

What the Experts Say



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CONCERN

The preschool years are a period of rapid growth and development as children learn new skills and refine them into increasingly more complex and sophisticated responses. If there are delays or problems in mastering social-emotional skills, a child may experience later problems in academics, social relationships, and mental health. When a child's ongoing problem behaviors remain unaddressed by key caregivers such as parents and teachers, they often cluster with other behaviors that collectively become harder and harder to manage, as well as further stigmatizing and isolating the child from adults and his or her socially competent peers.¹ When negative developmental trajectories are established early, they can be self-sustaining throughout the lifespan.² Research indicates that emotional and behavioral problems in young children may be less likely to respond to intervention after age eight.³

RESEARCH

Social-Emotional Development

Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development identifies three major developmental tasks of early childhood that highlight the importance of social and emotional development:⁴

- **Emergence of self-control and independence:** Children make the transition from requiring help from others to regulate their emotions, behaviors and attentions to regulating them by themselves (self-regulation).
- **Language, reasoning and problem-solving:** Children acquire the skills that are the foundation for communication and learning.
- **Relationships:** Children learn to trust adults, relate well to other children, and form friendships that include the emerging capacity to trust, to love and nurture, and to resolve conflicts constructively.

In *Resources to Promote Social and Emotional Health and School Readiness in Young Children and Families*, the National Center for Children in Poverty identifies social and emotional skills young children will need to succeed in school:⁵

- Identify emotions accurately in themselves and others.
- Relate to teachers and friends in positive ways.

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- Manage feelings of anger, frustration and distress.
 - Enjoy academic learning and approach it enthusiastically.
 - Work attentively, independently and cooperatively in a structured classroom environment.

The preschool period is the critical time for children to learn to control their thoughts, feelings, attention, impulses, and behavior. Emotional development is the process of learning to recognize and express emotions, regulate or manage emotions, and understand the emotions of others. Social development is the process of developing skills to form positive relationships with adults and peers, play with others, and handle challenging situations. Together, social-emotional development is the process of acquiring skills to recognize and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish positive relationships and handle challenging situations effectively.

Children who develop social-emotional skills:

- Are more likely to make a successful transition to kindergarten.
- Are less likely to be labeled as delayed.
- Are less likely to be placed in lower academic tracks.
- Have parents and teachers with higher expectations for their academic performance.
- Have fewer problems with later behavioral, emotional, academic and social development.
- Are less likely to have poor academic achievement, be retained, or dropout of school.
- Are less likely to be delinquent, have antisocial behaviors, or have a teen pregnancy.

In contrast, children are less likely to succeed in school if they fail to learn social-emotional skills and competencies. Children with poor social-emotional skills participate less in school and do worse in school than children with positive social-emotional skills. Aggressive children who are unable to make friends are more likely to be held back a grade, drop out of school, and commit delinquent and criminal juvenile offenses in adolescence. Disruptive children spend less time on task and receive less instruction from teachers. Children's acting out behavior at age five predicts low educational achievement at age 30.⁶ Characteristics of children who lack social-emotional skills include:

- Frequent episodes of fighting, hitting, shouting or other aggressive behaviors.
- Inability to control impulsive behavior.
- Inability to pay attention to tasks or follow directions.
- Oppositional, non-compliant or defiant behavior.
- Failure to cooperate with others.
- Constant attention-seeking from teachers and friends.
- Ignoring teachers or friends.

Parent-Teacher Partnership Promotes Social-Emotional Health

The quality of the experiences and relationships at home and at child care set the stage for children's social and emotional development and school success.⁷ When preschool programs use good teaching practices that emphasize children's social and emotional development, they provide the basis for long-term social, emotional, and cognitive benefits. Preschool programs are ideal settings for promoting children's competence because they have access to children and their parents on a regular basis over an extended period and can serve as an agent of developmental change for children.⁸

Based in an increasing body of research, the National Association for Young Children's publication, *The Teaching Pyramid: A Model for Supporting Social Competence and Preventing Challenging Behavior in Young Children*,⁹ offers a model for effectively promoting social-emotional competence and addressing problem behavior. The model focuses on: 1) promoting social-emotional development; 2) providing support for children's appropriate behavior; and 3) preventing challenging behavior. Good relationships are critical to effective teaching and guidance in social, emotional, and behavioral development. Giving children positive attention for their prosocial behavior and providing consistent routines and expectations promotes social-emotional development.

Emotional Literacy

Emotional literacy is the ability to recognize, label and understand feelings. It is one of the most important skills children learn in early childhood.¹⁰ It is a prerequisite skill to emotion regulation, successful interactions with others, and problem solving. Understanding emotions provides the foundation for communication and social relationships. Accurately reading and understanding others' emotions gives children clues for handling social interactions, allows empathy, and sets the stage for prosocial behavior. Inability to read and understand others' emotions interferes with social communication and interactions.

Adult-Child Interactions. Children's capacity for emotion regulation begins in infancy and is strongly influenced by adult-child interactions. The way that adults help children handle their emotions makes a significant difference in their development of emotion regulation and later mental health. Caregiver sensitivity and responsiveness is important. If adults fail to respond sensitively and appropriately to a child, it sets the stage for later behavioral problems.¹¹ For example, caregiving strategies that work with children who are overly sensitive are different from those that work with children that are less sensitive. When sensitive and responsive adults help children by easing negative emotions and reinforcing positive emotions, they help children develop emotion regulation.¹²

Feeling Vocabulary. For children to correctly recognize, label and understand their own feelings and feelings of others, they must first have words for those feelings – develop a feeling vocabulary. Many children are either *happy* or *mad* with *mad* being any intense negative emotion. These children miss all the subtle feelings in between happy and mad because they do not have labels and definitions for those emotions. Children from low

income families^{13,14,15} and children with disabilities or developmental delays¹⁶ are more likely to have fewer feeling words than typically developing children and, therefore, may require targeted efforts to promote emotional literacy.

- **Teach feeling words** – All children need to develop a feeling word vocabulary to discriminate among finer emotions. Parents and teachers can increase children’s feelings words by directly teaching different feeling words and definitions and through conversations, play and special activities.¹⁷
- **Develop supportive, caring relationships** – It is in the context of warm, supportive and caring relationships that children learn to read the emotional cues of others and of themselves.¹⁸ Differences in the way adults talk to and teach children about feelings and problem solving are related to children’s abilities to label emotions.
- **Model feelings** – When adults talk out loud about feelings as they are experienced throughout the day, children are exposed to expressions, feeling words, and using those words to cope. For example, when a teacher or parent knocks something over, she says, “Oops. That is so frustrating. I was in too much of a hurry. I’d better take a deep breath, calm down, and clean it up.”
- **Label children’s feelings** – Sensitive adults help children identify their feelings and then validate those feelings. To validate feelings means adults let children know their emotions are real and acceptable and show them how to deal with them in socially acceptable ways. Labeling children’s feelings throughout the day helps them learn to identify their own internal feelings (“I’m frustrated”) which is an important step in learning to regulate emotions (“I need to calm down”). ***Do not deny, punish or withdraw from children for having emotions. It may be necessary to help children calm down before talking about their feelings.*** When children are out of control is not the appropriate time to talk about feelings.

Recognizing Others’ Emotions. Preschool children’s ability to recognize and understand emotion cues in others’ facial expressions has a long-term effect on social behavior and academic success. Consistently missing or misinterpreting others’ emotional cues interferes with the development of social and emotional competence.¹⁹ For example, a child may misinterpret an accidental bump as intentional and retaliate. Another child may not understand that he is irritating his playmate. Understanding others’ emotion expressions predicts children’s empathy, prosocial behavior, and how well like they are by other children. A lack of emotion knowledge is associated with internalizing behaviors (depressive symptoms, withdrawal, anxiety, hopelessness, and loneliness) and aggression in abused children and children with behavioral disorders. Teaching children to correctly read and respond to others’ emotion cues can prevent the onset of later behavioral and mental health problems.

Emotion Regulation

Young children experience a range of emotions every day and can easily be overcome by them. They experience conflict and intense, negative emotions such as anger, frustration,

and disappointment. Preschoolers vary in their ability to control their emotion due to differences in temperament, developmental readiness, and background experiences.

