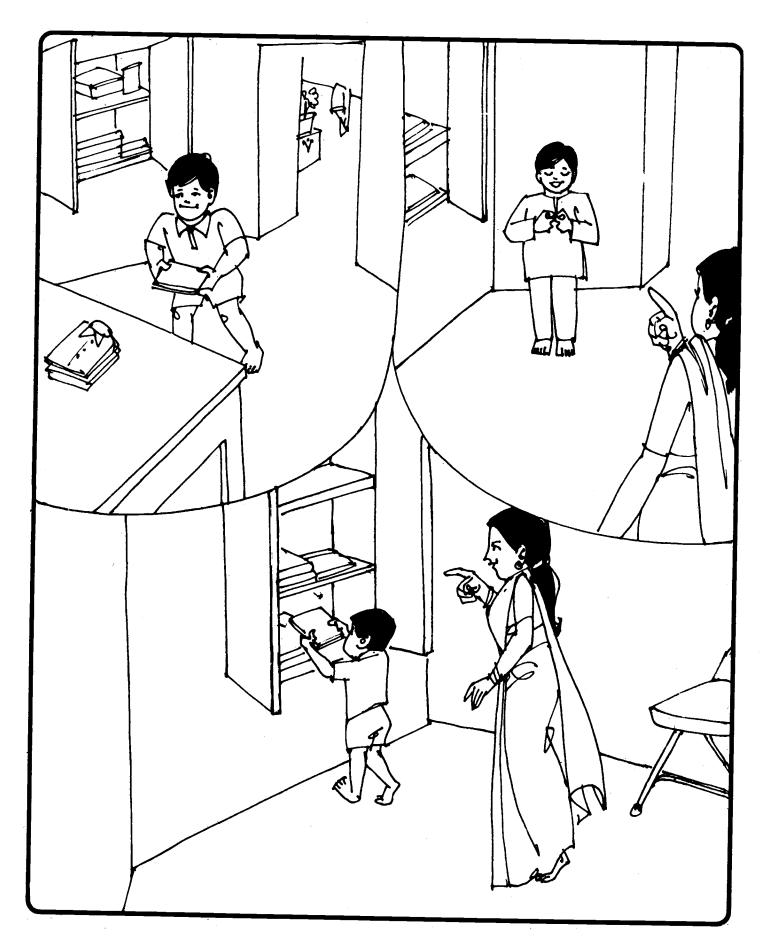
- * Let the child also sit in proper place with the other family members.
- * Train him to serve food for himself and others without spilling. Initially let him start with items like papad which will not spill. Gradually move to solid food items and finally liquid and sticky items.
- * Demonstrate how to request for food if he wants.

Taking part in clearing and cleaning

- * Tell the child to wait for everybody to finish to get up/leave the table.
- * Make sure he washes his hands and mouth properly.
- * Give him chances to clear the table/dining place.
- * Encourage the child to clean the utensils and keep in proper place.

Give chances and check whether he follows appropriate manners when you take him to restaurants and social functions. Appreciate his appropriate responses.

Training in this should be based on his comprehension and physical ability. Give chances to participate in a number of activities, based on his ability level.



14. DRESSES AND GROOMS APPROPRIATELY TO THE SITUATIONS

Appropriate dressing and grooming skills are necessary for social acceptance. It is essential that one knows to differentiate and use clothings appropriate to the situation.

1. At home

Provide the child a place in the almirah to keep separately the clothes which he has to wear at home during different house hold/play activities.

