



4 Effective Ways to Boost Your Child's Skills

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Here are fun virtual activities that help build children's social skills!

Children are social beings. They need to interact, connect, and socialize — not just with their immediate family members, but with kids their age — to **grow and develop**. It is how they learn to be independent, manage their emotions, build self-esteem, and even become empathetic toward others.

However, the current situation has deprived kids, especially 3+ toddlers, of opportunities to have these meaningful interactions with their peers.

One way to help children learn and practice their social skills while still following health and safety protocols is by hosting virtual playdates.

While online interactions cannot offer the same intimacy as physical ones, virtual playdates allow preschoolers and 3+ toddlers to have **shared experiences**. The act of doing the same things together — even through a screen — will enable kids to connect beyond an ordinary video call.

Below, we recommend several engaging activities for kids to do online and tips for parents to make these virtual gatherings more interactive and beneficial for their children's social development.

1. Host a virtual movie screening

Invite three to four of your child's preschool classmates to bond over a kid-friendly film online. You can use the screen-sharing feature of different video-call platforms or through browser extensions of video-streaming services.

Then, schedule a "movie review" afterward, where you can encourage the kids to **talk about the movie** by asking questions about the characters, the setting, and the lessons, among others.

How this activity helps kids: This allows 3+ toddlers to engage with what they watched on the screen, give them a chance to share their thoughts out loud, and listen to what other people have

to say. Having a neutral topic to talk about will practice their conversational skills.

Tip for parents: Make sure to emphasize that there's no right or wrong answer so the children wouldn't be intimidated to speak. Allow each child the opportunity to talk, but make sure not to force anyone to do so. If you observe anyone straying from the discussion, gently guide them back to the topic at hand.

2. Do arts and crafts

Unleash the 3+ toddlers' creativity by organizing arts and crafts sessions. It could be focused on drawing, painting, making scrapbooks, or even creating [DIY handiworks](#) that kids can do with little to no assistance.

How this activity helps kids: Knowing — and actually seeing — other kids do the same activity will make a 3+ toddler feel less isolated despite not being physically in the same space. A shared experience like this provides a sense of belongingness and community. [Art](#) also helps kids express their emotions, learn more about themselves, and build self-confidence.

Tip for parents: While it's okay to supervise and offer help, try not to hover or take control. Give the 3+ toddlers the freedom to express themselves through their work. At the end of the crafting session, consider doing a short show-and-tell. Talking about their projects will help them verbalize their emotions and thoughts and open up more to their friends.

3. Have an interactive storytelling session

Instead of reading books for your storytelling activity, have a [story jar](#) filled with different kinds of "prompts" written on paper strips and ask the children to talk about these topics. It can be about anything under the sun: their favorite toy, what they want to be when they grow up, their favorite animal, etc.

Another idea is to do a story chain. The parent can start off with a make-believe premise for the story. Then, each child will be given a chance to continue the story using their own ideas. They can be as creative and as imaginative as they want — they just need to connect their idea to what the last person said.

How this activity helps kids: These storytelling activities emphasize the importance of listening when communicating. The kids will learn patience and focus as they [pay attention](#) to the story being told in the session.

Tip for parents: Some 3+ toddlers can be quite energetic (read: madal dal) when allowed to tell their stories. Ensure everyone is given a chance to speak and remind the children to be patient as they await their turn.

4. Organize a dance party

Running around the park or playing outdoor games is out of the picture for now. What 3+ toddlers can do instead is to dance with each other — through a screen, of course. They can do kiddie dance steps or watch dance-along videos online (such as those from their favorite [CoCoMelon](#) tunes).

It might also be a good idea to do this regularly. Experts say [20 minutes](#) of physical activity thrice a

week helps keep kids physically fit.

How this activity helps kids: Through dancing, 3+ toddlers can break out of their shells and let loose, helping overcome shyness. Socialization also goes beyond verbal communication. In **dancing**, children learn what it means to cooperate, respect, and accept one another.

Tip for parents: Let 3+ toddlers participate in this kind of activity at their own pace. Manage your expectations, especially when you know your child needs more time to warm up. To help build confidence, you can also join in! Kids model their behavior from adults, so seeing you enjoying dancing with other people may encourage them to do it, too.

While you make sure your 3+ toddlers are getting the social experiences they need, don't forget to keep them healthy and active. Provide them with a balanced diet complemented with **NIDO® 3+** or **NIDO® 5+**.

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