Emotion regulation is the process of controlling thoughts and responses to emotions. It is a second cornerstone of social-emotional development. When a child is continuously overwhelmed by emotions, it may interfere with development, cognitive learning, and relationships with others. Learning to manage intense and negative emotions in early childhood is critical to school success and the prevention of later behavioral and emotional problems. Learning to control intense, negative emotions involves recognizing the emotion, understanding that strong emotions can interfere with problem solving and relationships, and using strategies to calm down instead of act out or withdraw.

Children's emotions have both inward and outward expression.

- **Internal responses** — Increase in heart rate and blood pressure, sweating, stomach problems, tensed muscles and increase in stress hormones (cortisol).
- **Outward expressions** — Change in expressions, crying, yelling, screaming, physical aggression or hysterics.

Emotional Thinking. Emotion regulation begins with emotional thinking. Emotional thinking links ideas with emotions. It is the ability to use cues from reading and labeling emotions of self and others to guide one's actions to: brainstorm a variety of solutions to a problem, predict the consequences of one's own actions, and link cause and effect in interactions.²⁰ When children lack these skills, they are more likely to have frustrating social encounters which lead to a cycle of misbehavior, hurt feelings, frustration, and more bad behavior. Adults can help children learn to:

- Use cues from words and body language of others to make judgments about the cause and the intent of another's feelings and actions.
- Use those judgments to guide their actions
 - Calm down
 - Try again
 - Find someone to help or try a different way.
- Assess if the solution is fair, safe and leaves positive feelings for everyone.
- Remember what has worked before in similar situations and apply now.
- Distinguish between what is important and what is insignificant
- Stop, think, and control impulses.

Emotional Competence. Emotional competence is the ability to successfully manage emotions in different situations. Children who are emotionally competent get along better with friends, are more aware of their own and others' emotions, are less likely to use aggression, are more caring, are better able to concentrate and cope with problems, are more resilient and do better in school.²¹ The following factors affect emotion regulation:

- **Caregiver sensitivity** — When children are overcome by their emotions, they need adults to help them calm down until their own coping skills can take over. Adults help children by easing negative emotions and reinforcing positive emotions.¹²

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- **Cognitive and language skills** — Skills such as labeling, categorizing, communicating feelings and needs, and identifying and using appropriate behaviors are strongly affected by language. Children who have trouble labeling emotions may have difficulty identifying and using appropriate behavior to express those emotions. Children who have a hard time expressing their emotions and needs may have difficulty with give-and-take with friends and adults.
 - **Autonomy and initiative** — Autonomy is a sense of independence that usually develops during the second and third year.²² It includes the development of an internal code of behavior. Children who have developed a sense of autonomy act for a purpose or to achieve their own goals (a child insists on pouring juice into her glass by herself). Defiance occurs when a child gives up her goal (pouring juice) and acts to resist the adult (tantrums) when told she can not pour the juice. Initiative is the intent to act and develops during the preschool years. Children learn either to take initiative (“do it myself”) or feel shame and doubt because they cannot do things on their own. Children who have initiative can self-direct their activities. Autonomy and initiative develop when children have firm limits, opportunities to explore, make choices, and practice new skills. Children are more compliant and less defiant when adults provide firm limits with some choices. Children are more likely to be defiant when adults are intrusive, negative and controlling.

Strategies for Building Emotional Competence

When children enter preschool lacking emotional competence, teachers will play an important role in helping them learn to express and manage their emotions in healthy ways. It is important for adult caregivers to distinguish between children who are emotionally overwhelmed, are unable to regulate their emotions, or are having a tantrum (resisting adult authority). This is critical because adults must respond differently to each of these episodes.

Parents and teachers help children develop emotional regulation and competence when they:

- Provide sensitive, consistent and responsive care.
- Develop nurturing relationships with children.
- Soothe children’s intense emotions.
- Help children master new emotion regulation skills.

The American Academy of Pediatrics provides recommendations for ways adults can help children develop healthy, constructive ways to express their negative feelings by modeling appropriate and mature handling of frustration, anger, and unhappiness so children learn by example; letting children know it is normal to feel angry, sad, disappointed or hurt; encouraging children to go to ask an adult for help for problems they can’t solve alone; and setting clear limits so children know violence is not permissible.²³ Parents and teachers can jointly teach children strategies for handling negative emotions and praise children when they problem-solve, remain calm, handle disappointment, and ask an adult for help.

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- **Problem-solving** – Problem-solving involves recognizing when a problem exists, generating multiple alternative solutions (brainstorming), evaluating the consequences of solutions, acting on a solution, trying the solution and then evaluating its effectiveness.²⁴ In one study, children of parents who learned to use the problem-solving approach the best with their children to solve real problems were found to have made the strongest cognitive and behavioral gains.²⁵
 - Step 1 - Recognize when there is a problem (tell what happened).
 - Step 2 - Brainstorm many possible solutions (think of what to do to solve problem).
 - Step 3 - Talk about the consequences of solutions (tell what would happen if they did that).
 - Step 4 - Act on a solution (may need help and encouragement to try it).
 - Step 5 - Evaluate how well it worked (Was this a good way to handle it? If not, come up with another solution).
 - **Calming down** – Telling a child to calm down is seldom effective and may even further upset the child. Learning to control anger and disappointment is an extremely difficult task for young children. Calming down is more than suppressing emotion. It is linking feelings and actions. Children who learn to calm down have an easier time at home, school, and during play.²⁶ The **turtle technique** is one strategy that has been found to be effective for preschool children in which children learn to Stop-Think-Solve the problem (see attachment).²⁷
 - **Handling disappointment** - Adults can help children learn to handle disappointment by preparing them ahead of time, before a disappointing event occurs. One technique is **next time** in which children role play responding to disappointing situations by snapping their fingers and saying, “Next time.” For example, if it is highly unlikely a child will get to be a helper or ride a tricycle, the adult can guide the child in role playing the **next time** routine in advance.
 - **Asking an adult for help** – Children from high risk backgrounds may not have learned to trust adults and therefore do not ask adults for help. Children may need help learning to ask adults for comfort, to help solve a problem, or protect from bullying. Consistent, sensitive responsiveness to children’s request for help over time is essential to build a sense of trust.

Undermining Social-Emotional Competence

Just as adults can promote children’s social-emotional health, they can undermine it. Adults undermine children’s social-emotional competence when they:

- Make empty threats
- Use praise inappropriately (non-specific praise, group praise)
- Ask confusing questions
- Give confusing directions
- Overuse the phrases “I need…” or “You need…”
- Use timeout inappropriately

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- Withdraw emotionally from a child (hold a grudge)
 - Ignore a child's distress
 - Argue or lecture
 - Perpetuate a negative reputation or image (labeling)
 - Predict failure
 - Remind children of past failures or misbehavior
 - Ask children to do something they are not developmentally ready to do.

Social Competence

Preschool children vary in their ability to get along with other children. Some children use strategies that are appropriate, positive and lead to success for both children. Some children may grab, push or hit to get what they want and ignore overtures from other children, leading to conflict and isolation. Children may have difficulty interacting with friends because they have language delays, social delays, or disabilities such as mental retardation, autism, conduct problems and emotional problems. When preschool children have difficulty getting along with others, it is important to look for the reasons why and identify and teach the needed skills.

Prosocial skills contribute to the foundation for social-emotional learning. Prosocial skills include sharing, taking turns, using words, getting a friend's attention, offering play ideas, playing cooperatively, saying nice things, using self-control, and self-directing activities. Children who have these skills are accepted and develop friendships. Children who interact well with their friends are more popular, have stronger friendships and are included more often in activities than children who lack these skills. Children who are accepted by their peers and have friends tend to feel more positive about school, participate more in activities, and learn more than children without friends.