2. At school

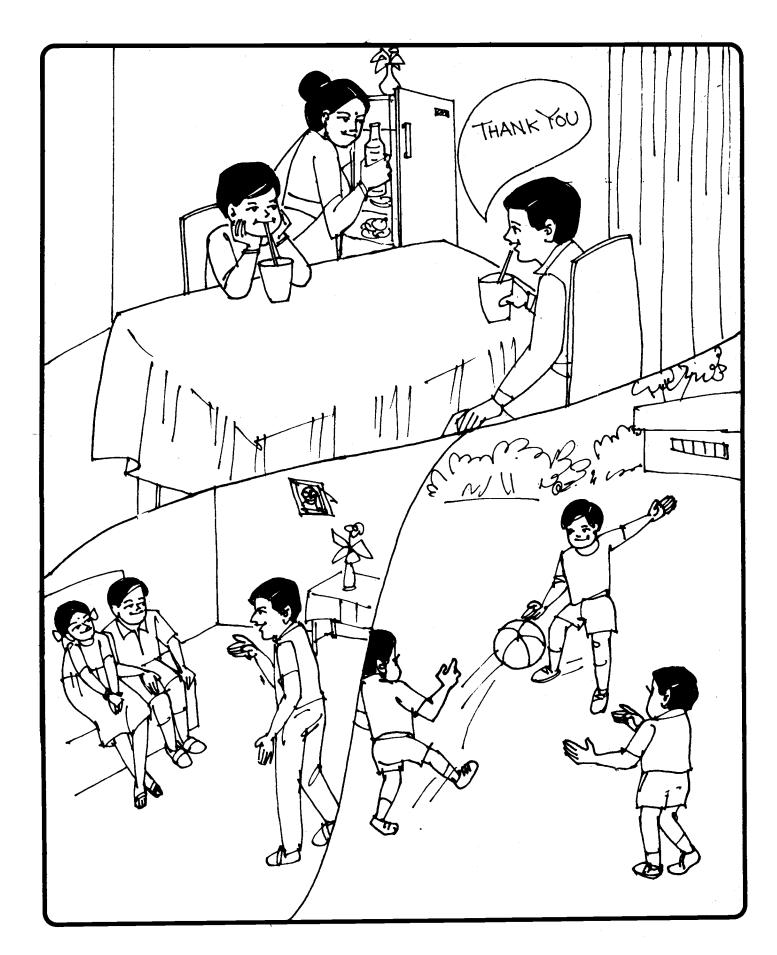
If he has to wear the uniform when he goes to school, tell him the need and keep it for that purpose. As soon as he comes home remind him to change from the uniform to home clothes. Depending on his age and ability, he can be taught to maintain his clothings.

3. Various functions

Most of the households have the clothings for occasions stored safely in one place. Give the child also a place there to keep his clothings. Explain to him that they are expensive clothes, not easily washable and hence must be maintained carefully when worn and also when stored. Allow him to participate in storing them carefully.

4. Various seasons

Discuss about the different seasons in a year. Show him in pictures and TV. Explain the need to wear warm clothes in winter and light clothes in summer. Train him to wear the different clothes and maintain them.



15. VISITS AND INVITES RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

Visits relatives and friends

Do not hesitate to take the child when the family members visit relatives and friends. Give him chances to wish them appropriately, use polite language, use words like 'please' and 'thank you' when needed, and exhibit good manners.

