

Social and Emotional Development

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Positive social and emotional development in the early years provides a critical foundation for lifelong development and learning. Social development refers to a child's ability to create and sustain meaningful relationships with adults and other children. Emotional development is a child's ability to express, recognize, and manage his or her emotions, as well as respond appropriately to others' emotions. Both social and emotional development are important for young children's mental health. In fact, early childhood mental health is the same as social and emotional development!

To read more about this domain, visit the [Interactive Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework](#). The Social and Emotional Development domains for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers include the following sub-domains:

- [Relationships with Adults](#)
- [Relationships with Other Children](#)
- [Emotional Functioning](#)
- [Sense of Identity and Belonging](#)

Effective Teaching Practices

The effective teaching practices that follow are grouped in three categories: Interactions, Environment, and Individualization. Examples of ways to support goals for children are provided by sub-domain. It is likely, however, that these practices will also support goals for children in additional domains and sub-domains. This is the nature of teaching and learning in the early years.

- Engage parents in focusing on their child's development
- Directly encourage parents to teach, talk, and interact with their child in responsive and warm ways
- Use family activities, routines, and materials in the home for learning
- Collaborate with parents to plan activities and experiences

Topic: [School Readiness](#)

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