Social-Emotional Development Is Important for:

- Understanding thoughts and feelings to help communicate and act appropriately
- Developing healthy relationships with friends and family

These steps help children live happy, successful lives.

Social-Emotional Skills Impact Daily Life

Social-emotional skills allow us to express ourselves appropriately in different environments and with different people. Developing these skills helps boost your child's confidence and can help them in school, work, and life.

- Succeed in school
- Make friends and maintain friendships
- Resolve conflicts
- Manage stress and anxiety
- Learn social norms
- Make appropriate decisions
- Resist negative social pressure
- Learn our strengths and weaknesses
- Gain awareness of what others are feeling

Where To Go for Help

Recognizing an issue early is always best. Children may show different warning signs for social-emotional issues. If you have a concern talk to your healthcare provider. There are many specialists who may help including:

- Child psychologist
- Social worker
- Neuropsychologist
- Psychiatrist
- Occupational therapist
- Speech-language pathologist
- Developmental and behavioral pediatrician

Pathways.org

Pathways.org empowers parents and health professionals with FREE tools and resources to maximize a child's motor, sensory, and communication development.

800-955-CHILD (2445)
friends@pathways.org
www.pathways.org

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Early Social-Emotional Development

FREE tools to maximize child development

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Social-Emotional Development By Age

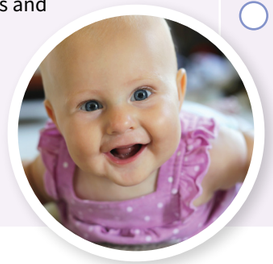
FIRST YEAR

0 – 3 Months

- Begins to smile in response to their caregivers, also called a social smile
- Develops more facial and body expressions
- Can briefly calm themselves, e.g. sucking on thumb
- Recognizes they are having fun and may cry when playing stops
- Makes eye contact and looks at people while interacting

4 – 6 Months

- Is usually happy when surrounded by cheerful caregivers
- Responds to and copies some movements and facial expressions
- Develops an awareness of their surroundings and expresses a desire to engage, e.g. banging objects or toys



7 – 9 Months

- May show anxiety around strangers
- Plays social games, e.g. *peek-a-boo*
- Learns the meaning of words when they're used consistently
- Enjoys looking at self in a mirror
- Becomes more "clingy" when leaving caregiver, e.g. reaches for caregiver when being held by someone else

10 – 12 Months

- Attempts to display independence, e.g. crawling for exploration or refusing food
- May show fear around unfamiliar people and objects
- Tries to get attention by repeating sounds and gestures
- Enjoys imitating people in play

1 – 2 Years

- Shows defiant behavior to establish independence, e.g. having tantrums
- Does not understand what others think or feel and believes everyone thinks as he does, e.g. gets upset when no longer the center of attention
- Enjoys being around other children, but not yet able to share easily
- Can play independently for brief periods of time

2 – 3 Years

- Copies others in more complex tasks, e.g. cleaning, cooking, self-care
- Shows affection towards friends
- Shows an increasing variety of emotions
- Upset when there are major changes in routine
- Seems concerned about personal needs and may even act "selfishly"

3 – 4 Years

- Starts cooperating more with others during play, e.g. sharing toys
- Can sometimes work out conflicts with other children, e.g. taking turns in small groups
- Uses words to communicate needs instead of screaming, grabbing, or whining
- Becomes more independent in daily activities, e.g. may choose own clothes to wear

4 – 5 Years

- Has more developed friendships and maybe even a "best friend"
- More cooperative with rules
- Understands and is sensitive to others' feelings
- Understands the difference between real life and make believe
- Has changes in attitude, e.g. is demanding at times and cooperative at times

Remember to correct your child's age for prematurity.

Please visit www.Pathways.org to find more FREE resources on child development.

Social-Emotional Development Tips

- Model the emotions and behavior you want your child to show
- Be responsive to your child's emotions and behaviors. Respond quickly to basic needs to develop trust, e.g. feeding, playing, soothing, and comforting them
- Help your child work through negative emotions by asking simple questions, offering choices and avoiding power struggles, e.g. *"Would you like to brush your teeth or take a bath first?"*
- Point out and talk about your child's emotions and how to cope
- Use stories to talk about different social situations and how each person might be feeling
- Ask *"What would you do?"* to help develop problem solving skills
- Encourage kids to try new things and learn how much they are capable of
- Play games to teach kids how to take turns, win and lose, share, and negotiate
- When using screens after 18 months (not recommended earlier), sit with your child and make it a social activity, e.g. asking them questions or playing turn-taking games

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