

Supporting Personal, Social and Emotional development at home



Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others.

The development of social and emotional skills is a core part of a child's learning and helps to underpin almost all other skills. This progression is unique to every individual and the skills and behaviours learnt at this stage will help to shape the person that they become. In early childhood development, children develop their social and emotional skills in three areas which are outlined in this guide: **Self-regulation, Managing Self and Building Relationships.**



Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and how to manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. **These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.**

What can you do at home?

Rather than a list of must-do activities, you can dip in and out of these prompts and ideas based on your child's current interests and appropriate stage of development.

Self-Regulation

Children manage their feelings in different ways and what works for one child may not necessarily work for another. Understanding how your child may react to a particular setting or social situation and preparing them for these moments is key to supporting their behaviour choices. As your child grows and interacts with a wider range of people, they will begin to understand more about their own actions and how they can affect other people, while learning how to negotiate and problem-solve with their friends.

- Model ways that you calm yourself down such as stopping and taking a few deep breaths. This can help children to learn ways to calm themselves.
- Help children explore situations from different points of view. Talk together about how others might be feeling. Bring these ideas into your child's pretend play: "I wonder how the chicken is feeling now the fox is creeping up on her?"
- Share books and stories about characters showing different behaviour. Discuss 'goodies and baddies' and their characteristics - just think of the big bad wolf!
- Help them to develop problem-solving skills by talking through how they, you and others resolved a problem or difficulty. Show that mistakes are an important part of learning and going back is trial and error not failure.
- Discuss 'rules' at home, school or when out and about and talk about why they are needed - to keep us safe, help us get along and to help us manage difficult feelings.

Managing Self

At this age, your child needs to be given plenty of opportunities to share their feelings and emotions and learn about how others may feel differently as we are all unique. You can support your child in a variety of ways from simple things such as sharing how they feel and what they would like to do, to trying new activities and taking a risk.

- Encourage talk by asking what your child would like to do and why; model sharing your interests, likes and needs.
- Try not to do everything for your child. Where possible, allow them to safely have a go at something. They can always ask for help if they need it!
- Narrate your own decisions about healthy foods, highlighting the importance of eating plenty of fruits and vegetables. Help individual children to develop good personal hygiene. Acknowledge and praise their efforts. Provide regular reminders about thorough handwashing and toileting
- Explain and model how to travel safely in their local environment, including: staying on the pavement, holding hands and crossing the road when walking, stopping quickly when scootering and cycling and being sensitive to other pedestrians.
- Visit the library and borrow some picture books to explain the importance of the different aspects of a healthy lifestyle, e.g. tooth brushing, washing hands etc.

Building Relationships

Your child will most likely already have consistent people in their lives who make them feel loved and valued and who they feel confident to be around. As they enter new settings (such as school), they will be required to make new, positive relationships and friendships with others, both children and adults. Modelling how to be kind, respectful and understanding can help support a child's knowledge of how to make positive relationships and give them the confidence to make new friendships themselves.

- Turn taking, sharing and patience are all skills that your child will currently be developing. Why not support this learning by having a weekly games night? You could play board games and card games that help to further develop your child's early maths and reading skills too.
- Arrange regular play dates, providing your child with opportunities to play. Talk afterwards about what went well and any conflicts that may have arisen.
- Read stories with your child that promote talking about feelings and making relationships. Encourage your child to relate the stories to their own experiences, talking about their own friends and encounters with difficult or new social situations.
- Show what positive relationships look like within your family. Resist the temptation to tell your child to fight back if someone hurts them at school. Teach them instead that it is OK to tell an adult who will then help to sort out any problem.
- Collect pictures of faces displaying different emotions and help your child to label them. Perhaps create a poster to put on the fridge or bring into school to show.