

**Building Social Capital:
Strategies to Ensure that Others Value
your Son or Daughter
Teresa Bolick, Ph.D., BCBA-D**

Social capital, likeability, and individuals with special needs

- ❖ “Social capital” refers to the good will, understanding, and opportunities that emerge from our interactions with others.
- ❖ “Likeability” includes our ability to connect with others by showing interest and learning about their experiences and needs.
- ❖ Children and adolescents with special needs may not have developed the skills necessary for social capital and likeability.
- ❖ All too often, others underestimate, overlook, or fail to give them the “benefit of the doubt.”

Strategies for building social capital and likeability

- ❖ Social participation depends upon one’s ability to regulate alertness, attention, behavior, and emotion.
- ❖ Social participation also depends upon the presence of role models.
- ❖ Provide opportunities for children and adolescents to contribute. It’s never too early!
- ❖ Work on manners (at a developmentally-appropriate level).
- ❖ Teach them to “share the stage” by turn-taking, waiting, and tolerating disappointment.
- ❖ Teach good sportsmanship (even if the situation isn’t sports).
- ❖ Model and reward “listening with your eyes and ears.”
- ❖ Model and practice “true” conversations that include “conversational glue.”
- ❖ Strive for “working partnerships”!
- ❖ Prepare the family and community.

Take home messages

- ❖ Remember “Stilts on an icy pavement.”
- ❖ Remember the Hanes slogan.
- ❖ And remember “Low and Slow.”
- ❖ Remember Ralph Waldo Emerson and weeds.

Resources

- ❖ Bolick, T. (2001). *Asperger syndrome and adolescence: Helping preteens and teens get ready for the real world*. Gloucester, MA: Fair Winds Press.
- ❖ Nowicki, S., & Duke, M. (2002). *Will I ever fit in?* New York: Free Press.
- ❖ Patrick, N.J. (2008). *Social skills for teenagers and adults with Asperger syndrome*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- ❖ Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling alone*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- ❖ Sanders, T. (2005). *The likeability factor*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
- ❖ Williams, D. (1994). *Somebody somewhere*. New York: Times Books.
- ❖ “Manners for the real world: Basic social skills” Video from www.coultervideo.com