

Joaquimia Williams, Mental Health/Disabilities Coordinator



Children often lack key social skills necessary for success in preschool and later in life. In fact, research has indicated a strong relationship between low peer status in childhood and later problems in adolescence and adulthood. Children with social deficits often show similar patterns of behavior. They may be withdrawn and hesitant to interact with peers, they may be socially aloof and unaware of their peers, or they may want to interact with their peers but not have the skills to do so successfully.

To help prevent problems later in life, promoting children's social development is one of the primary goals of preschool. However, simply placing a child with social delays in an early childhood setting does not automatically result in increasing positive social behaviors or peer acceptance.

Children learn new skills by watching and interacting with other children during play and everyday activities. Peer interactions promote learning and development in language, literacy, and cognition. They also promote motor and social and emotional development. These practices promote the development of young children, including those who have or are suspected of developmental delays or disabilities and those with chronic health impairments. They support children's interactions across environments, routines, and activities. Here are several strategies that can be used to improve peer interaction.

- Encourage children to start or sustain positive interactions with other children and adults during routines and activities by modeling how to enter and contribute to play with peers. Provide feedback to children in the moment. For example: "Jake, let's ask Sarah and Kyle if you can play with the puppy too!"
- Observe a child's verbal or non-verbal communication. Respond by using language to label and expand on the child's requests, needs, preferences, or interests.
- Observe a child's exploration, play, and social activity. Respond intentionally by joining in and expanding on the child's focus, actions, and intent.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding your child developing social skills I am available with resources and referral information at your child's Early Learning Program.



Catalina Torres, Parent Involvement Coordinator

Around Town

CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY offers affordable rental housing opportunities. For eligibility requirements and to place your name on a waitlist visit www.thecha.org and click "apply for housing Public Housing & Applicants Only!" For questions or more information, call 312-913-7400.

ACCESS TO CARE: You are eligible for Access to Care if you are uninsured and have a family income under 300 percent of the federal poverty guidelines and are not eligible for public health programs such as Medicaid and Medicare. For more information call 708.531.0680 or visit www.accesstocare.org.

THE PLUMBERS' JOINT APPRENTICESHIP COMMITTEE, LOCAL 130 UA will be accepting applications for admission to the Plumbing Apprenticeship Program (1400 W. Washington Blvd., Chicago, IL 60607) on the following days/times from January 22 through February 21, 2019: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 1 to 4 p.m.; and Thursday evenings from 6 to 8 p.m. For registration information, requirements and qualifications, please visit <http://www.plumberslu130ua.org/apprenticeship.aspx>.

SOUTH SUBURBAN COOK COUNTY AMERICAN JOB CENTER offers free services to job seekers including: Career Coaching, Professional Resume Building, Job Readiness Training, Funding for Occupational Training, On-the-Job Training, Job Placement Assistance and Paid Work Experience. For more information, call 708.589.7375 or visit 16845 S. Halsted St. in Harvey, IL.

BLUE CAP nonprofit organization located in Blue Island has the following positions open: Direct Support Professional, paraprofessional, Special Education Teacher, Job Coach, and Buildings and Grounds Manager. For more information to access the and application, visit www.bluecap/careers or stop in at 2155 Broadway St., Blue Island, IL.

PRAIRIE STATE COLLEGE offers the Talent Pipeline Program that provides industry recognized training to maintain a pipeline of hireable talent within their region. Students can gain the necessary skills to become employable in the health-care and transportation industries, such as: CDL-A Truck Driver Certified Medical Assistant (CMA), Medical Billing and Coding, Medical Central Service, and Pharmacy Technician. To learn more about free eligibility for the program, call 708.709.7768 or email twl@prairiestate.edu.