



Children with disabilities stemming from hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy may have limitations or delays in socialization, the process by which they pick up their own identity, learn social norms, customs, behaviors and skills. Socialization is a process closely connected to communication, and involved connecting to and understanding other people, including the child's peers, adults, and, as the child grows, individuals in the educational and employment-related settings.

Body Language & Social Cues



Some children with disabilities can have trouble picking up on body language, social cues, or in recognizing what kinds of social interactions are appropriate for a given situation. Parents can consult with a behavioral therapist, psychologist, or developmental specialist, who can then work with the child to prevent them from withdrawing, helping them to express their emotions, and assisting them in developing an understanding of the kinds of patterns that are expected in different social situations. Group therapy and/or one-on-one counseling can also be effective for some children in helping them to alleviate social anxiety and develop an internal framework for developing friendships and interacting with others. This is critical, as a sense of isolation can have negative impacts on a child's emotional health, learning and general perception of wellness.



Develop a Social Support System

In many cases, socialization involves the development of a system of social support, which can include buddy systems, mentorships, support groups, and programs that foster inclusion and group activities. It can also involve providing caregivers with a template for engaging the child in new experiences and providing them with opportunities to explore their environment, play and learn.

In some cases, parents may seek to enroll their child in programs specifically designed for children with disabilities. These programs have many advantages (because they are facilitated by staffers with experience in addressing the physical and emotional needs of individuals with disabilities), and are often available at the local level. To find such programs, parents can consult with the child's teachers, therapists, and community advocates who may have access to extensive information regarding local community groups and non-profit organizations. Parents can also ask about inclusive programs that integrate activities for individuals with disabilities *and* individuals without disabilities, in order to provide the child with exposure to different social environments. Before enrolling their child in such a program, it may be advised to speak with the program coordinator about ways to help foster inclusion.

Learn More About Socialization for Children with HIE and Disabilities:

- [The Importance of Socialization for Kids with Disabilities](#)
- [Tips for Helping your Child with Socialization](#)
- [Nonverbal Learning Disabilities](#)
- [TEDTalk: \(Perspective\): Why Separating Kids with Disabilities from Their Peers Hurts Instead of Helps](#)