Preschool Skill-Building
Supporting Social Emotional Development

We prepare children for preschool in many ways, by labeling school supplies and helping them to learn the alphabet, all while trying not to let them see us tear up as they are dropped off on the first day of school. Here are some simple ways caregivers can help children develop the social-emotional skills needed to succeed in the preschool setting:

Teach Children Winning *AND* Losing Social Skills: No one likes to lose, but it happens to everyone. Playing simple board or card games can help teach children how to cope with emotions when participating in a group activity. Before starting the game make the objectives and rules clear. Knowing the rules before beginning can make it seem less shocking when they lose. It can also eliminate any sense of unfairness.

Let Children Lose: As harsh as this might sound, letting children lose will encourage developing the ability to cope with disappointment. Losing at simple games will allow children to develop grit, perseverance, and strategy. Show them a new technique or explain the rules again (if needed) and play a second round.

Model Sharing and Taking Turns: Routinely use simple words to describe turn-taking: "My turn, then it's your turn". Create opportunities to share with children, such as sharing a snack. Acknowledge when others share and describe their actions: "Thank you for passing the dice."

Label Emotions: Help children understand emotions by encouraging them to talk about how they are feeling. Let children know when they are upset, they should talk about it and tell others why they are upset: "It is ok to feel frustrated when a friend doesn't share a toy. It is not ok to push your friend." By identifying feelings and setting behavior expectations, children can learn how to problem solve in a positive way.

Preschool Expulsion
Why are children so young being expelled?

Very few things can prepare a parent for a phone call from preschool telling them that their child has been expelled. Preschool expulsions and suspensions occur at a higher rate as compared to other academic settings. Expulsions are commonly the result of challenging behaviors, such as aggression or tantrums. Suspensions/expulsions isolate the children that are typically in the most need of social-emotional development.