Social competence is the ability to get along with others in a positive and constructive manner that allows a person to achieve their own goals while maintaining positive relationships with others.²⁸ Children who are socially competent show prosocial behaviors. Social competence includes development of empathy and sympathy. A child who has **empathy** is able to recognize another person's emotions and respond with identical or similar emotions. A child who has **sympathy** feels concern or sadness for the other person's emotions or situation. Children who are socially competent display the following skills:

- Cooperation
- Listening to others
- Positive interaction with other children
- Empathy
- Pretend play with multiple roles
- Sympathy
- Problem-solving
- Comforting others
- Understanding another's point of view
- Interactive play in games with rules

Social competence predicts positive outcomes for children. Preschool children who are socially competent are more likely to have a higher IQ, positive self-worth and better mental health.^{29,30} Children who are well-liked adjust better to school and are more likely to complete school. Socially competent children are less likely to develop emotional and behavior disorders. Children who lack social competence are likely to have excessive externalizing behaviors such as aggression or internalizing behaviors such as shyness and withdrawal, have low self-esteem, miss school, have discipline problems in school, and drop out of school.³¹ These outcomes lead to anxiety, depression and conduct disorders.³²

Preschoolers vary in their ability for social competence due to differences in temperament, developmental readiness, and background experiences. Social competence is influenced by many factors:

- **Language and communication** — Language and communication skills influence turn-taking, resolving conflicts and expressing caring.
- **Emotion regulation and self-regulation** — The ability to control negative behaviors and intense emotions influences children’s social competence.
- **Imagination** — Children who assume multiple roles during pretend play have an easier time playing with friends.
- **Gender** — Boys generally prefer rough-and-tumble play, competition and dominance. Girls generally prefer more cooperative play and less aggressive play.
- **Temperament** — Children with positive mood and adaptability are more likely to get along well with other children. Children with negative moods (irritable) and intense emotions may be more aggressive and therefore have greater difficulty making and keeping friends.
- **Parenting** — Social competence has been linked to warm but firm and consistent parenting.³³ Parents promote social competence when they teach social skills, arrange social activities for their children and give advice about how to get along with friends. Children with secure attachment have been found to have better social interaction and problem solving skills than children with insecure attachment. Insecurely attached children use more aggressive strategies with others.³⁴ Research by Baumrind³⁵ showed that parents who are warm, loving, responsive and supportive with clear limits are more likely to have socially competent children. Parenting behaviors such as power-assertive and inconsistent discipline, indulgence, and lack of supervision have all been linked to children’s highly aggressive behavior with playmates⁴ and to less compliance with rules.³⁶ Lack of social competence is associated with parents who expect negative behavior and who blame children for their problems with friends,³⁷ have a low level of education or who are poor.³⁸

Friendship Skills

Friendship skills include:³⁹

Greeting
Sharing

Listening
Turn-taking

Asking another to play	Saying no nicely
Initiating play	Joining in play
Making up games,	Playing games with rules
Cooperating	Offering to help
Asking a favor	Apologizing
Showing a sense of humor	Comforting others
Making suggestions in play	Requesting and receiving help or information
Giving and accepting compliments	Negotiating to solve problems
Dealing effectively with peer problems	

Children who do more of the following behaviors are more likely to have friends:⁴⁰

- Organize play – Use *Let's* statements (“Let’s play house.”) and follow with suggestions about roles (“You be the mother.”) or activities (“Call me on the phone.”).
- Share - Make requests in the form of “May I have…” and share when asked to by peers.
- Help others - Help each other onto or off of play equipment, tell or show a friend how to do something, and help someone in distress.
- Give compliments - Compliment one another’s success, art, skill, buildings and appearance.
- Give and take - Respond to the social overtures of others (“Can I play?”); start play approximately about the same number of times as they follow a peer’s lead (accept another’s play ideas such as “You can be the daddy this time,” or “Let’s play fireman.”), and lengthen the interactive play over time.

The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning provide guidelines for creating classrooms that support friendships.^{41,40}

- **Create inclusive classrooms** - All children are meaningfully included, including those with disabilities and who are English language learners.⁴²
- **Provide cooperative toys and materials** — Cooperative toys are those that naturally lend themselves to two or more children playing together. Cooperative toys include sand and water tables, balls, puppets, small wooden and plastic figures, tire swings, rocking boats, slides, wagons, two telephones, teeter-totters, dress-up clothes, dramatic play materials, large pieces of materials for group drawings, and board games.
- **Allow child choice in social situations** – To develop autonomy and initiative, children need choices, including in social situations. Choices may include choosing a buddy for an activity, choose between too cooperative activities or play material.

Following Rules

Another important task for children in early childhood is learning to follow rules until they internalize those rules to develop their own code of behavior. Learning to follow rules is a prosocial skill that requires self-regulation. An *internal code of behavior* means children move from relying on others to controlling their behavior (i.e. keep from running inside only when someone is looking) to controlling their own behavior (will not run inside whether an adult is present or not). For example, a three-year old knows he shouldn't hit, can refrain from hitting when an adult is present, but hits when there are no adults. A socially skilled five-year old can resist hitting most of the time regardless of who is present.

Consistent Feedback. Adults help children develop their own internal code of behavior. At age three, children check adults' expressions and change their behavior according to what they see. They change their behavior if they see disapproval or continue if they see approval. Children who get consistent feedback about the acceptability of their actions learn what is acceptable and what is not. When children do not get consistent feedback about what is acceptable or unacceptable behavior from families or teachers, they are less likely to learn to follow rules on their own.

Play. Play is an opportunity for children to develop their own internal code of behavior. Play allows children to practice making and following rules and to learn what is acceptable and unacceptable. Children practice rules they develop during pretend play. As children begin to learn rules and expectations for behavior, they often act like adults such as a mother, father or teacher, enforcing rules (tells the dolls how to behave or scolds them for misbehavior). Preschoolers begin to make up new rules, negotiate rules to add to their play.

Generalization. Learning to follow rules and developing an internal code of behavior follows a developmental course. At first, children follow rules inconsistently, particularly in different settings or with different people. For example, they may leave the television alone at home, but not at grandmother's house. They may behave well with the teacher, but not with the substitute. Over time, children learn to **generalize** - follow rules across settings and people. By age four, children generally have internalized a set of rules, understand *do's* and *don'ts*, and understand that they should obey adults most of the time. By five or six years, children generally have a conscience with strict rules and sense of fairness, begin to insist on rules in their games, and are generally obedient although they may argue and try to negotiate.

Empathy

Socially and emotionally healthy children show signs of empathy and caring early. A baby will cry when she hears another baby crying or sees an adult crying. As early as one year of age, a child learn to read adults' expressions to get clues about how to behave, such as to quit banging on the drum when the mother frowns. Toddlers will try to care for someone who is upset by trying to comfort and soothe them. By four to six years, children understand others feelings better, are less likely to be overwhelmed by them, and will feel guilty if they do not respond by helping. Empathy is linked to

positive behavior toward others. Problems with empathy and caring for others can contribute to behavioral and emotional disorders such as anxiety, depression and conduct disorders.

Parenting practices that have been found to promote empathetic feelings, understanding, and social behavior in children include:⁴³

- Warm, responsive, and non-punitive, parenting with clear expectations and consistent limits.
- Talking with children about the effects of their behavior on others and the importance of sharing and being kind.
- Modeling empathetic, caring behavior towards child and towards others in the child's presence.
- When other children are hurt or distressed by the child, giving explanations as to why the behavior is harmful and suggestions for how to make it right.
- Encouraging children to talk about their feelings and problems.

Parenting practices that have been negatively related to empathy:⁴³

- Threats and/or physical punishment in an attempt to improve children's behavior
- Inconsistent parenting reactions to children's emotional needs.
- Parental rejection and withdrawal in times of children's emotional distress.
- Homes where fathers physically abuse mothers.
- Use of extrinsic rewards (i.e. bribes) to improve children's behavior when the focus is on the reward rather than the reason for it.