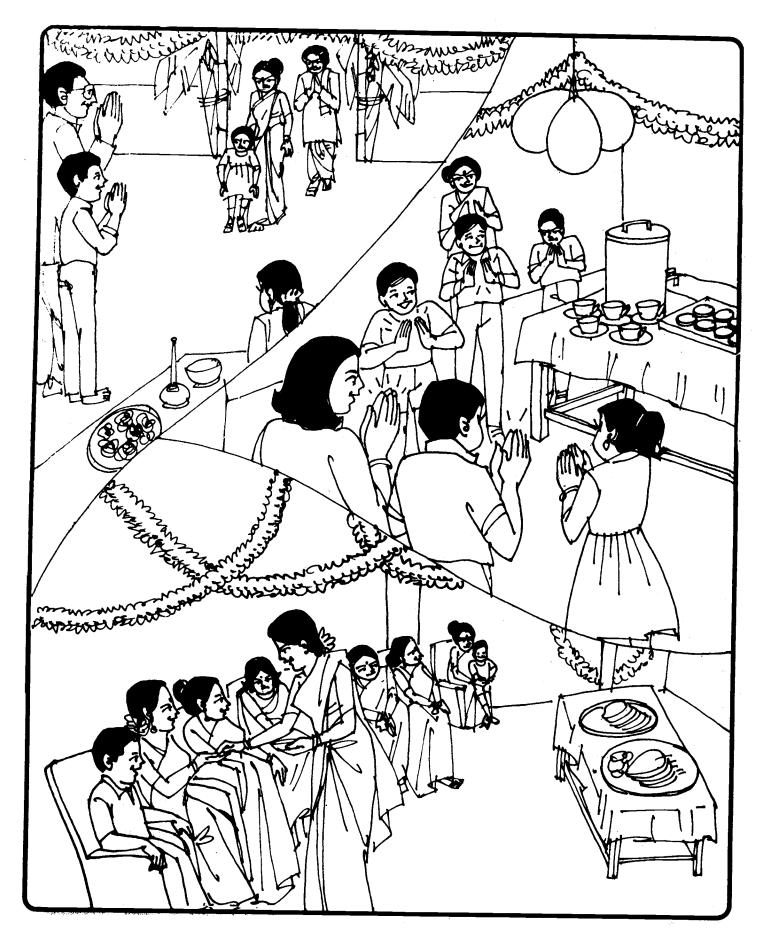
Depending on the child's level of functioning and the distance of the relative's house train him to go and come back by himself.

Invites relatives and friends

When the child visits the relatives and friends, let him see when you invite them to your house. Give him chances to invite his friends/relatives to his home, after getting his parents permission to do so.

Explain to him how to receive them when they come, talk to them, play with them and eat with them. Be with the child, model the activities so that he can follow. Gradually, reduce the help, and guide him to receive his friends and relatives.

Do not be ashamed of introducing the child to others. He is a member of your family and he deserves to participate in the family gathering.



16. PARTICIPATES IN PARTIES

At home

During functions at home include the child as a family member. Let him participate in arrangements and reception of guests. Give him chances to sit with the family members and guests during parties.

