

A Parent Guide to Supporting Your Child's Social-Emotional Development Learning At Home and "On the Go" Series

It is essential that young children's feelings get the same level of attention as their thinking.

Pre-k programs use the **New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core** to support meaningful social-emotional development in young children. This means that the curriculum in your child's school is focused on developing your child's abilities in the following areas:



- ❖ **Self Concept and Self Awareness** – Your child recognizes himself as a unique individual having his own abilities, characteristics, feelings and interests.
- ❖ **Self Regulation** – Your child regulates his responses to his needs, feelings and events.
- ❖ **Relationships with Others** – Your child demonstrates and continues to develop positive relationships with important peers and adults, and demonstrates pro-social problem-solving skills in social interactions.
- ❖ **Accountability** – Your child understands and follows routines and rules.
- ❖ **Adaptability** – Your child adapts to change.

Importance of Social-Emotional Development for Young Children

Research shows:

- ❖ "Children who develop warm, positive relationships with their kindergarten teachers are more excited about learning, more positive about coming to school, more self confident and achieve more in the classroom." (Young Children Develop in an Environment of Relationships, 2004)
- ❖ "By the end of the preschool years, children who have acquired a strong emotional foundation have the capacity to anticipate, talk about, and use their awareness of their own and others feelings to better manage everyday social interactions." (Children's Emotional Development is Built into the Architecture of their Brains, 2004)

Here is how Families can Support Social Emotional Development- "At Home and on the Go"

You can support social-emotional development every day by:

- ❖ Encouraging your child to **make choices**. For example:
 - *Let your child choose between two different outfits to wear to school or pick out an afternoon snack from a selection of a few healthy options.*
- ❖ Establishing and following a **predictable, daily routine**. For example:
 - *Talk about the next day's schedule with your child when you put him to bed at night so he knows what to expect the following day. Your child may enjoy posting a daily schedule on the refrigerator that includes waking, breakfast, school time, play time, bath time, dinner time and bed time. Refer to the schedule as you transition your child from activity to activity to help him/her prepare for the changes throughout her day.*

- ❖ **Responding with inquisitiveness and specific praise** when your child shows pride in an accomplishment. For example:
 - *Inquisitiveness: I see that you drew lots of red and blue circles on your paper. Tell me about it.*
 - *Specific Praise: You cleaned up the spill all by yourself. When the paper towel didn't work, figured out a different solution – you got the sponge. Thanks for cleaning up the spill so that nobody slipped!*

- ❖ **Identify and name feelings** with your child so he/she can practice using words to identify emotions. Help your child recognize his/her own feelings feel like and to identify feelings in other people. For example:
 - *Play “Guess that Feeling”*
 - *Take turns acting out a feeling and trying to guess what feeling is being shown.*
 - *Make a face that shows the feeling.*
 - *Move your body to show the feeling.*
 - *Act out something that could happen to make you feel that way*

- ❖ Teach your **child strategies to calm down when he/she is angry or upset**. For example:
 - *Sing “If You’re Happy and You Know It” with your child.*
 - *Choose a new feeling (such as angry), and ask your child to think about something he or she does when feeling that way.*
 - *If your child can’t think of something, make a suggestion such as, “I noticed when you were angry at your brother, you took a deep breath.”*
 - *Demonstrate the angry motion to the song: “if you’re angry and you know it, take a breath.” Talk about things that are okay to do and things that are not okay.*
 - *Develop a cozy corner in your home with books your child may select to read.*
 - *Create a simple chart of activities your child can do to calm down such as counting to 10, humming a song, doing a simple exercise, or striking a yoga pose.*

You can find more helpful resources at The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/family.html> and at The Fund for Public Health NY <http://www.fphny.org/programs/promoting-social-and-emotional-development-in-young-children>. You can find Social-Emotional books to read with your child at <http://www.flashlightworthybooks.com/Picture-Books-for-Developing-Social-Emotional-Growth/459>

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