Parents and teachers can join together to teach children empathy. Strategies include:

- Teaching children how to respond positively to others.
- Talk about child's own feelings
- Imagine what feelings would be associated with different kinds of situations.
- Encourage children to focus on similarities between oneself and others of different race or cultures.
- Use role plays that encourage children to assume the role of a real or fictional person and to act out that person's feelings and behavior.
- Frequent modeling of empathy to others.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Children are not born with social-emotional skills. These skills must be taught, just as they need to be taught shoe tying or the ABCs. Parents and teachers teach social-emotional skills by modeling, direct teaching, and by being near to help children practice real life situations over and over until they are able to do them on their own. When children arrive at preschool with delays in these skills, teachers can work with parents to prioritize helping children learn them. Teachers are a resource to help parents learn effective strategies for teaching social-emotional skills to ensure children are on a pathway to school success and academic achievement. Teachers can help parents

understand the connection between teaching social-emotional skills now and academic success later. A joint school and home partnership is optimal.

Teachers can work with parents to help them become more sensitive parents. It doesn't take much. Teachers can keep parents informed of social and emotional skills they are teaching just as they would for literacy or math to help parents have age appropriate expectations, model appropriate behavior, and reward children. When parents and teachers use the same words, children learn to generalize their behavior from one setting to the next. Teachers can use their regular communication strategies to highlight how children are mastering social and emotional skills. Celebrate success! Share positive news about their children.

When parents share their stories about their child's behavior, teachers can listen sensitively. Empathize with parents. Help them understand children are learning to control their emotions and interact with others. Help them identify skills they need to teach their child, rather than just trying to stop problem behavior. Teachers and parents can work together to promote children's healthy social-emotional development.

1. Teach feeling words.
2. Respond warmly to children's distress and help them manage intense emotions.
3. Teach strategies for problem-solving, calming down, and handling disappointment.
4. Teach prosocial skills, including friendship skills and empathy.
5. Ensure communication between teacher and parents as new social-emotional skills are taught.
6. Set rules at home and in the classroom and enforce them consistently.
7. Encourage impulse control (Stop. Think. Problem Solve).
8. Praise children when they exhibit social and emotional competence.
9. Provide many opportunities for children to practice social-emotional skills with nurturing adult guidance.
10. Create a warm, caring, structured, and consistent environment at home and school.

RESOURCES

SAMHSA Building Blocks: <http://bblocks.samhsa.gov/family/rules/default.aspx>

ATTACHMENT

Booklist for teaching social-emotional skills

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Feeling Words - 01-C1a - Quick Sheet for Teacher Reference

Parent Messages

- Children need help from adults to learn to express their emotions appropriately.
- Parents can help by using feeling words in conversations with their children frequently.
- Being able to label their feelings helps children control their emotions, get along with others, and solve problems with friends.

Parent Skills:

1. Models using words to describe how self, child, and others are feeling.
2. Validates child's feeling by labeling the feeling with an appropriate word.
3. Reminds child to use an appropriate word when experiencing intense emotions.
4. Allows child to have intense emotions, but teaches child to express the emotion appropriately and accepts and labels disappointment or other emotions.
5. Uses a variety of feeling words to increase child's feeling vocabulary.
6. Reads books to child that talk about feelings.
7. Asks teacher for recommendations for books on feelings appropriate for preschoolers.

**Social-Emotional Health
Feeling Words**

Dear Parents,

I need help to learn to name my feelings and the feelings of others. Being able to tell my feelings in words will help me control my emotions, get along with others, and solve problems with my friends. You help me learn feeling words when you:

- Talk about feelings each day. Talk about my feelings, your feelings, and other's feelings.
- Tell me my feelings are important.
- Help me put my thoughts and feelings into words.
- Teach me to use my words to express feelings instead of hurtful actions.
- Sing songs and read books with me that talk about feelings.

Thanks,

Your child

Happy • Sad • Angry • Embarrassed • Frustrated • Afraid • Surprised • Excited • Tired • Loved • Bored • Proud • Shy • Hopeful • Worried • Scared • Calm • Relaxed • Impatient • Overwhelmed

**Salud Socio-Emocional
Palabras de sentimiento**

Queridos padres:

Si yo puedo darle nombre a mis sentimientos y a los de los demás. Ser capaces de decirme mis sentimientos en palabras, me ayudará a controlar mis emociones, tratar con otros y resolver problemas con mis amigos. Ustedes me ayudan a aprender esta habilidad cuando:

- Hablan de los sentimientos cada día. Hablar de mis sentimientos, sus sentimientos y los sentimientos de otros.
- Decirme de mis sentimientos es muy importante
- Me ayudan a colocar mis pensamientos y sentimientos en palabras
- Enséñenme a usar mis palabras para expresar mis sentimientos y no usar acciones hirientes.
- Cántenme canciones y léanme libros que hablen acerca de los sentimientos.

Gracias,

Su hijo

Alegre, • triste • bravo • avergonzado • frustrado • asustado • excitado • cansado • enamorado • aburrido • orgulloso • tímido • esperanzado • preocupado • relajado • impaciente • abrumado

Social-Emotional Health - Emotional Thinking -02-C1b - Quick Sheet for Teacher Reference

Parent Message

- **Emotional thinking is the ability to use cues from reading and labeling emotions of self and others to guide one's actions.**
- **Children learn by example so adult modeling of healthy, constructive ways to express feelings is critical.**

Parent Skills:

- Is sensitive to child's feelings and helps him name his feelings.
- Reminds child to express feelings using words, not harmful actions.
- Helps child read other's face and body language to know how they are feeling.
- Helps a child calm down so he can think, talk about feelings, and figure out what to do.
- Responds to their child's requests for help.
- Models caring, concern, and fairness to others.
- Models appropriate and constructive ways to handle strong feelings.

**Social-Emotional Health
Emotional Thinking**

Dear Parents,

I am learning to identify my own emotions and read the emotions of others so I will know how to act. I can tell by your face if I'm doing the right thing, need to calm down, or try a new way. When I can do that, I will do better in school and have more friends. You can help me learn to link my emotions and my actions when you encourage me to:

- Name my feelings.
- Express my feelings using words, not actions.
- Read faces and body language to know how others are feeling so I can be a good friend and playmate.
- Calm down so I can think, talk about my feelings, and figure out what to do.
- Show caring, concern, and fairness to others.

Thanks,
Your child

**Salud Socio-Emocional
Pensamiento Emotivo**

Queridos Padres,

Yo estoy aprendiendo a identificar mis propias emociones y a interpretar las emociones de otros entonces yo sabré como actuar. Yo puedo decirle por la expresión de su cara si estoy hacienda lo correcto, necesito calmarme, o trato por otra vía. Cuando yo pudo hacer esto, lo haré mejor en el colegio y tender más amigos. Ustedes pueden ayudarme a mi a aprender a conectar mis emociones con mis acciones cuando me animan a:

- Nombrar mis sentimientos
- A expresar mis sentimientos usando palabras y no acciones.
- A interpretar las caras y el lenguaje del cuerpo y a saber como son los sentimientos de los otros entonces así puedo ser un buen amigo y un buen compañero de juegos.
- A calmarme, así puedo pensar, hablar acerca de mis sentimientos y a resolver que debo hacer.
- A mostrarme interés, preocupación o imparcialidad con los otros.

Gracias,
Su hijo

Calming Down - 02-C1c - Quick Sheet for Teacher Reference

Parent Message

- Learning to control emotions and behavior is hard work. Just saying, “Calm down” is not enough. Parents must help children learn the self-control skill of calming down.

Parent Skills:

1. Remains calm when child is upset.
2. Comforts and validates child’s feelings.
3. Waits to talk about feelings or problem until child is calm.
4. Prompts child to use a calm down routine when upset (e.g. count to ten, take deep breaths, Stop-Think-Talk about the Problem).
5. Praises child for calming down and solving the problem.

**Social-Emotional Health
Calming Down**

Dear Parents,

Learning to control my emotions and behavior is hard work! Right now, when I feel strong emotions, I react by having angry outbursts or being aggressive - that can cause me real problems in school. You can help learn to calm down when I’m upset, think before I act, and talk about the problem:

- Remain calm – that shows me how to do be calm.
- Acknowledge my feelings (“I can see you are mad.”)
- Help me remember to *Stop. Think. Talk about the problem.*
- Help me get calm by taking deep breaths or counting.
- Hold me in a loving way while I calm down.
- When I’m calm, talk with me about the problem and see if I can find a good way to solve it.
- Praise me when you see me calm down, stop and think before acting, and find a good way to solve a problem.

