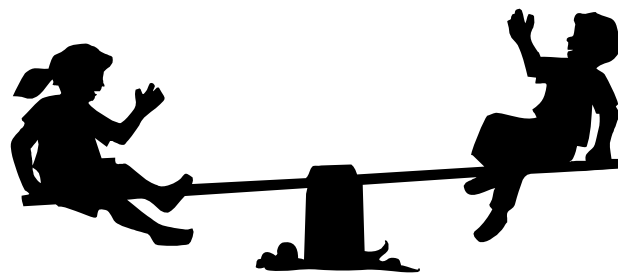


# PLAYS WELL WITH OTHERS



## A GUIDE TO A YOUNG CHILD'S SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

MAY 2005

## Early Social/Emotional Development (age 6 months to 5 years)

Helping your child develop good social and emotional skills will make him/her more:

- 😊 happy and more confident
- 😊 able to make and keep friends
- 😊 successful at school
- 😊 able to follow directions and learn new ideas
- 😊 ready to cope with stress
- 😊 willing to express his needs

Catching problems at an early age usually makes them a lot easier to solve. Help is available!

If a behavior seems unusual, happens over and over or goes on for a long time, this may mean your child needs extra help.

All children benefit from positive adult interaction!

### Learn more about:

- Typical behavior
- Behavior concerns
- Tips on how you can help

\* All information here is the same for boys or girls. "He" and "she" are used at different times just to make it easier to read.

### These parenting tips help with children of any age:

- ▶ Parenting can be hard - it's okay to wonder whether you are being a good parent
- ▶ It's okay to take a break and ask for help
- ▶ Keep the rules clear and try not to make exceptions
- ▶ Make sure the adults in your child's life are working together
- ▶ Be firm with your child, but also respectful and patient
- ▶ Listen to your child - allow her to share her thoughts and feelings
- ▶ Reward good behavior with praise instead of food
- ▶ Limit your child's TV and video games - encourage playing with others instead
- ▶ Model what you expect by sharing, taking turns and saying, "please," "thank you," "I'm sorry" and "I forgive you"
- ▶ When your child acts out, remember that *she* is not bad, her *behavior* is bad
- ▶ Stick to a daily routine as much as possible, like meal times and bedtimes
- ▶ You and your child may have different personalities - try to make them work together
- ▶ Make sure your child gets plenty of exercise
- ▶ Get to know people your child spends time with, like teachers, daycare providers or their friend's caregivers
- ▶ Learn to deal with your own anger - you could try taking deep breaths or calling a friend
  
- ▶ In general, as children get older they will become *more* able to:
  - ✓ calm themselves down
  - ✓ follow rules
  - ✓ communicate their feelings
  - ✓ do things themselves
  - ✓ have sympathy for others, and
  - ✓ interact in a positive way with other people

## BY 6 MONTHS...

### A baby typically:

- Smiles
- Cries
- Makes eye contact
- Recognizes your face/voice
- Responds to other people's facial expressions
- Enjoys cuddling and hugging
- Can feel excited, happy, relaxed or upset
- Responds to sounds, like her name and the word "no"
- Enjoys both quiet and play times
- Begins to make sounds or babble



### What kind of behavior should I be concerned about?

- Does not smile or make other facial expressions on her own
- Does not cry
- Does not respond to sounds
- Refuses to cuddle
- Is fussy and cries most of the time
- Does not babble or make eye contact

### Things to help your SIX-MONTH-OLD grow:

- Have fun with your baby by talking, reading, looking at books, singing, laughing, dancing and playing games
- Learn and be attentive to your baby's cries - this makes him feel safe, it will not spoil him
- Hold and tenderly touch your baby as much as possible, especially when feeding
- Introduce your baby to interesting places, objects and sounds, while making sure he is safe
- Remember that babies are interested in exploring the world *and* want to feel safe - this is a challenge for them
- Stay close to your baby around new people
- Baby-proof your house, making it a safe place to move and explore
- Begin to stick with a daily routine - this helps her feel secure
- Talk in a soft and soothing voice, telling your baby you love her and how strong she is

