

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

What You Should Know

Social and emotional development involves several areas of development, including social interaction, emotional

Social interactions focus on the relationships we share with others, including relationships with adults and peers. As children develop socially, they learn to take turns, help their friends, play together, and cooperate with others.



Self-regulation is the ability to express thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in socially appropriate ways. Learning to calm down when angry or excited and persisting at difficult tasks are examples of self-regulation.

Emotional awareness includes the ability to recognize and understand our own feelings and actions and those of other people, and how our own feelings and actions affect ourselves and others.



PARENTS/GUARDIANS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE

Parents, you are your child's first teacher. Your role is to nurture your children's social and emotional development. This will help them learn the skills to play cooperatively in groups with other children, such as daycare centers or school. Model the emotions and behaviors you want your child to show and help them develop problem solving skills by asking open-ended questions. Playing games with your children can teach them how to take turns, win and lose, share, and negotiate. Lastly, use stories to talk about different social situations and how each person might be feeling.



As your child grows, they . . .

Express emotions with words

Socialize with others

Share toys, take turns— first with help, then independently

Initiate or join in play with other children and make up games

Follow simple rules in games

Begin dramatic play, acting out whole scenes such as travelling or pretending to be animals

Might be bossy and defiant

Show more independence

Experience a broad range of emotions (ie: jealousy, excitement, fear, happiness, anger)

Become less egocentric

Become more even-tempered and cooperative

Show some awareness of moral reasoning, such as “fairness” and good or bad behavior

Develop friendships

Express more awareness of other people's feelings

WHEN TO BE CONCERNED

9 to 12 months, Your child...:

- ◆ Does not responding to sounds
- ◆ Does not smile or respond to you the way you expect
- ◆ Avoids close contact or cuddling
- ◆ Is inconsolable at night
- ◆ Cannot seem to self-soothe or calm themself
- ◆ Has no interest in games like peek-a-boo
- ◆ Does not show interest in other children of the same age
- ◆ Does not respond to you the way you expect them to
- ◆ Has extreme difficulty waiting for something they want
- ◆ Is very rigid about their routine, food items, clothing, etc.
- ◆ Has limited or fleeting eye contact with others
- ◆ Does not imitate any of your actions
- ◆ Does not respond when you call their name
- ◆ Does not follow your point when you try to show something or bring attention to something
- ◆ Does not take turns in a simple turn-taking game like chase or peek-a-boo

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IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS

- ◆ Talk to your family practice doctor or pediatrician
- ◆ Ask your school district to conduct a developmental screen
- ◆ Look for resources on child development and milestones such as the ACT Early resources



It is important to act on your concerns. If there are some developmental delays, early intervention services will help your child work toward meeting developmental milestones. Don't delay. Getting services early helps many kids catch up and thrive in school and in life overall.

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2 to 5 years:

- ◆ Does not imitate other people
- ◆ Constantly moves from one activity to another and is not able to stay at an activity for long periods
- ◆ Requires constant attention to stay at an activity
- ◆ Does not “show” things to other people
- ◆ Extremely “rigid” about routines, becomes extremely upset when they are changed
- ◆ Too passive and doesn’t want to try things other children their age are doing
- ◆ Has extreme difficulty waiting for items they want
- ◆ Is not interested in pretend play
- ◆ Has extreme difficulty separating from you
- ◆ He is not starting or responding to simple interactions with other children
- ◆ She is showing abnormal aggression
- ◆ He has extreme fears that interfere with daily activities
- ◆ He shows extreme fears that interfere with daily activities



Connecting at Home

Children are social. They watch, learn, and play with others. The way you talk and play with your child helps them develop healthy emotions. These early positive relationships serve as a model when children begin making friends. The following tips can help you support your child as they make new friends.

Engaging Environments

Children like to play with fun materials and show their toys to friends. Lay out fun items and let your child choose what to play with! Remember, some of the best toys come from items right in your home, like a large cardboard box turned into a castle or garage. Play together with toys that represent your community!

Model Good Relationships

Children learn from you. Young children learn to care for others with kindness when adults in their lives show them how.

Respond Consistently

Consistent, positive responses make children feel supported and valued. When your child wants attention, respond. You may not be able to give your full attention right away, but you can still show that you hear them. For example, look at your child and nod; you can also say, “I see you want me to pick you up. I’ll be right there!” As children get older, you can explain what you’re doing and when you’ll be available: “I’m putting the groceries away right now, but I will be finished in two minutes.”

Let Children Take the Lead

Allow your child to choose a toy or game. Let them follow their own interests and help them problem-solve. For instance, if children fight over a toy, resist the urge to solve the issue. Instead, give them tools to find a solution. You can suggest different options: “Maybe you can take turns!” or “Maybe Sally can find a new toy instead.” Help children think it through. With older children, let them work on their own solution.

Who To Talk To If You Have More Questions



Resources

South Dakota Parent Connection
1-800-640-4553

www.sdparent.org

South Dakota Statewide Family Engagement Center (SD SFEC)
<https://sdsfec.org>

Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center

<https://sdsfec.org/brief-earlychildhoodsel>

South Dakota Department of Education Birth to Three

<https://doe.sd.gov/birthto3/>

- ◆ What is Early Intervention
- ◆ Developmental Checklist
- ◆ and more!

U.S. Department of Education

<https://sdsfec.org/brief-doemilestonetracker>

- ◆ Milestone Tracker App

Center for Disease Control

www.cdc.gov/concerned

- ◆ Learn the Signs
- ◆ Act Early
- ◆ Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive!

Early Childhood Personnel Center

<https://ecpcta.org/>

- ◆ Acronym List for families

Too Small to Fail

<http://toosmall.org/>

- ◆ Tip sheets on Fostering Healthy Social and Emotional Development in Young Children Tips for families :

www.sdsfec.org/brief-tips-for-families-sel

Learn the Signs. Act Early.

- ◆ www.cdc.gov/actearly

