

PROMOTING HEALTHY SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN YOUR CHILD

From the moment your child is born they are developing a sense of self and the world around them. They begin to learn to trust you. As you build a bond with them they feel secure in their world. This sets the stage for their entire developmental future. You help them develop socially and emotionally. Social development is our interaction with others. It is the ability to form secure relationships. Emotional development is regulating and expressing emotions. It involves the way one feels about themselves, others and the world.

Recent research shows a direct connection between healthy social-emotional development and academic success. The National Academy of Sciences identified three qualities children need to be ready for school: intellectual skills, motivation to learn, and strong social/emotional capacity. The report states:

Strong social-emotional development underlies all later social, emotional, and academic success. Young children who develop strong early relationships with parents, family, caregivers, and teachers learn how to pay attention, cooperate, and get along with others. They are confident in their ability to explore and learn from the world around them.

A person's life experiences, genetic make-up, and temperament can affect their social-emotional development. As your child's first role model, you can send a positive message to them. Start by being supportive.

- Love your child and show your affection for them. Hug, cuddle, read, and talk with them throughout the day.
- Encourage your child to try new things. Help them see what they are capable of. Let your child know you are pleased with their accomplishments.
- Give your child opportunities to play with other children their age. Help them explore their world and get to know the people in it. Model kind and generous behaviors when interacting with other adults and children.
- Show your feelings. Let your child see when you are happy or sad. This helps them to develop empathy for others.
- Establish daily routines. Your child will feel confident and secure. They will learn that events can happen in an organized way. Create routines that are predictable but flexible.
- Acknowledge your child's feelings. Help them talk about what they feel and how they are feeling. Comfort your child when they are upset. Hold them and speak softly and calmly.

Provide positive social-emotional opportunities for your child. They will feel good about themselves and develop confidence. Your child will form secure relationships with others and ultimately will be able to focus and learn. This strong and healthy foundation will lead to future academic success.