Thanks,
Your child

**Salud Socio-Emocional
Calmándome**

Queridos padres,

Aprender a controlar mis emociones y mi comportamiento es un trabajo duro! Ahora, cuando siento emociones fuertes yo reacciono teniendo arranques de rabia o siendo agresivo. Esto puede causarme tener problemas en el colegio. Pueden ayudarme a calmarme cuando estoy enojado, a pensar antes de actuar, y a hablar acerca del problema:

- ◆ Permanecer calmados - me demostrará como estar calmado.
- ◆ Admitir mis sentimientos (“yo puedo ver que están enojados”)
- ◆ Ayúdenme a recordar, “Paro. Pienso. Hablo acerca del problema”
- ◆ Ayúdenme a obtener calma respirando profundo o contando.
- ◆ Acogiéndome de manera amorosa mientras me calmo.
- ◆ Cuando estoy calmado, hablen conmigo acerca del problema y miren si puedo encontrar una buena manera de resolverlo.
- ◆ Alábenme cuando vean que me calmo, paro y pienso antes de actuar y encuentro la via correcta para resolver el problema.

Gracias,
Su hijo

Social-Emotional Health - Asking a Grown-Up for Help - 02-C1d - Quick Sheet for Teacher Reference
Parent Message

- Learning to control emotions and behavior is hard work. Parents help children to learn to trust adults for help when they respond sensitively to children's needs and help them identify safe adults.

Parent Skills:

- Responds to child's needs to help calm down and solve problems.
- Encourages child to ask teacher for help with academic, physical, social, and emotional problems.
- Communicates with the teacher to be sensitive and responsive to child's needs.
- Helps child identify safe adults.

Social-Emotional Health
Asking a Grown-Up for Help

Dear Parents,

In my preschool years, I need to learn **self-control**. That includes **learning how and when to ask a grown-up for help**. Kids do better in school when they know to ask a teacher for help. Teens that don't ask grown-ups for help are more likely to get in trouble. I need to learn that now so I will do better in big school later.

You teach me I can trust adults to help when you patiently help me as many times as I need. You can also remind me to ask my teacher for help. If I get mad at one of my friends, she can help me make a good choice instead of doing something against the rules. When I ask a grown-up for help and get it, I feel I have some control in my life and I'm less likely to make mistakes. That's part of self-control.

Thanks,
Your child

Salud Socio-Emocional
Pidiendo ayuda a una persona mayor

Queridos padres:

En mi año de preescolar, yo necesito aprender **auto control**. Esto incluye **aprender como o cuando pedir ayuda a una persona mayor**. Los niños se desempeñan mejor en el colegio cuando requieren ayuda de los profesores. Los adolescentes que no piden ayuda a mayores, es más probable que se metan en problemas. Yo necesito aprender esto ahora entonces lo haré mejor en el colegio de grandes.

Me pueden enseñar que puedo creer en ayuda de los adultos cuando ustedes, cuantas veces lo necesite, pacientemente me ayudan. También pueden recordarme que puedo pedir ayuda a mi profesora. Si me pongo bravo con uno de mis amigos, ella me puede ayudar hacer la mejor elección en vez de hacer algo en contra de las reglas. Cuando yo pido ayuda a una persona mayor y la obtengo, yo siento que tengo control de mi vida y estoy menos predispuesto a cometer errores. Esto hace parte del autocontrol.

Gracias,
Tu hijo.

Social-Emotional Health - Making Choices - 02-C1e - Quick Sheet for Teacher Reference

Parent Messages

- Learning to make healthy choices as a preschooler predicts school success and positive outcomes later in life.
- Parents help children learn to make good choices by providing them opportunities to practice.

Parent Skills:

1. Provides many opportunities for child to practice making choices by offering the child a limited number of appropriate choices.
2. Sets clear limits for when something is not the child's choice.
3. Praises the child for making a good choice and following through with the choice.

**Social-Emotional Health
Learning to Make Good Choices**

Dear Parents,

To make good choices as a teen or adult, I need to start practicing now. You help me when you give me choices. Making choices helps me feel that I have some control in my life and often prevents a tantrum. Of course, I'm not big enough yet to make all my own choices. You can help me make good choices by giving me just the choices that are okay with you. Here's how:

- ☺ Let me choose between two things (red or blue shirt, apple cut up or whole, toys picked up before or after dinner).
- ☺ Calmly and firmly let me know when something is not my choice.
 - Bedtime is not a choice; I can choose the bedtime story book.
 - Wearing my seat belt is not a choice; I can choose a toy to bring.
- ☺ Make sure I act on my choices.
- ☺ Praise me when I make a good choice.
- ☺ Remind me I can make good choices at school and other places, too.

Thanks,
Your child

**Salud Socio-Emocional
Aprendiendo a hacer buenas elecciones**

Queridos padres:

Para hacer buenas elecciones cuando sea adolescente o adulto, yo necesito empezar a practicarlo ahora. Escoger algunas elecciones me ayuda a sentir que tengo algo de control en mi vida y muchas veces me evita trastornos. Claro está que yo no soy tan grande todavía para hacer todas mis elecciones. Ustedes me pueden ayudar a hacer buenas elecciones ofreciéndome solo las elecciones que son buenas para ustedes. Aquí está como:

- ☺ Empiecen a darme dos cosas para elegir (vestir mi camisa roja o azul, manzana en trozos o entera, recoger mis juguetes antes o después de la cena.)
- ☺ Déjenme saber cuando no tengo elección, firme pero calmadamente.
 - La hora de ir a la cama no es mi decisión; si puedo elegir el libro para leer a la hora de acostarme.
 - Colocarme el cinturón de seguridad no es mi elección; si puedo escoger el juguete para traer.
- ☺ Asegúrense que continúo con mis elecciones
- ☺ Elógiénme por hacer buenas elecciones
- ☺ Recuérdenme que puedo hacer buenas elecciones en el colegio y otros lugares también.

Gracias,
Su hijo

Social-Emotional Health - Think, then Act - 02-C1f - Quick Sheet for Teacher Reference

Parent Message

- Learning to control emotions and behavior is hard work. Parents help children learn self-control by having consistent rules and playing games that let children practice paying attention, following the rules, and controlling their actions.

Parent Skills:

1. Communicates with teacher to identify a set of rules for home that teach positive behaviors necessary for school success (e.g. no hitting, asking instead of grabbing)
2. Enforces rules consistently to enable child to predict what will happen, control their actions, and learn to follow them even when no adults are present.
3. Plays games requiring the child to think before they act such as Red Light, Green Light or Simon Says
4. Recognizes the child when he or she follows rules or displays self-control (i.e. uses words to express anger rather than hitting).
5. Sees the connection between these skills and later academic success.

**Social-Emotional Health
Think, then Act**

Dear Parent,

During preschool, **I need to learn self-control**. One part of self-control is **learning to think before I act**. You can help me by playing games with me like Red Light, Green Light or Simon Says. These games let me practice paying attention, following the rules, and controlling my actions, such as stopping when the leader says “Red light!” Sometimes, it is fun to tell me to do something “as fast as you can” or “as slow as you can.”

Also, it is good to have some rules that I must think about before I act. If I start to hit, I can remember that we have the rule “No hitting at home” and stop myself from hitting. Making me follow rules consistently teaches self-control. I can do well in big school when I can pay attention, follow rules, and think before I act.

Thanks,
Your child

**Salud Socio-Emocional
Pensar y luego actuar**

Queridos padres:

En mis años de preescolar, **yo necesito aprender autocontrol**. Una parte del autocontrol es **aprender a pensar antes de actuar**. Ustedes me pueden ayudar jugando conmigo a la luz roja, luz verde o Simón dice. Estos juegos hacen que yo practique el estar atento, seguir las reglas y controlar mis acciones, como parar cuando el líder diga “luz roja!” Algunas veces, es divertido que me digan que haga algo “lo más rápido que pueda” o “lo más lento que pueda”.

