

Social and Emotional Development

“Emotional well-being and social competence provide a strong foundation for emerging cognitive abilities. Together they are the ‘bricks and mortar’ of the foundation of human development. The brain is a highly integrated organ. Social development and regulation of behavior are as much a part of development as cognitive learning.”

Shonkoff, J. (2007). Social, emotional, and cognitive development are inextricably linked. *Preschool Matters*, 5, (5), 5.

“Play allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, and physical, cognitive, and emotional strength. Undirected play allows children to learn how to work in groups, to share, to negotiate, to resolve conflicts, to learn self-advocacy skills and leadership. Perhaps above all, play is a simple joy that is a cherished part of childhood.”

Ginsburg, K.R. (2007). The importance of play in promoting healthy child development and maintaining strong parent-child bonds. *Pediatrics*, 119 (1), 182-191.

II. Children Show Progress in Social and Emotional Development When They:

A. Self Concept

1. Know own name (first and last) and age
2. Identify own gender
3. Participate in and talks about own cultural traditions
4. Show initiative and self direction
5. Recognize own feelings/emotions
6. Begin to answer, “Who am I?” (e.g., attributes various characteristics to self)
7. Demonstrate self confidence, is emotionally secure

B. Self Regulation

1. Regulate feelings/emotions (e.g., self calming)
2. Regulate physical actions (e.g., follows classroom rules and routines, uses classroom materials purposefully and respectfully, manages transitions and adapts to changes in routine)
3. Understand what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behavior in different situations (e.g., in the classroom, on the playground)

C. Self Reliance and Resiliency

1. Begin to take care of own emotional needs (e.g., accepts and asks for hugs and self soothes when needed)
2. Begin to take care of own physical needs (e.g., when hungry eats or asks for food, when cold dresses warmer, uses lavatory as needed)
3. Use coping skills appropriately (e.g., reads body language and adjusts behavior if needed)
4. Find humor in a widening variety of situations
5. Assert own rights (e.g., holds on when they have something first; speaks up if own turn is skipped)

D. Social Competence

1. Work with others in play and group activities (e.g., uses names, shares, takes turns, asks for help)
 - a. Negotiate roles and tasks when working with peers
2. Participate in a variety of group and individual activities, tasks, and play
3. Use acceptable methods to resolve conflicts and disagreements with peers

E. Interactions with Peers and Adults

1. Begin to trust appropriately (e.g., does not hug strangers)
2. Begin to attach appropriately (e.g., forms relationships with nurturing adults)
3. Begin to interact with others regardless of differences
4. Begin to respect the feelings, opinions, and perspectives of others
5. Begin to understand that other people have rights (e.g., stands up for a friend)
6. Begin to understand the concept of fairness (e.g., everyone gets a turn or a piece of fruit)
7. Begin to participate in and talk about the cultural traditions of others
8. Begin to read social cues
9. Begin to seek and/or accept help from a peer or adult when encountering challenges (e.g., asks adult for help if something is out of reach, negotiates with peer before calling for teacher)
10. Converse with peers and adults
11. Begin to care for others and demonstrate a desire to be helpful (e.g., comforts a friend who is crying)
12. Begin to develop friendships with peers
13. Begin to develop relationships with adults