## BY 12 MONTHS...

### A child typically:

- Cries when you leave and is fearful or shy with strangers
- Shakes head to show likes or dislikes
- Looks when his name is called
- Responds to "no" and other one-word directions
- Tries different ways to get your attention
- Enjoys playing alone and having your attention
- Can feel happy, sad, angry, scared and upset
- Starts to understand that objects "do" different things (like phones are for talking)
- Explores her own body through touch
- Imitates sounds, actions and facial expressions of others
- Prefers certain people and toys over others
- Babbles sounds like "mama" and "dada"



### What kind of behavior should I be concerned about?

- Does not cry when you leave and ignores when you return
- Loss of eye contact
- Does not respond to your smile, sound, or her name
- Shows very little or a strong response to sound, light, touch or pain
- Does not sleep through the night
- Does not use simple movements like shaking head or waving to communicate
- Is always afraid to leave your side
- Says no simple words
- Loss of babbling

### Things to help your ONE-YEAR-OLD grow:

- Play with, read, sing, laugh, talk to and have fun with your child as much as possible
- Describe the world with words
- Help your child identify her feelings with phrases like, "You look like you're mad!"
- Have a bedtime routine (for example: bathe, then sing, read, rock, and sleep)
- Play on the floor with your child - he will feel special having all your attention
- Have enough toys when your child is playing with others, because she doesn't know how to share yet
- Re-direct or distract your child from unwanted behavior and save a firm "NO" when safety is the concern
- Introduce your child to things that encourage use of all five senses
- Let your child make as many choices as possible
- Tell your child every day how special he is

## BY 2 YEARS...

### A child typically:

- Has fears like bed time, the toilet, or large animals
- Is pushy and whines
- Shows emotions such as fear, sympathy, modesty, guilt, or embarrassment
- Enjoys it if she can upset you or make you angry, and may try to make it happen as much as she can
- Refuses to obey and often does the opposite of what you ask
- Wants everything her way and throws temper tantrums
- May insist on doing everything herself
- Likes playing alone sometimes
- Likes to play *next to* other kids
- Does not understand how to share
- Likes to try new things when he knows you are nearby
- Copies the actions of others like driving, cooking, vacuuming, etc.
- Gets upset when you leave
- Uses simple phrases to tell you what he needs
- Says "no!" and "mine!" a lot



### What kind of behavior should I be concerned about?

- Rarely shows emotion or responds
- Is not interested in what other children are doing
- Is not able to calm down, even after a caregiver comforts for 15 minutes
- Needs constant contact with caregiver
- Does not understand simple instructions
- Does not speak, or loses speech
- Speaks less than 15 words or does not speak 2-word sentences

### Things to help your TWO-YEAR-OLD grow:

- Have fun talking about different emotions by making faces together in a mirror
- Remember the "Terrible Twos" are children forming their own personality and identity (and that's GOOD!)
- Don't exaggerate your fears (of bugs or heights, for example), or your toddler may start to fear these, too!
- Don't tease your child about carrying a blanket or stuffed animal - these things help him feel safe
- Listen to your child and be understanding, allow and help her to express fear, anger, and other emotions
- Refusing to obey is not rejecting you, but usually a test to see how you'll react
- Let your child know what will happen next in the day, like moving from playtime to meals, and meals to bedtime
- Remember that toddlers usually cannot remember rules
- Make sure your toddler gets enough movement and sleep
- Allow a lot of time for your child to play with others
- Let your child make as many simple and meaningful choices as possible to help her gain self-confidence
- When she tantrums, protect her and others from harm by separating
- When she tantrums, help her calm down, remind her she's safe and that you love her
- Hug and praise your child often, saying things like, "You're so special!" or, "Wow, you did it!"

## BY 3 YEARS...

### A child typically:

- Changes moods quickly, especially with major changes in routine
- Becomes more affectionate and sensitive of other people's feelings
- Enjoys pretending to play different characters
- May be bossy
- Starts playing *with* other children, and likes some better than others
- May throw temper tantrums
- Can often stay with one activity for at least 5 minutes
- Is starting to share and take turns
- Understands that some things are "mine" and some are not
- Makes simple choices for himself
- Is able to separate from you much more easily
- Knows her name, age, and sex
- Answers "who," "what" and "where" questions easily
- Uses 4 to 5 word sentences like, "I want to go outside," or "I don't like it!"

