



Social Emotional Development

What is Social Emotional Development?

Social Emotional, is how we think about ourselves, how we behave with other people, and how we learn to be independent. Social emotional skills are important for kids to interact nicely with others and these skills are helpful in school and in life, too.

Here are ways you can help your child practice social emotional skills:

- **Be engaged:** Kids engage with others by smiling, talking, singing, reading, and more. Give your child many chances throughout the day to engage with you!
- **Have fun!** Play “social games” with your child, such as peek-a-boo, tickling, or making sounds.
- **Make friends:** Find places where your child can play with other kids, such as a playground. Children who spend time together learn how to play together.
- **Understand personal feelings:** Say how you think your child feels so they learn the names of feelings, such as “you’re happy playing outside.”
- **Understand how others feel:** Help your child understand how others feel by saying things like, “Mommy is excited to play with you,” or “he’s sad because he didn’t get a cookie.”
- **Follow routines and rules:** Talk to your child about routines (meals, bedtime, etc.) and explain any “rules” you make. Routines and rules help children feel safe at home and at school by knowing what to expect and when to expect it.
- **Get involved with “dramatic play”:** “Dramatic play” is when kids pretend by playing house, school, or dress-up. Go along with your child when she is being silly because it helps her imagination.
- **Be independent:** Let your child try something first before helping him, such as eating or putting on shoes. Building independence helps kids feel good about themselves.

For more information about how United Way is supporting school readiness through healthy child development, please visit:

unitedwaymassbay.org/DRIVE

United Way
of Massachusetts Bay
and Merrimack Valley



There are **5**
main areas
of development:

1. Communication
2. Fine Motor
3. Gross Motor
- ▶ 4. Social Emotional
5. Problem Solving

