

# SOCCSS

## What is SOCCSS?

SOCCSS (**S**ituation, **O**ption, **C**onsequences, **C**hoices, **S**trategies, **S**imulation) is a teaching strategy that is meant to help your child analyze and comprehend social interactions. This technique may help your child to reflect on a problem or situation, determine alternative options and strategies, recognize consequences and choose an appropriate course of action. The goal of SOCCSS is to provide your child with socially appropriate responses to specific situations. The SOCCSS strategy provides a step-by-step process for helping your child build the skills needed for social competence.

## Why use SOCCSS?

If your child becomes anxious in social situations or is unsure how to act when engaging with peers this may contribute to your child having negative feelings about interacting with others which, may in turn lead to avoiding social situations altogether or displaying challenging behavior. The SOCCSS strategy may be useful in helping your child understand more about a specific social situation as well as the choices and strategies available to him/her. The strategy will also teach your child how to make appropriate choices as well as identify the consequences of their potential actions. Ultimately the expectation would be that your child can use this strategy independently.

## When could your child use SOCCSS?

This strategy could be used when your child encounters new or difficult social situations and may benefit from a detailed yet simple overview of the situation as well as the choices and outcomes to which he/she can contribute.

## How could your child use SOCCSS?

- To help understand or make more sense of social situations and the potential outcomes of his/her actions.

## Questions to consider when implementing the SOCCSS strategy

This strategy is typically used with children who are at a higher level of cognitive functioning. You should ask yourself the following questions before deciding to use this strategy;

- Can my child answer who, what, when, where and why questions?
- Can my child understand a simple cause-and-effect relationship?
- Can my child make choices?
- Can my child follow multi-step directions?
- Can my child participate in social interactions?
- Does my child have the ability to problem-solve?
- Does my child have the ability to identify or accept a socially appropriate outcome?
- Is my child able to generalize his/her learning?

To benefit from SOCCSS, the above noted skills do not have to be mastered--they can be in various stages of development and may require adult assistance. For individuals with cognitive and language impairments, and acting out or aggressive behaviors SOCCSS may not be an effective strategy for teaching social skills.

\*Disclaimer: These materials have been prepared for information purposes only.

# SOCSSS

## Before implementing any strategy, remember to:

- 1) Assess – What is your child currently able to do?
- 2) Goal – What is a specific goal for your child to work towards?
- 3) Strategies – How will you teach to reach the goal?
- 4) Monitor – How will you know if the teaching strategies are working?

## Sample Case Scenario:

The following example provides a narrative describing the social situation and a completed SOCSSS worksheet demonstrating the six-step analysis.

**Scenario:** Sam enters school and comes directly to the classroom, where he goes to his desk and sits down, still wearing his jacket with the hood pulled tightly over his head. When the teacher asks him to hang up his jacket, he shakes his head "No" and glares at her. He appears to be very angry and/or upset. The teacher asks him to step out into the hallway in an effort to determine what is wrong. The teacher tries various ways to get Sam to talk but is unsuccessful. Sam continues to shake his head and glare. The teacher finally brings him to the office. After several unsuccessful attempts by the principal to find out what is going on, the social worker is called to assist.

### S O C C S S Situations-Options-Consequences-Choices-Strategies-Simulation

#### Situation

**Who:** Sam and the teacher

**What:** Sam refused to take off his jacket or the hood off his head. He also refused to explain why he wanted to keep the jacket on

**When:** Entering the classroom from the bus

**Why:** Sam was embarrassed-"bad hair day." Sam was angry because the children on the bus made fun of his hair style.

#### Desired Outcome:

---



---

Options	Consequences	Choice
1. Keep the jacket on – refuse to talk	1. Punishment for not answering or removing jacket	3
2. Take the jacket off when asked	2. More teasing by the other kids	4
3. Explain to the teacher/principal	3. Teacher tells Sam he can wet his hair; no punishment	1
4. Ask to go wet his hair, remove jacket and go back to class ; no explanation	4. Teacher might still be angry; possible punishment	2

#### Strategy – Plan of Action:

Option #3 – Talk to the teacher in private. Apologize for “clamming up” and explain how he was feeling (angry and embarrassed).

Explain that sometimes when he’s angry he cannot talk; he needs to be aware of this and work through it. He will try to in the future.

<http://www.autismnetwork.org/modules/social/soccss/index.html>

\*Disclaimer: These materials have been prepared for information purposes only.

## **Process:**

An adult should work with the child through the following steps:

### **Step One: Situation**

1. What happened?
2. When did it happen?
3. Who was there?
4. Where did it happen?
5. Why did it happen?

### **Step Two: Options**

Brainstorm options for responding to the situation by asking questions such as, “How did you react?” At this point the options are not judged, simply recorded.

### **Step Three: Consequences**

In this step, the options provided should be reviewed and discussed. This may help your child to understand cause-and-effect relationships and to recognize that from his/her actions, something will occur and he/she will have some control over those consequences.

### **Step Four: Choices**

The Option-Consequences should now be reviewed, asking questions such as, “If you did A, and B happened, would that be a positive thing?” And, “If you choose A, what should you do first?” The strategy should be defined in detail so that your child feels comfortable carrying it out.

### **Step Five: Strategies**

This is when a plan is created. Your child should be clear on when, how, and where the plan can be executed. If necessary, your child could be provided with a script for the plan.

### **Step Six: Simulation**

This can occur by (a) using imagery, (b) writing out the plan and reading and re-reading it, (c) engaging in role-play as a participant or (d) watching a role-play by others first before becoming a participant.

## **References**

Myles, B.S., & Adreon, D. (2001). *Asperger syndrome and adolescence: Practical solutions for school success*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.

\*Disclaimer: These materials have been prepared for information purposes only.