### What kind of behavior should I be concerned about?

- Doesn't look at you
- Shows limited facial expressions
- Shows little interest in toys or other children
- Cannot focus on one activity for longer than 3 minutes
- Doesn't know how to "pretend"
- Hurts himself, like by biting himself or head banging
- Has a very difficult time separating from you
- Does not let you know when she is hurt
- Does not understand simple instructions
- Uses no two-word phrases (without imitating or repeating)
- Loses speech or social skills



### Things to help your THREE-YEAR-OLD grow:

- Play and have lots of fun together
- Read and talk a lot about how different people or characters in stories feel about things
- Give words to feelings saying things like, "When you hit that shows me you're mad," or "You're smiling - are you happy?"
- Have a special reading time each day, and slowly lengthen the stories so she can sit a little longer
- Play games using simple two-step directions
- Take your child to get a preschool screening (see resource list for phone number)
- Allow your child to do more for herself
- Tell your child often how that he is fun, awesome, and a good helper

## BY 4 YEARS...

### A child typically:

- Expresses strong emotions and opinions at times
- Feels guilty about his bad behavior
- Is beginning to control his frustration
- "Talks back" and challenges things you are teaching her
- Begins to understand danger and things that are dangerous
- Compares things by saying phrases like, "I'm bigger," "Mine is better," or "You have a dog and I don't"
- Asks questions about her life and family after spending time with other families
- Has an active imagination and may have imaginary friends
- Likes everyone to do things the "right" way
- Becomes more independent and likes to play with other children
- Can ask for help



### What kind of behavior should I be concerned about?

- Is not interested in games or other children
- Repeats behaviors like rocking, hand flapping, spinning, etc.
- Cannot focus on one activity for longer than 3 minutes
- Uses sexual behavior or language you can't get her to stop
- Tries to hurt other children, adults, or animals
- Hits or bites others without any self-control when upset
- Still clings and cries when you leave
- Speaks very few words, loses speech or social skills

### Things to help your FOUR-YEAR-OLD grow:

- Have fun with your child!
- Recognize good behavior and reward with praise - this makes her want to do it more often!
- Keep helping your child talk about her feelings
- Express feelings using activities like drawing a "mad" picture or dancing an angry dance
- Keep a daily routine and let your child know what's coming up next
- Make sure your child has a chance to play with other children and encourage taking turns
- Pay attention to your child when he is talking
- Let your child make daily choices like, "Do you want to brush your teeth or get your pajamas on first?"
- Help your child feel important by giving her jobs like setting the table, picking up toys or feeding the cat
- Talk about how people are the same and different and that it's okay
- Make sure your child has had a preschool screening (see resource list for phone numbers)
- Cuddle, hug, and praise your child for all the new things she can do

## BY 5 YEARS...

### A child typically:

- Shows many emotions, including jealousy
- Can be demanding at times and cooperative at others
- Will be sensitive to other children's feelings
- Is able to follow simple rules like waiting in line or using a quiet voice
- Wants to please you, but may go against your authority
- May make up excuses or stories for their behavior to stay out of trouble
- Can take turns and share, but doesn't always want to
- Plays in small groups and may choose to leave someone out
- Likes to sing, dance, and act
- Likes to make many independent choices about clothes, food, and activities



### What kind of behavior should I be concerned about?

- Does not express a wide range of emotions
- Seems sad or unhappy most of the time
- Is very aggressive
- Is very fearful and shy
- Refuses to go to school
- Is only interested in 1 or 2 activities
- Cannot focus on any one activity for longer than 5 minutes
- Unable to make friends
- Does not understand that some things are not real
- Cannot separate from you without getting very upset
- Loses speech or social skills

### Things to help your FIVE-YEAR-OLD grow:

- Be silly, laugh at her jokes, and have fun together
- Encourage your child to ask for help instead of whining or pouting
- Don't be afraid to show a wide range of *your* emotions and how you deal with them in a healthy way
- Use magazines or pictures to point out real dangers (like guns or fire) and make-believe dangers (like monsters)
- Make sure your child gets enough exercise and rest
- Encourage your child to play games that involve working together
- Encourage creativity and understanding of others by acting out stories, playing dress-up and pretending
- Gently remind him of rules and why we have them
- Allow your child to help plan activities
- Give lots of praise, hugs and encouragement every day