



Support Your Child's Social and Emotional Development

Your child's social and emotional development (mental health) — how he or she manages emotions and relates to others — is as important as physical health. Social and emotional development is not as obvious as physical health, but it's vital for future success — in school and in life.

Why it matters

Your child's social and emotional development affects every part of his or her life. Children who develop good social and emotional skills:

- make and keep friends
- understand and express emotions
- are ready for school
- think clearly and learn new things

You can make a difference

Your love and attention are as important as food and a place to live. When you talk to and listen to your child and praise good behavior, you're supporting your child's social and emotional development — and building a foundation for a lifetime of success.

Inside you'll learn about:

- social and emotional milestones for your child
- how to support your child's social and emotional development
- when to be concerned
- where to go for help

How to Get Help

If you have concerns, talk to your doctor or call 311 for a doctor near you. Your pediatrician or family doctor can provide health information, mental health screenings and referrals.

For mental health referrals, you can also call 311 or LifeNet: **800-LIFENET (800-543-3638)**.

For this pamphlet online and more information, visit nyc.gov and search for *child mental health*.

helping children soar



**NYC PROJECT
LAUNCH**

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Strong families and communities
Promoting social and emotional development
Healthy, happy and successful children

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Promoting Your Child's Social and Emotional Development

A Guide for Parents of Five- to Ten-Year-Olds



Building Healthy Foundations
for a Lifetime of Success

	What to Expect	What You Can Do	When to Be Concerned
Your Child at Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoys doing things as a family • Understands other people's feelings and points of view • Cooperates and is helpful • Has lots of energy • Has control over her behavior and negative feelings • Is proud of new skills • Can bounce back after failure • Occasionally worries, has challenges with self-esteem and self-confidence • Makes friends with other children • Wants to participate in activities, such as after-school arts and sports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage your child to make friends and involve him in activities with children his age. • Know who your child is around and stay involved in her friendships. • Encourage your child and praise good behavior. • Be a good role model: show understanding, respect and patience. • Take breaks from technology to play with your child. • Ask how your child is feeling, such as, "You seem mad. Are you upset about something?" • Set clear rules and limits. If you're angry, calm down before disciplining your child. • Explain why helping or sharing is important. • Help your child solve and cope with problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clings to you or wants to stay home all the time • Withdraws, or acts out by hitting • Has temper tantrums over little things • Can't calm herself or be soothed by you • Says negative things about himself or others • Often seems out of control or takes unsafe risks • Cries or laughs excessively or engages in other extreme behavior • Thinks only of herself; can't tell how her actions make others feel • Witnessed violence or had a traumatic experience
Your Child at School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is included in group activities • Follows rules and routines • Gets along with the teacher • Makes new friends and spends time with other children after school • Solves simple problems, such as sharpening a pencil when it breaks • Expresses many feelings • Seeks praise, wants to be best and first • Takes reasonable risks, such as speaking in front of the class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get to know your child's teacher. • Listen and talk to your child about school. • Ask about the best and worst parts of your child's school day. • Talk to your child about classmates and friends. • Get to know parents of your child's classmates. • Volunteer at your child's school. • Get involved in your child's activities. • Encourage creativity by involving your child in art, music, writing or games. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acts out in class • Refuses to go to school • Is worried about failing or making mistakes • Feels left out or rejected • Doesn't listen to directions or does the opposite of what the teacher asks • Is overly nervous or shy • Is aggressive or bullies others • Gives in to peer pressure to do things he wouldn't do on his own • Won't share or take turns • Doesn't have friends

Your Child Depends on You

It's important to take care of yourself, too. Talk to your doctor if you:

- Feel tired, depressed, worried or overwhelmed, and these feelings don't go away
- Don't enjoy spending time with your child
- Are having a hard time with your own emotions and relationships
- Witnessed violence or had a traumatic experience

