

Fostering Social-Emotional Development in Young Children



Research confirms that early childhood experiences set the stage for later health, wellbeing and learning. 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 providers, afford children the comfort, safety and confidence needed to form friendships, pay attention, communicate feelings and deal with challenges.

To foster social-emotional development in children it must be a priority. Start by implementing some of these simple activities:

- Encourage turn-taking
- Imitate child's facial expressions
- Communicate what a child is feeling
- Provide opportunities for group activities
- Offer choices throughout the day

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:

- Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) at: <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/index.html>
- Zero to Three at: <https://www.zerotothree.org/>

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