También, es bueno tener algunas reglas que yo pueda pensar acerca de ellas antes de que yo actúe. Si yo comienzo a golpear, puedo acordarme que tenemos una regla “no golpear en casa” y así paro de golpear. Esto será una gran ayuda en el colegio cuando pueda estar atento, seguir las reglas y pensar antes de actuar.

Gracias,
Su hijo.

Social-Emotional Health – Tantrums - 02-C1g - Quick Sheet for Teacher Reference

Parent Message

- Tantrums occur when children resist adult authority.
- Parents can use strategies to prevent tantrums and teach self-control.
- Getting angry, threatening, or punishing children when they have a tantrum only makes it worse.

Parent Skills:

1. Gives reasonable choices when possible.
2. Gives advance warnings when a child needs to stop one activity and do another.
3. Helps when a child is getting too frustrated.
4. Praises good behavior.
5. When a tantrum occurs, ignores the child if not causing harm or calms by taking to a quiet place holding lovingly until calm.
6. When the child is calm, talks to child about his feelings and okay ways to handle anger and problems
7. Gives child another chance to do what was asked and reassures the child he is still loved.

Queridos padres: **Social-Emotional Health
Tantrums**

Dear Parent,

You can help me learn to control my tantrums. Here's how:

- When I begin to get frustrated, help me with my problem. Give me choices if possible.
- Tell me ahead of time when I will need to stop playing soon.
- Ignore my tantrum if I'm not hurting myself or breaking anything.
- If you can't ignore it, take me to a quiet place and hold me in a loving way until I am calm.
- Don't reward my tantrum. If I'm screaming for candy after you've said "no", don't give in.
- When I'm calm, tell me you care about my feelings, even when I can't have my way.
- Give me another chance to do what you said. Let me know you still love me.
- Praise my good behavior.

Thanks,

Your child

P.S. Adult anger, threats, and punishment can make tantrums worse. Be a calm example.

**Salud Socio-Emocional
Rabietas**

Queridos Padres,

Ustedes pueden ayudarme a aprender a controlar mis rabietas. Aquí esta como:

- Cuando yo empiece a sentirme frustrado, Ayúdenme con mi problema. Denme una elección si es posible.
- Díganme con anterioridad cuando tengo que parar de jugar.
- Ignoren mis rabietas si no me estoy haciendo daño o rompiendo cosas.
- Si usted no puede ignorar esto, llévenme a un lugar callado y sosténganme de una manera amorosa hasta que este calmado.
- No premie mis rabietas. Si yo estoy gritando por un confite después de que me dijeron que "no", no me lo den.
- Cuando yo este calmado, díganme que ustedes tienen en cuenta mis opiniones, inclusive cuando yo no he podido obtenerlas.
- Denme otro chance para hacer lo que dicen. Déjenme saber que aun me aman.
- Enorgullézcanse de mi buen comportamiento.

Gracias,

Su Hijo

P.S. Adulos enojados, amenazas y castigos pueden hacer las rabietas peor. Estar calmado da ejemplo.

Social-Emotional Health - Coping with Emotions - 02-C1h - Quick Sheet for Teacher Reference

Parent Messages

- **Learning to control emotions may be harder than learning letters and numbers.**
- **When adults calmly talk out loud about their feelings, children are exposed to expressions, feeling words, and using words to cope.**

Parent Skills:

1. Talks about feelings frequently.
2. Models being calm and using words when sad, angry, upset or disappointed.
3. Encourages child to name feelings and talk about them.
4. Doesn't deny, punish or withdraw from the child when upset.
5. Offers comfort to help child calm down.
6. Encourages child to use a calm-down routine.
7. Praises child for remaining calm and using words to express feelings.

**Social-Emotional Health
Coping with Emotions**

Dear Parent,

During preschool, **I need to learn self-control.** For some kids, learning to control emotions is harder than learning to read or do math. Even some adults are still learning to cope with their emotions! If I learn to control my emotions, I'll have better success at making friends and doing well in school. You help me learn to cope with my emotions when you:

- Model being calm and using words when you are sad, angry, upset, or disappointed.
- Teach me to name my feelings and to use words to express them.
- Don't deny, punish, or withdraw from me when I'm upset. Instead, comfort me to help me calm down until I'm able to take over and handle it on my own.
- Teach me a calm-down routine.
- Praise me for when I use my words to express my feelings or calm down by myself.

Thanks,

Your child

**Salud Socio-Emocional
Hacer Frente a las Emociones**

Queridos Padres,

Durante el preescolar, **Yo necesito aprender auto-control.** Para algunos niños, aprender a controlar las emociones es más difícil que aprender a leer o matemáticas. Inclusive algunos adultos están todavía aprendiendo como hacerle frente a sus emociones! Si yo aprendo a controlar mis emociones, yo voy a tener mayor éxito hacienda amigos y desempeñándome bien en el colegio. Usted me ayuda a hacerle frente a mis emociones cuando usted:

- Es un modelo de calma y de uso de buenas palabras cuando esta triste, bravo, perturbado o en desacuerdo.
- Enséñeme a nombrar mis sentimientos y a usar palabras para expresarlos.
- No reniegue, castigue ni se aleje de mi cuando estoy ofuscado. En cambio, confórtenme para ayudarme a calmar hasta que sea capas de sobreponerme y manejarlo por mi mismo.
- Enséñeme una rutina para calmarme.
- Elógienme cuando uso mis palabras para expresar mis sentimientos o calmarme yo mismo.

Gracias,

Su Hijo

Social-Emotional Health - Following Rules - 02-C1i - Quick Sheet for Teacher Reference

Parent Messages

- Preschool is the prime time for teaching children to follow rules.
- Being able to follow rules is essential for school success and avoiding delinquency.
- Supervised play is important for learning to follow rules.

Parent Skills:

1. Teaches and consistently enforces developmentally appropriate rules at home and other places.
2. Tells child consequences in advance for not following the rules.
3. Praises child for following rules and reminds them of rules when necessary.
4. Teaches games with rules and provides opportunities to play with friends.
5. Reads stories about rules, listening, and following directions.
6. Talks with teacher about the classroom rules.

**Social-Emotional Health
Following Rules**

Dear Parents,

During preschool, I am learning to follow rules at home and school. I enjoy rules. I like games with rules. Rules help me learn what is acceptable and what is not. I check your face a lot to see if what I'm doing is okay. Being able to follow rules will help me learn self-control. You help me learn to follow rules when you:

- Teach and consistently enforce rules for home and other places.
- Make sure I can do what you are asking.
- Tell me consequences in advance for not following the rules.
- Praise me when I follow the rules and remind me of them when I do not.
- Encourage me to play with friends so I can practice making fair rules.
- Teach me games with rules.
- Read me stories about rules, listening and following directions
- Talk with my teacher about classroom rules.

Thanks,
Your Child

**Salud Socio-Emocional
Siguiendo las Reglas**

Queridos Padres,

Durante el preescolar, yo estoy aprendiendo a seguir las reglas en la casa y el colegio. Yo disfruto las reglas. Me gustan los juegos con reglas. Las reglas me ayudan a aprender que es aceptable y que no. Yo miro muchas veces su cara para ver si lo que estoy haciendo esta correcto. Ser capaz de seguir reglas me ayudara a aprender auto-control. Ustedes me ayudan a aprender a seguir las reglas cuando:

- Enseñan y refuerzan consistentemente las reglas en casa y en otros lugares.
- Están seguros de que puedo hacer lo que me están pidiendo.
- Decirme las consecuencias por anticipado si no estoy siguiendo las reglas.
- Elogiarme cuando yo sigo las reglas y recordármelo cuando no.
- Animarme a jugar con amigos para que yo pueda practicar hacienda reglas justas.
- Enséñenme juegos con reglas.
- Léanme historias acerca de reglas, escuchando y siguiendo las direcciones.
- Hablen con mi profesor acerca de las reglas de clase.

Gracias,
Su Hijo

Social-Emotional Health - Raising Socially Healthy Kids - 02-C1j - Quick Sheet for Teacher Reference

Parent Messages

- Children who are well-liked adjust better to school and are more likely to complete school.
- Socially competent children are less likely to develop emotional and behavior disorders.

