



Social-Emotional Development Is Important for:

Understanding thoughts and feelings to help communicate and act appropriately

Developing healthy relationships with friends and family

These steps help children live happy, successful lives.

Social-Emotional Skills Impact Daily Life
Social-emotional skills allow us to express ourselves appropriately in different environments and with different people.

Developing these skills helps boost your child's confidence and can help them in school, work, and life.

- Succeed in school
- Make friends and maintain friendships
- Resolve conflicts
- Manage stress and anxiety
- Learn social norms
- Make appropriate decisions
- Resist negative social pressure
- Learn our strengths and weaknesses
- Gain awareness of what others are feeling



Early Social-emotional Development



Social-Emotional Development By Age

0-3 months

Begins to smile in response to their caregivers, also called a social smile.
Develops more facial and body expressions
Can briefly calm themselves, e.g. sucking on thumb
Recognizes they are having fun and may cry when playing stops
Makes eye contact and looks at people while interacting



4-6 months

Is usually happy when surrounded by cheerful caregivers
Responds to and copies some movements and facial expressions
Develops an awareness of their surroundings and expresses a desire to engage, e.g. banging objects or toys



7-9 months

May show anxiety around strangers
Plays social games, e.g. peek-a-boo
Learns the meaning of words when they're used consistently
Enjoys looking at self in a mirror
Becomes more "clingy" when leaving caregiver, e.g. reaches for caregiver when being held by someone else



10-12 months

Attempts to display independence, e.g. crawling for exploration or refusing food
May show fear around unfamiliar people and objects
Tries to get attention by repeating sounds and gestures
Enjoys imitating people in play



1-2 years

Shows defiant behavior to establish independence, e.g. having tantrums
Does not understand what others think or feel and believes everyone thinks as he does, e.g. gets upset when no longer the center of attention
Enjoys being around other children, but not yet able to share easily
Can play independently for brief periods of time



2-3 years

Copies others in more complex tasks, e.g. cleaning, cooking, self-care
Shows affection towards friends
Shows an increasing variety of emotions
Upset when there are major changes in routine
Seems concerned about personal needs and may even act "selfishly"



3-4 years

Starts cooperating more with others during play, e.g. sharing toys
Can sometimes work out conflicts with other children, e.g. taking turns in small groups
Uses words to communicate needs instead of screaming, grabbing or whining
Becomes more independent in daily activities, e.g. may choose own clothes to wear



4-5 years

Has more developed friendships and maybe even a "best friend"
More cooperative with rules
Understands and is sensitive to others' feelings
Understands the difference between real life and make believe
Has changes in attitude, e.g. is demanding at times and cooperative at times



Social-Emotional Development Tips

- Model the emotions and behavior you want your child to show
- Be responsive to your child's emotions and behaviors.
- Respond quickly to basic needs to develop trust, e.g. feeding, playing, soothing, and comforting them
- Help your child work through negative emotions by asking simple questions, offering choices and avoiding power struggles, e.g. "Would you like to brush your teeth or take a bath first?"
- Point out and talk about your child's emotions and how to cope
- Use stories to talk about different social situations and how each person might be feeling
- Ask "What would you do?" to help develop problem solving skills
- Encourage kids to try new things and learn how much they are capable of
- Play games to teach kids how to take turns, win and lose, share, and negotiate
- When using screens after 18 months (not recommended earlier), sit with your child and make it a social activity, e.g. asking them questions or playing turn-taking games