

Social Skills "Basic Training" in Schools

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

Posted on : August 17, 2010 at 5:25 am

WA - As kids head back to school in Washington and across the country, some of their teachers and parents are realizing many children could use some help with the simplest of social skills, such as how to greet a stranger or carry on a casual conversation. The National Association of School Psychologists now includes this type of training in its recommended curriculum.

In the past, social skills training was used mostly for students with diagnosed conditions, such as autism. But therapist Kristen Wynns says more children now need basic training on how to relate to others.

"Everyone is extremely busy, extremely focused on technology as a means of communicating. As a result, sometimes parents aren't teaching their children some of the social skills that, perhaps a few generations back, it was just natural to teach your kids."

Wynns uses social skills training in individual therapy sessions and even hosts social skills camps during the summer months.

There are also programs available commercially, with multimedia lessons for children to help them improve social interaction. One such program, Boost Kids, has seen sales double in the last year, as parents and educators become more aware of the problem.

Boost Kids founder Rob Heller says he created the program six years ago, when he realized his pre-teen son was in need of some social education.

"To me, they are life's most important lessons, and the interesting thing is that these things can be taught. I mean, certainly they come more naturally to some kids - but at the same time, these are things that can be taught."

Social skills training also includes such concepts as how to resolve conflicts. The National

Association of School Psychologists says improving social skills also improves school safety.