

# Social Emotional Skills

Social and emotional development in preschool involves learning:

- Identify and understand one's own feelings
- Accurately read and comprehend emotional states in others
- Manage strong emotions and their expression in a constructive manner
- Regulate one's own behavior
- Develop empathy for others
- Establish and sustain relationships



## **Why Are Social Emotional Skills Important?**

There is a strong connection between children's early relationships and behaviors and their later development and learning. For this reason, supporting their growth and competence in this area is especially important.

## **How Do We Practice These Skills at School?**

In school, we learn and practice these skills throughout each and every day, through games, play, lessons, centers, and group time.

We learn the importance of listening to each other's thoughts and ideas.

We discuss how to recognize feelings in ourselves, our peers and characters in books.

We problem solve during play, share materials, take turns, and learn to accept and celebrate our differences.

We learn coping skills, or way to manage the feelings we all naturally have.

## **What can families do at home?**

Parents and families play an enormous role in shaping a child's social and emotional development. The next page includes easy and fun ideas on how families can support social emotional development- "At Home and on the Go"!

## 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.
  
- ❖ Establish 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, you 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. Practice these strategies when they are calm. For example:
  - Choose a feeling (such as angry), and help your child to think about something he or she can do when feeling that way (taking 5 slow, deep breaths; walk away/find a new activity). Talk about things that are okay to do and things that are not okay.
  - 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.
  - Praise your child for efforts to practice these skills, “I noticed when you were angry at your brother, you took a deep breath.”
  - Develop a cozy corner in your home with books your child may select to look at/read.