

## Chapter 2 Family Handout

### THINKING SOCIALLY

If your child behaves rudely then it might not feel like a learning disability, but it is. Children with social-thinking problems have a learning problem associated with understanding social concepts and ideas. A problem of social thinking involves a difficulty in understanding how one's actions impact how another person might think about him. Consider the following:

- When giving feedback to your child regarding her social behavior, you should make a conscious effort to track how often you use words like “inappropriate” or other vague and ill-defined terms because these words are not clear enough for your child to understand.
- For some children, the idea of doing something just to make another person happy seems illogical. You might have to clearly illustrate for your child how another person's thoughts about him can directly impact his own quality of life. For example, if your child says thank you to a teacher, that teacher will likely have a good thought about him, and good thoughts can influence how the teacher thinks about his effort and work.
- Social concepts are not easy to teach, and in our society we tend to address them indirectly, making assumptions about how a child is reading our disapproving look, for example. It is a good idea to think in terms of “compassionate honesty.” You don't want to punish your child because this is a learning issue; instead, try to teach social concepts in the same way that you would teach a math concept. Be understanding, but direct and honest. For example, if your child can hardly tolerate the smell of bad breath and he tends to tell people that they have horrible breath, talk to him about how his words might embarrass someone and how those words might cause the person to have an angry thought about him. Help him to come up with an alternative response, like carrying breath mints and offering one to someone as a friendly gesture.