



Social and Emotional Development

How Do Preschool Children Learn About Themselves and Each Other?

Preschool children’s social and emotional skills such as self-regulation and social problem-solving affect how they participate in activities both at home and school. One way teachers can support healthy social and emotional development is by building warm, trusting, and respectful relationships with children. High quality teacher child relationships foster children’s engagement and achievement (O’Connor & McCartney, 2007).

Social and Emotional Development



- Self-Awareness:** understand self; develop self-esteem and self-confidence; and unique identity
- Self-Regulation:** understand emotions; manage actions; emotional regulation; and emotional expression
- Social Awareness:** recognize and understand emotions of others; develop relationships; and social skills
- Relationship Skills:** relationships and communication; social competence; compassion and empathy; and conflict resolution

Books to Promote Positive Sense of Self and Relationships

Self

- Be You* by Peter H. Reynolds
- Be Who You are* by Todd Parr
- I Am Enough* by Grace Byers
- I Like Me* by Nancy Carlson
- I Like Myself* by Karen Beaumont

- Just Like Me* by Vanessa Brantley-Newton
- Lots of Feelings* by Shelley Rotner
- The Feelings Book* by Todd Parr
- The Quiet Book* by Deborah Underwood
- The Skin You Live In* by Michael Tyler
- You Matter* by Christian Robinson

Relationships

- All Are Welcome* by Alexandra Penfold
- Be Kind* by Pat Zietlow Miller
- Boy + Bot* by Amy Dykman
- City Dog, Country Frog* by Mo Willems

- Jake the Growling Dog* by Samantha Shannon
- Little Blue and Little Yellow* by Leo Lionni
- My Friends* by Taro Gomi
- Same, Same but Different* by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw

Tools and Resources

- [NAEYC: Teaching Emotional Intelligence in Early Childhood](#)
- [American Academy of Pediatrics: Social Development in Preschoolers](#)
- [Head Start ECLKC: Social and Emotional Development](#)
- [PBS: Social and Emotional Development](#)
- [Videos: Making Space with Christian Robinson](#)

Examples of Integrated Learning

How children may exhibit these skills	How early care and education providers can encourage these skills
<p>Notice and point to reflection in mirror, make a muscle, smile, name body parts, and make a silly face. Says, "Oh, I'm so big now!"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish a meaningful connection between home and school by interacting with family members during arrival/departure and other times throughout the day. Show interest in family life, special events and milestones by asking questions and include children in conversations. ▪ Welcome framed family photos, photo albums, stuffed animals, and special family mementos as part of the classroom environment and make them easily accessible to children. Discuss similarities and differences among children in the classroom. <i>Example:</i> "You're right, you have brown hair and brown eyes, and Olivia has blonde hair and blue eyes." ▪ Support the unique identity of each child by providing opportunities to make choices and respecting those choices-even "No!" Celebrate differences.
<p>Stomp foot, clench fists, yell, or cry when a friend takes a favorite toy. Walk to cozy corner to squeeze a stuffed animal and self-soothe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read books that feature the expression of a wide range of emotions and provide opportunities for meaningful discussion. Recognize that there are cultural differences in what may be "acceptable" ways to express emotions. ▪ Nurture with kindness and verbally respond without judgement when children display emotion. Provide support when needed. <i>Example:</i> "You were crying when Susan took your dump truck away. How did that make you feel? What did you do in the cozy corner to help yourself feel better?" ▪ Identify visual cues of emotions, such as facial expressions, body language, and vocalizations, and model emotional regulation throughout the day. <i>Example:</i> "Oh no, I dropped the puzzle, and the pieces went everywhere! I feel frustrated so I'm going to take a few deep breaths before I clean it up." Take several deep breaths and blow out the air before asking if children will help you clean up.
<p>Hug or play with a familiar friend or caregiver during free play time. Attempt to share toys, offer comfort, problem-solve, and resolve conflict.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Offer extended opportunities for children to interact with each other during free play, meals, outdoor play, etc. ▪ Support children in communicating their feelings to others. Model compassion and empathy. ▪ Encourage and engage in associative and cooperative play with children and support communication and relationship building. <i>Example:</i> "I see that you and Charlie are working so hard together in the sandbox. I have a funnel and sifter you might want to use. May I join you?"