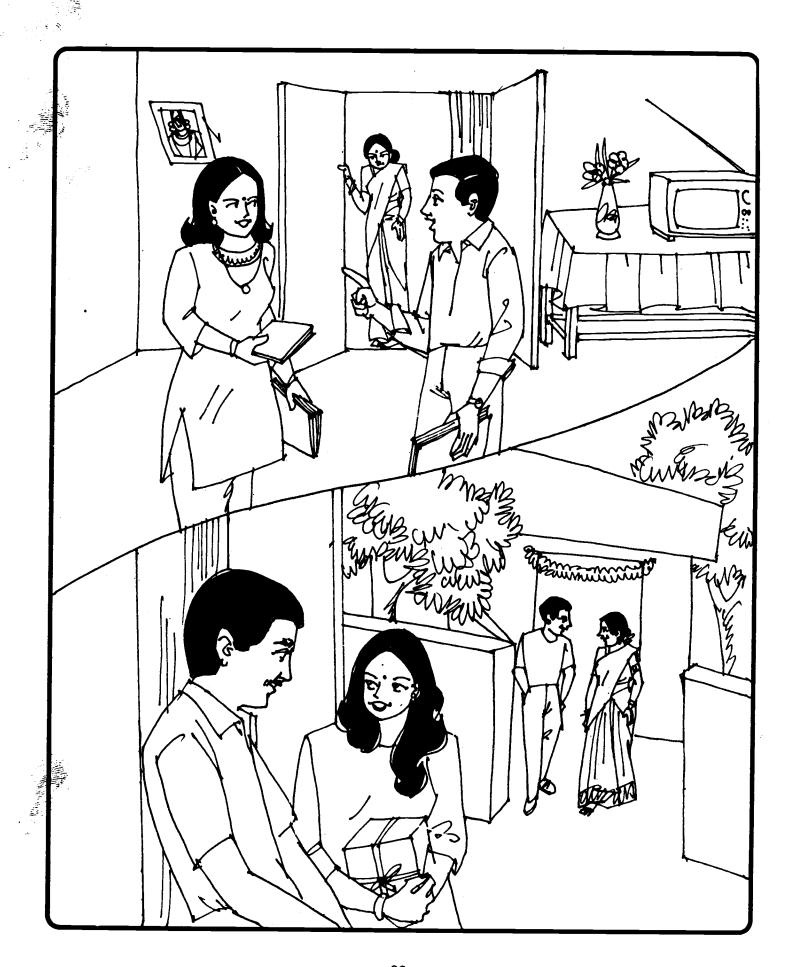
At school

Usually in schools, the teachers organise functions and give specific responsibilities to each child with intimation to parents. Cooperate with the teachers in helping the child to effectively participate in the party or function.

In the community

As he learns to take part in parties at home and school give him chances to go for the social functions. Till he becomes independent to take part with his friends, take him with you and train him in good manners which he has to observe. The more chances we give, the better competence the children gain.

Appreciate and reward him for his appropriate behaviour.



17. BEHAVES APPROPRIATELY WITH OPPOSITE SEX

At home

As the child grows, it is important to train him to behave appropriately with the opposite sex. Check and train him for proper behaviour with the brothers/sisters at home. The acceptable interaction between boys and girls vary from culture to culture. Train suitably.

When friends/relatives visit your home, if the trainee is a boy, train him to receive and wish a girl and vice versa.

Instead of keeping him/her away from the persons in the opposite sex, expose him to such situations under supervision so that he develops acceptable manners. Show that a physical distance is maintained when one interacts with persons of the other sex.

Community

Take the child also for outings and functions. Give him chances to talk to boys and girls of his age group. Supervise and help when needed, during their interaction. Explain the do's and don'ts then and there so that he does not commit the same error again.



18. RESPECTS PRIVACY AND PROPERTY OF OTHERS

Respects privacy

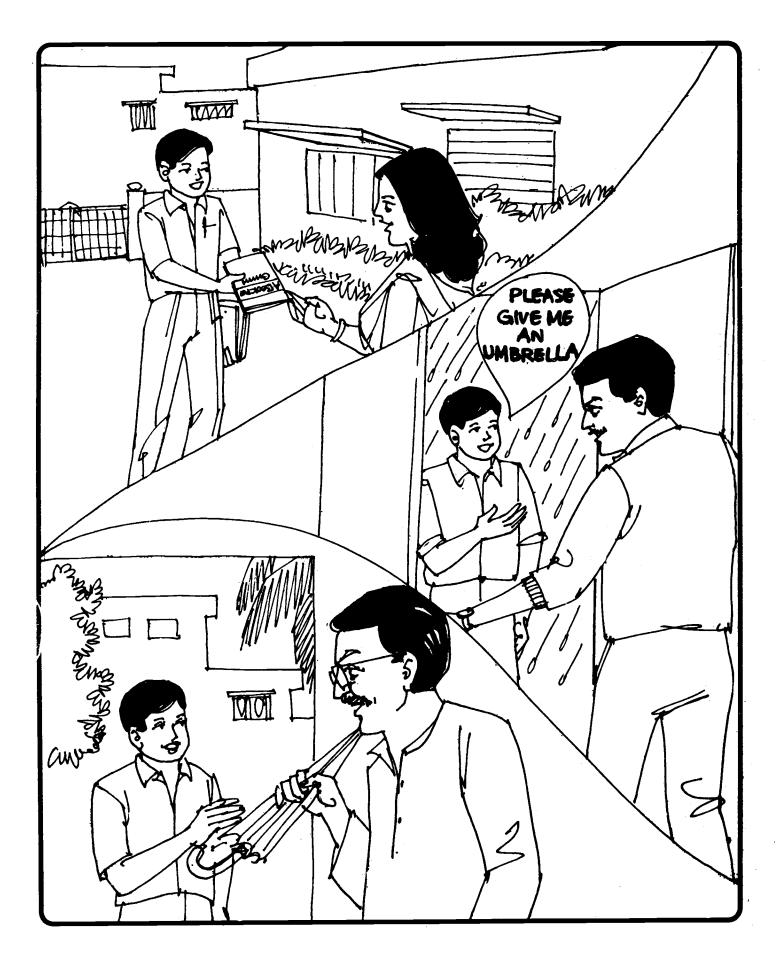
Explain the importance of maintaining privacy while dressing, taking bath and during toiletting. Show to him that people close the door for these activities. As he learns the need for privacy, explain to him, the need to respect others' privacy.