Parent Skills:

1. Identifies and teaches social skills their child needs help with.
2. Arranges social activities for their child to play with same age friends.
3. Gives child advice about how to get along with friends.
4. Is warm, loving, responsive and supportive.
5. Establishes clear expectations and limits.

**Social-Emotional Health
Raising Socially Healthy Kids**

Dear Parents,

If I'm well-liked by other children and teachers, I'll be more likely to finish school. I'll be less likely to develop mental health problems. Kids who are overly aggressive or really shy may need extra help learning social skills. You help me have good social skills when you:

- Help me name and practice skills like sharing, taking turns, solving problems, calming down, and following rules, when playing with friends.
- Arrange for me to play with other kids my age.
- Give me advice about how to get along with my friends.
- Have clear expectations and limits for my behavior.
- Are warm and loving.
- Watch me and help me when I need to learn new social skills.

Thanks,
Your Child

**Salud Socio-Emocional
Alcanzando Niños socialmente Saludables**

Queridos Padres,

Si yo les agrado a otros niños y maestros, yo estaré dispuesto a terminar la escuela. Estaré menos predispuesto a desarrollar problemas de salud mental. Niños que son demasiado agresivos o realmente tímidos pueden necesitar extra ayuda aprendiendo habilidades sociales. Usted me ayuda a mí a tener habilidades sociales cuando:

- Me ayuda a nombrar y a practicar habilidades como compartir, tomando turnos, resolviendo problemas, calmándome y siguiendo reglas, cuando juego con amigos.
- Arreglen para mí, juegos con otros niños de mi edad.
- Denme consejos acerca de como persuadir con mis amigos.
- Tener claras expectativas y límites para con mi comportamiento.
- Ser calido y amoroso.
- Mírenme y ayúdenme cuando yo tenga que aprender nuevas habilidades sociales.

Gracias,
Su Hijo

Social-Emotional Health - Raising an Emotionally Healthy Child - 02-C1k

Quick Sheet for Teacher Reference

Parent Messages

- **Parents play an important role in helping children learn to express and manage their emotions in healthy ways.**
- **Children who are overwhelmed by their emotions can't learn.**
- **Misunderstanding others' emotions may lead to rejection, loneliness, and later behavioral and mental health problems.**

Parent Skills:

- Recognizes and talks about own and child's feelings every day.
- Is warm and loving to the child.
- Helps ease intense emotions by calming and soothing the child.
- Provides a consistent schedule and prepares child for changes.
- Models healthy and constructive ways of expressing and handling of strong emotions.
- Praises child when she expresses her feelings, uses strategies to calm down, solves a problem with a friend.

Social-Emotional Health - Raising an Emotionally Healthy Child

Dear Parents,

Now is an important time for learning about emotions. Emotional health means I can manage my emotions in different places. With good emotion skills, I will do better in school and have more friends. I need your help to learn to:

- Identify my own and others' feelings.
- Get along well with friends and teachers.
- Control my feelings of anger, frustration and distress.
- Pay attention, listen, and cooperate.

My relationship with you is very important in helping me be emotionally healthy. You help me when you recognize and talk about my feelings with me every day. I may need your help to calm down when I get overwhelmed by my feelings. A consistent schedule is a big help so I will know what is coming and how to act. I will learn the most by watching you handle your feelings and mine in a calm, positive way.

Thanks,
Your child

Salud Socio-Emocional - Alcanzando un Niño emocionalmente Saludable

Queridos Padres,

Ahora es un tiempo importante para aprender acerca de las emociones. Salud emocional significa que yo puedo manejar mis emociones en diferentes lugares. Con buenas habilidades emocionales, yo lo haré mejor en el colegio y tendré más amigos. Yo necesito su ayuda para aprender a:

- Identificar mis sentimientos y los de otros.
- Ser querido por amigos y profesores.
- Controlar mis sentimientos de enfado, frustración y angustia.
- Poner atención, escuchar y cooperar.

Mi relación con ustedes es muy importante para ayudarme a ser emocionalmente saludable. Usted me ayuda cuando usted reconoce y habla de mis sentimientos con migo todos los días. Yo puedo necesitar su ayuda para calmarme cuando me sobresalto con mis sentimientos. Un horario consistente es una gran ayuda entonces yo saber que va a estar viniendo y como actuar. Yo aprenderé lo mejor observándolos a ustedes manejar sus sentimientos y los míos con calma y en unas vía positiva.

Gracias,
Su Hijo

Social-Emotional Health - Problem-Solving - 02-C11 Quick Sheet for Teacher Reference

Parent Messages

- **Children of parents who learn how to use the problem-solving approach when problems arise have better cognitive and behavioral skills.**
- **When practicing problem solving, the process of solving the problem calmly is more important than what solution was chosen.**

Parent Skills:

1. Intervenes quickly when a problem arises.
2. Asks the child(ren) to tell what happened in a caring, non-judgmental way. Reiterates what child(ren) said and helps them label their feelings.
3. Asks the child(ren) to think of better ways to handle the problem.
4. Asks the child(ren) to talk about the consequences of each solutions
5. Encourages the child(ren) to select and act on one solution
6. Gives help and encouragement to child(ren) to try it.
7. Monitors to see how well it worked. Provides praise if it worked and helps find another solution if it didn't.

Social-Emotional Health - Problem-Solving

Dear Parents,

If I learn to solve problems nicely, I will do better in school, now and later. Help me practice these steps when I'm having a problem:

1. Say, "This looks like a problem. What happened?"
2. Let me tell what happened and how it made me feel. If another child is involved, let them tell their side too. Don't choose sides.
3. Calmly repeat back what we just told you saying, "That does sound like a problem."
4. Say, "What can we do next time instead?"
5. Help me (us) come up with ideas of what to do next time and then pick one solution. Help me (us) try our idea.
6. Check on me. Ask if my solution is working. Praise me if it worked. Help me come up with another solution if it didn't.

If you help me practice problem-solving while I'm little, I'll do better when real problems come up later.

Thanks,

Your Child

Salud Socio-Emocional - Resolviendo-Problemas

Queridos Padres,

Si yo aprendo a resolver los problemas amablemente, yo lo haré mejor en el colegio, ahora y después. Ayúdeseme a practicar estos pasos cuando yo este teniendo un problema:

7. Digan, "Esto se ve como un problema. Que esta pasando?"
8. Déjenme decir que esta pasando y como me hizo sentir esto. Si otro niño esta envuelto, déjenlo también decir su versión. No se pongan de una de las partes
9. Calmadamente repítannos que exactamente dijimos, "Esto si suena como un problema."
10. Digan, "Que en cambio podemos hacer la próxima ves."
11. Ayúdenme (ayúdenmos) a sugerir como hacerlo la próxima ves y luego elegir una de las soluciones. Ayúdenme (ayúdenmos) a tratar nuestras ideas.
12. Chequéenme. Pregunte si mi solución esta trabajando. Elógiénme si esta trabajando. Ayúdenme a sugerir otra solución si esta no funciona.

Si ustedes me ayudan a practicar resolviendo-problemas mientras soy un niño, yo lo haré mejor cuando problemas reales surjan luego.

Gracias,

Su Hijo

Social-Emotional Health - Caring about Others - 02-C1m Quick Sheet for Teacher Reference

Parent Messages

- **Empathy is understanding and sharing in others emotions.**
- **Socially and emotionally healthy children show signs of caring early.**
- **Problems in caring for others can contribute to behavioral and emotional disorders.**

Parent Skills:

1. Is warm and caring towards their child and others in the child's presence.
2. Talks to the child about his behavior and how it affects others.
3. Encourages the child to be kind and caring toward others.
4. If the child hurts another, talks about what was hurtful, the other child's feelings, and how to make it right.
5. Talks about the child's feelings and imagining how other real people or pretend characters feel.

Social-Emotional Health - Caring about Others

Dear Parents,

If I learn to care about others, I will get along better with friends. We will fight less and share more. When I share, help, comfort others, and make things right, I am more likely to have better self-esteem and self-control. That means I'll do better in school.

