



COLORADO
Office of Early Childhood
Department of Human Services

PROMOTING SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Social, emotional and behavioral health begins at birth and lays a foundation for children to:

MANAGE EMOTIONS • HAVE POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS
RESOLVE CONFLICTS PEACEFULLY • TAKE CARE OF OTHERS

Children begin learning these skills from birth as they build attachments and trust with caregivers, learn how to calm themselves down, and later, to recognize emotions.

Just like other skills, children develop social and emotional abilities gradually - and they need plenty of support from adults as they learn.

Nurturing our children's social and emotional needs from birth helps ensure they will have good mental health throughout their lives.

We all have mental health - even babies! And just as physical health enables us to have the energy we need to work and live our lives, mental health allows us to have positive relationships with others, cope with life's challenges, and manage our emotions.

Just as we take care of our children's physical health - with healthy food, plenty of sleep and regular check-ups - we must also take care of their mental health by supporting their social-emotional development.

BUT HOW?

Loving relationships with you and other adults are the foundation of children's healthy social-emotional development.

Positive relationships help children feel secure and encouraged. Through relationships we can teach children to understand and express their feelings, develop compassion for other people, and learn the difference between right and wrong. These social and emotional skills prepare children for success in school and throughout their lives.



19-36 MONTHS

Children age 19-36 months are starting to play with other children - instead of just next to them. They are beginning to compare themselves with others. They might say, "Daniel is a boy like me." Children are starting to do things on their own and may insist: "do it myself!" At this age children are starting to express their feelings and understand emotions. They use words to describe feelings and say what they like and dislike.

TRY THESE TIPS:

- Provide chances to play with other kids, including kids from different cultures and ethnicities
- Offer toys that encourage imagination and role play (play kitchen, dress-up clothes, etc.)
- Use words to help him learn to share and take turns: "I'm going to share this car with you so you can play, too"
- Encourage her when she shares or takes turns: "You gave Adam a block to play with - that was so nice"
- Talk with him about rules, limits, and choices and why they are important
- Help her identify her features like hair color, gender, size, etc.
- Allow him time to do things for himself and encourage him: "If you want help, I am here"
- Use words to talk about your feelings, the child's feelings, and others' feelings
- Look at pictures of people showing emotions and help children identify the feelings
- Always respond calmly; emotions can be overwhelming to children and your calm response helps them calm down

JUST AS WE TAKE CARE OF CHILDREN'S
PHYSICAL HEALTH, WE MUST ALSO TAKE
CARE OF THEIR MENTAL HEALTH.

Challenging behavior - or acting out - is how children communicate that their social and emotional needs are not being met. Parenting is hard, and all families need help to prepare their children for success in school and beyond. It's normal to have questions and concerns about your child's development and behavior.

THERE ARE SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES IN YOUR COMMUNITY:

Talk to your child's health provider, child care provider, or other early childhood professional. Visit earlylearningco.org to get practical tips and fun ideas to support children's learning. Visit coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.com to learn about social-emotional development and community resources.



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