



Who We Help

We believe that making friends and socializing in school are just as important as academics. In fact, students who improve their ability to interact with others very often perform better in school. That's why our Social Thinking Groups begin with kindergartners and serve students throughout their school years.

The groups are appropriate for students with social communication difficulties, and at least average intellect, including students with:

- Asperger Syndrome
- High Functioning Autism
- Nonverbal Learning Disorder
- PDD-NOS
- Attention Deficit Disorder
- Other Language and Developmental Delays

Does Your Child Need Help?

Even bright students who perform well on standardized tests and speak well with adults and younger children can have trouble interacting with their classmates. A student might be having trouble with social interactions if he or she:

- Is being repeatedly bullied.
- Is having difficulty working in a group.
- Is struggling with reading comprehension.
- Is refusing to participate in school activities.
- Is isolated at lunchtime or during recess.

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Social Thinking Groups

An Innovative Approach to Teaching Social Skills



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Social Thinking Groups*

Teaching Students How to Interact

For most of us, interacting with other people comes naturally. However, students with social difficulties often lack this innate ability to think through and succeed in everyday social situations. For them, social thinking must be learned and practiced.

PSLLC's cutting-edge Social Thinking Groups bring together students of similar ages and abilities for weekly sessions aimed at helping them more easily "fit in" and establish and maintain friendships. The groups provide a safe environment to work on skills including:

- Non-verbal communication
- Initiating conversations/Small talk
- Problem solving and negotiating
- How their behavior impacts others
- Emotional regulation and self control
- Group dynamics/How to "fit in"
- Understanding abstract language
- Thinking flexibly
- Perspective taking
- Understanding hidden social rules

*The concept of Social Thinking Groups and the terms social thinking vocabulary, Superflex and Purposeful Play Groups are based on the works of nationally renowned experts Michelle Garcia Winner and Stephanie Madrigal. To learn more about their work, visit www.socialthinking.com



What We Do

Each group meets for an hour, once a week, under the direction of a speech-language pathologist. The groups usually include three to six students, although we sometimes have groups of two. All students must be able to participate without one-to-one assistance.

Each session is built around social thinking vocabulary and concepts. For younger students, we teach concepts using a comic book superhero named "Superflex." Students are taught that, as social beings, we are like superheroes - we are always trying to use our "brain powers" to be flexible thinkers.

A Typical Session Includes:

- **Gathering** - Five minutes of open talk time.
- **Group Lesson** - Social cognitive strategies and social thinking vocabulary.
- **Practice Time** - An activity to reinforce the concepts being taught, followed by less structured time such as an "open topic" discussion among group members. The therapist provides feedback to reinforce the lesson.
- **Parent Wrap Up** - Parents gather while the therapist reviews the lesson. If parents are unable to attend, we arrange for them to receive feedback either via email, phone or face-to-face monthly conferences.



How We're Different

Social Thinking is based on the philosophy that students need more than "social skills" to succeed in school and in everyday life. We use innovative, age-appropriate techniques to help students understand how their words and actions influence the ways people think about them. Our methods, adapted from leading experts in the area of social cognition, include:

- Role play or guided practice
- Activities and games
- Video and visual support
- Social Stories™ or scripts
- Homework and parent tips
- Positive reinforcement

A New Vocabulary

We teach our students to think socially first by introducing them to a new social thinking vocabulary. We present concepts such as "whole body listening," the idea that the whole body needs to be focused on the group, and the "social fake," showing interest in someone else's topic that you do not find very fascinating.

This unique vocabulary makes abstract concepts more concrete and easier to grasp, which helps our families practice newly learned skills at home after each therapy session.



Why Parents Choose Us

Experience

All of our therapists are nationally certified speech-language pathologists. They have extensive training and experience in the latest, most innovative treatment programs.

Because of our experience and our creative approach, we are often able to help students who have had little success in school or hospital-based "social skills" groups.

We do not group students simply by a diagnostic label or by the time slot they are available. To ensure the highest rate of success, we conduct screenings or evaluations of each student who applies to join a group. This includes a review of past medical and academic records.

How to Enroll

Social Thinking Groups are offered year round. We require an application and pre-group interview for all new students to determine whether they can benefit from our services. We ask parents to provide recent copies of all medical and diagnostic reports that are relevant to the student's academic, behavioral and language abilities as well as an IEP or 504 plan, if available.

To begin the application process, please visit our website, www.pslcnj.com or call us at **609.924.7080** to request the appropriate forms. After reviewing your application, our director will contact you to discuss your child's needs.



About PSLLC

Since 1989, we have been helping children and adults improve their ability to learn, communicate and interact with their peers. Because speech, language, communication and learning disorders are our sole focus, we believe we are better positioned to affect change than multipurpose county, school or hospital-based programs.

Evaluations

We are widely known for our thorough evaluations. We will dedicate as much time as necessary to assess a client's needs and create an individualized, goal-oriented treatment program. In addition, we will provide a comprehensive report to help parents, educators and health professionals understand a child's strengths and weaknesses.

School Services

The staff of PSLLC can provide consultations and/or training to teach public and independent school teachers how to provide Social Thinking Groups to their students. We are also available to directly run Social Thinking Groups to students during their school day.