Explain to him that one should not enter the room when someone is dressing. If he has to see someone in a room which is closed, he should knock at the door and wait for the reply to enter the room. When he follows these rules, recognize him for doing so.

Respects the property of others

Explain to him the difference between his property and others' property. Tell him that if somebody takes his things without permission he would not like it. In the same way, others also do not like if their belongings are taken away uninformed.

In case, there is a need to use other's materials, explain the need of getting permission, use it carefully and return it without damaging. Let him not forget the magic words 'please' when he asks and 'Thank you' when he returns it.

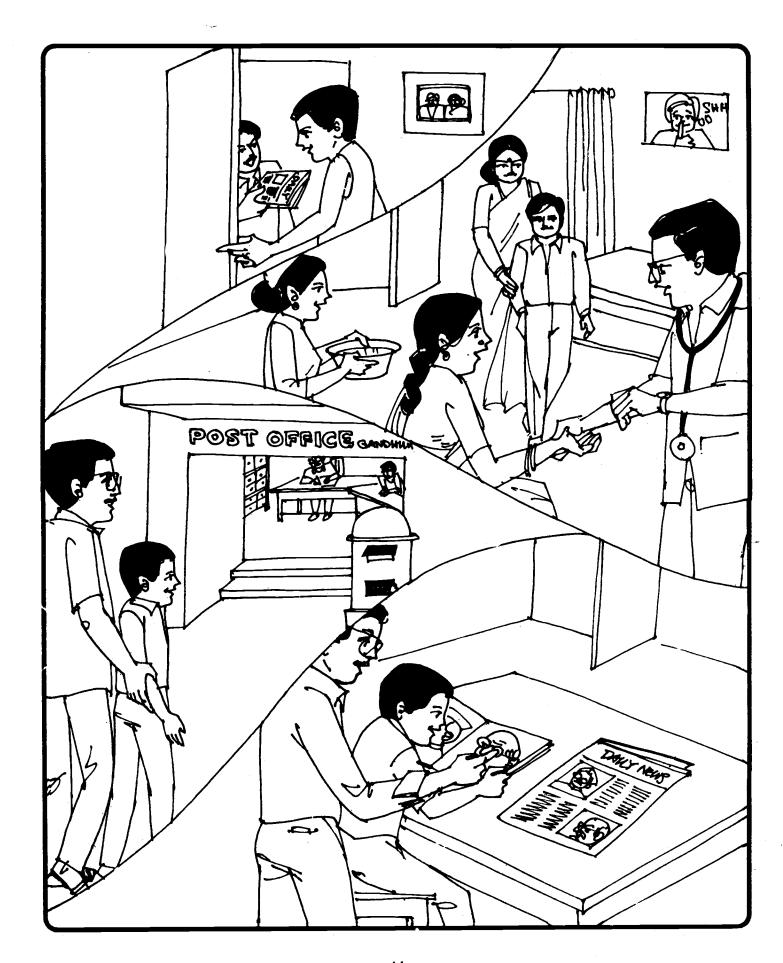


19. RETURNS BORROWED MATERIALS

- 1. In the initial stage, create situations so that the child can ask for things. Tell him to return it after use. If he returns reward him, if he forgets to return, remind him. Have more chances to learn the skill of returning borrowed things. You may borrow things from him and return to him. Remember to thank him. He is likely to follow your foot steps!
- 2. Insist that borrowed materials must be used very carefully so that they do not get damaged. They should be returned to the lender as soon as the need is fulfilled.