You help me learn to care about others when you:

- Are warm, kind, and caring towards me and towards our family and friends in my presence.
- Talk to me about my behavior and how it affects others.
- Encourage me to be kind and caring toward others.
- If I hurt another child, talk to me about what was hurtful and how to make it right.
- Talk to me about my feelings and imagining how other real or pretend people feel.

Thanks,
Your child

Salud Socio-Emocional - Preocuparme por Otros

Queridos Padres,

Si yo aprendo a preocuparme por otros, yo estaré mejor junto a los amigos. Nosotros peharemos menos y compartiremos más. Cuando yo comparto, ayudo, conforto a otros y hago las cosas bien, yo estoy más predispuesto a tener bien mi auto-estima y auto-control. Esto significa que lo haré mejor en la escuela.

Ustedes me ayudan a aprender acerca de la importancia de otros cuando ustedes:

- Son calidos, amables, y se preocupan por mí por nuestra familia y amigos en mi presencia.
- Me hablan acerca de mi comportamiento y como este afecta a otros.
- Me animan a ser amable y a preocuparme por los otros.
- Si yo lastimo a otro niño, hablen conmigo del por que fue doloroso y como hacer esto bien.
- Hablen con migo de mis sentimientos e imaginémonos como otras personas reales o imaginarias se sienten.

Gracias,
Su Hijo

Social-Emotional Health - Making Friends - 02-C1n Quick Sheet for Teacher Reference

Parent Messages

- **Children who have friends are more likely to have a higher IQ, positive self-esteem, and better mental health.**
- **Parents should take an active role in teaching children how to be a friend.**

Parent Skills:

1. Talks with teacher about child's ability to get along with classmates and have friends.
2. Shows child how to practice friend making skills while playing.
3. Gives child advice on how to get along with friends.
4. Praises child for being a friend.
5. Arranges for child to play with other children.
6. Provides toys that take two to play (balls, play figures, dress-up clothes, wagons, slides).

Social-Emotional Health - Making Friends

Dear Parents,

During preschool is when I am learning to make friends. If I have friends, I'll be more likely to have a higher IQ, positive self-esteem, and better mental health. I have a lot to learn about making friends. I'm more likely to have friends if I can:

- Ask a friend to play
- Listen to others' play ideas
- Make up games
- Cooperate
- Ask a favor
- Use humor
- Solve problems
- Give ideas for play
- Share
- Play games with rules
- Offer to help
- Apologize
- Give and receive compliments
- Comfort others

These aren't easy for me. You can help: Show me how and remind me to use these skills while I'm playing; arrange for me to play with other children; give me advice on how to get along with friends; and buy toys that take two to play like balls and wagons.

Thanks,
Your child

Salud Social-Emocional - Haciendo Amigos

Queridos Padres,

Durante el; preescolar es cuando yo estoy aprendiendo a hacer amigos. Si yo tengo amigos, yo tender mas probabilidad de tener alto coeficiente intelectual, auto-estima positiva, y mejor salud mental. Yo tengo mucho que aprender acerca de como hacer amigos. Yo tengo más probabilidad de tener amigos si yo puedo:

- Solicitar a un amigo jugar
- Escuchar de otros ideas de juegos
- Inventar juegos
- Cooperar
- Solicitar un favor
- Usar humor
- Resolver problemas
- Dar ideas de juegos
- Compartir
- Jugar juegos con reglas
- Ofrecer ayuda
- Disculparse
- Dar y recibir cumplidos
- Consolar a otros

Esto no será fácil para mí. Ustedes pueden ayudarme: Muéstrenme como y recuerdenme de usar estas habilidades cuando este jugando; Arreglen juegos con otros niños; denme concejos de como estar rodeado de amigos; y cómprenme juegos que requieran de dos para jugarlos como bolas y carros.

Gracias,
Su Hijo

Social-Emotional Health - Words Can Hurt - 02-C1o Quick Sheet for Teacher Reference

Parent Messages

- **Adults can undermine children’s social-emotional health by their words and actions.**
- **Stress in young children interferes with brain growth and development.**

Parent Skills:

1. Avoids name calling and using harsh punishment.
2. Encourages child’s efforts instead of predicting failure.
3. Uses age appropriate questions and directions.
4. Responds to child’s emotional distress.
5. Has high expectations for child success.

Social-Emotional Health - Words Can Hurt

Dear Parents,

I learn the best when I feel loved. Feeling safe and secure lets my brain focus on learning. When I’m stressed, my brain focuses on safety and won’t let me pay attention or learn. Too much stress keeps my brain from growing. I feel stress when I get frustrated, hurt, disappointed, or confused. Here are some things grown-ups do that can stress me:

- Threaten
- Call me names
- Ask me confusing questions
- Ignore me when I’m upset
- Use harsh punishment
- Tell me I’m going to fail
- Give me confusing directions
- Ask me to do something I can’t do yet

Make sure everyone who takes care of me understands I need lots of love and positive attention. I learn best when I’m calm, feel good about myself, and know my parents love me and expect good things from me.

Thanks,
Your child

Salud Socio-Emocional - Las Palabras pueden Herir

Queridos Padres,

Yo aprendo lo mejor cuando me siento amado. Sentirme a salvo y seguro le permite a mi cerebro concentrarse en aprender. Cuando yo estoy estresado, mi cerebro se concentra en la seguridad y no me deja poner atención o aprender. Mucho stress aleja mi cerebro del crecimiento. Yo siento stress cuando me frustró, me hieren, me decepcionan o me confunden. Aquí hay algunas cosas que pueden incrementar mi stress:

- Amenazas
- Sobrenombres
- Hacer preguntas confusas
- Ignorarme cuando estoy ofuscado
- Usar castigos severos
- Decirme que voy a fallar
- Darne directrices confusas
- Requerirme algo que no puedo todavía hacer

Cerciórense de que todos los que cuidan de mi entienden que yo necesito mucho amor y atención positiva. Yo aprendo mejor cuando estoy calmado, me siento bien de mi mismo, y se que mis padres me aman y esperan buenas cosas para mi.

Gracias,
Su Hijo

Social-Emotional Health - Setting Limits - 02-C1p

Parent Messages

- Consistently setting limits helps preschool children learn to develop self-control, reduces tantrums, and teaches children what **to do**.
- Children who have clear limits that are consistently enforced are more obedient and less defiant.

Parent Skills:

1. Sets age-appropriate rules, stated positively.
2. Tells children what the consequences will be for not following rules.
3. Helps child remember rules.
4. Enforces rules daily.
5. Says a rule no more than twice before taking action.
6. Follows words by actions.

Social-Emotional Health - Setting Limits

Dear Parent,

During preschool, **I need to learn self-control**. I need to learn what I can and can't do and that I can't get my way by having a tantrum. One way parents help kids learn self-control is by setting limits or rules. I may act like I don't like rules, but they really give me a sense of safety and security. But if rules change all the time, I don't know how to act and so usually act badly. Setting limits means you:

- Give me a few simple rules and routines to follow so I know what to do.
- Help me remember the rules.
- Tell me the consequences for not obeying the rules in advance.
- Enforce the rules daily.
- Say a rule no more than twice before taking action.

Thanks,

Your child

Salud Socio-Emocional - Fijar Límites

Queridos Padres,

Durante el preescolar **yo necesito aprender auto-control**. Yo necesito aprender que puedo y que no puedo hacer y así no puedo obtener a mi manera las cosas hacienda rabietas. Una de las vías que los padres ayudan a los niños a aprender auto-control es estableciendo limites y reglas. Yo puedo actuar como si no me gustaran las reglas, pero ellas realmente me dan sentido de garantía y seguridad. Pero si las reglas se cambian a toda hora, Yo no se como actúa y entonces actúo erróneamente. Fijar límites les significa:

- Denme algunas reglas y rutinas a seguir entonces yo se que hacer.
- Ayúdenme a recordar las reglas.
- Díganme las consecuencias de no obedecer las reglas con anticipación.
- Refuercen las reglas diariamente.
- No digan una regla más de dos veces antes de tomar una acción.

Gracias,

Su Hijo