

Promoting Social-Emotional Development in Young Children



Research shows that early childhood experiences set the stage for later health, well being, learning and academic success. Babies and young children, particularly at-risk children, need consistent, nurturing adults who are supportive and responsive. Nurturing relationships, such as those provided by early childhood teachers and child care providers, offer children the comfort, safety and confidence needed to form

friendships, pay attention, communicate feelings and deal with challenges.

To successfully foster social-emotional development in children, start by implementing some of these simple activities.

- Play social games, encourage taking turns & imaginative play
- Offer choices throughout the day
- Imitate child's facial expressions and sounds
- Communicate what you think a child is feeling, name their emotions (ex. "Brian, you look sad.")
- Help children learn to calm themselves and praise positive behavior
- Get to know each child and follow their lead
- Provide opportunities for group activities with children of varying ages

By building strong social-emotional foundations for babies and young children, they will be confident in their ability to explore and learn from the world around them. They will be better equipped to handle stress and persevere through difficult times in their lives and may experience later positive attitudes and behaviors, academic performance, career success and adult health outcomes.

For more information on social-emotional development of young children, check out these resources:

- [Emotions](#)
- [Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning](#)
- [Zero to Three](#)

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