3. Explain to him that in case he needs an article from another person - a pencil, a scissor, an umbrella, or a book he should ask politely and return it on time.

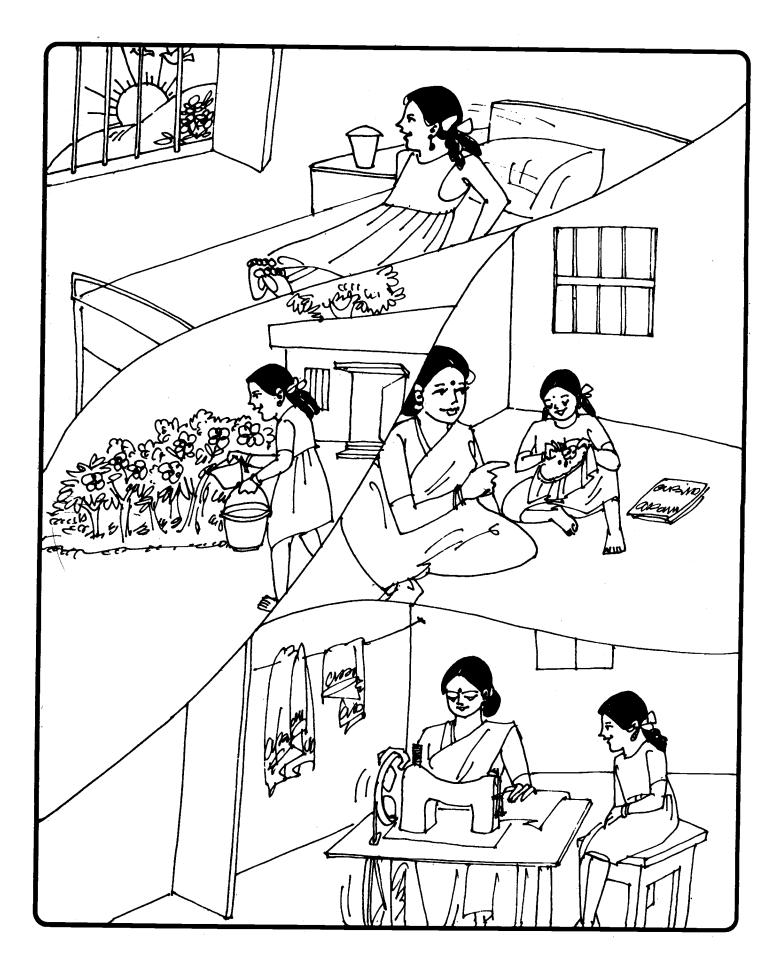
Do not forget to tell the child that as far as possible we use our own things rather than borrowed ones!!



20. IDENTIFIES HUMAN SERVICE PERSONS AND COMMUNITY HELPERS

Let him watch the services of persons who deliver newspaper, milk, gas and such other things.

Provide opportunity to him to know about other community helpers such as police man, postman, doctor, people from electricity board, station master and others whom we come in contact with once in a while. Take him with you when you meet these people and take time to explain to the child the role of these people in making our life easier. If possible let them talk to him about their work. Show him important people and events in the newspaper and television.



21. ENGAGES IN ACTIVITIES DURING FREE TIME

- 1. It is good to have a daily schedule of activities which the child can do at home the time to get up, to attend to daily morning routine, helping in household works
- 2. List out some activities which the child can do in free time -stitching, gardening, listening to music, playing, visiting relatives and friends staying nearby, drawing, painting....
- 3. Depending on the ability level the child can be trained in some of the leisure time activities mentioned above. Initially you do along with him, talking to him so that it sustains his interest. When he has learnt well and does independently, praise him, show the finished product done by him to others and highlight his acheivement.

Make it a point to see that he uses his leisure time fruitfully. Remember 'idle mind is a devil's workshop'. When the child has nothing to do he may develop problem behaviours. Help him to spend his time usefully.

Repeated chances for performing and exposure to social situations help the mentally retarded person to behave appropriately in a given situation.