

# PROMOTING SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



**BRIGHT  
FUTURES**

Social, emotional and behavioral health begins at birth and lays a foundation for children to:

## MANAGE **EMOTIONS** • HAVE POSITIVE **RELATIONSHIPS** **RESOLVE CONFLICTS** PEACEFULLY • **TAKE CARE** OF OTHERS

Children begin learning these skills from birth as they build attachments and trust with caregivers, learn how to calm themselves down, and later, to recognize emotions.

Just like other skills, children develop social and emotional abilities gradually - and they need plenty of support from adults as they learn.

Nurturing our children's social and emotional needs from birth helps ensure they will have good mental health throughout their lives.

We all have mental health - even babies! And just as physical health enables us to have the energy we need to work and live our lives, mental health allows us to have positive relationships with others, cope with life's challenges, and manage our emotions.

Just as we take care of our children's physical health - with healthy food, plenty of sleep and regular check-ups - we must also take care of their mental health by supporting their social-emotional development.

### **BUT HOW?**

Loving relationships with you and other adults are the foundation of children's healthy social-emotional development.

Positive relationships help children feel secure and encouraged. Through relationships we can teach children to understand and express their feelings, develop compassion for other people, and learn the difference between right and wrong. These social and emotional skills prepare children for success in school and throughout their lives.



## 0-8 MONTHS

Babies age 0-8 months are developing a sense of trust and security with parents and caregivers. They love to interact face to face. Babies this age are starting to know what to expect in their daily routine. They are likely to be sensitive to loud noises, bright lights or lots of activity. They are also starting to show interest in other children.

### TRY THESE TIPS:

- Make eye contact with baby during routines like feeding and diapering
- Talk and coo with baby, imitate his sounds and expressions
- Play peek-a-boo with baby
- Create routines - stick to a schedule for feeding, sleeping and other activities so baby learns what to expect
- Respond to baby kindly and warmly every time you interact
- Talk, read and sing together every day
- Give baby a break from too much activity - take her to a quiet place and cuddle and sway with her to help her calm down
- Let baby watch other children; let older children talk, smile and laugh with baby
- Talk to baby about what he might be feeling based on behavior (crying, laughing, etc.)

JUST AS WE TAKE CARE OF CHILDREN'S  
PHYSICAL HEALTH, WE MUST ALSO TAKE  
CARE OF THEIR MENTAL HEALTH.

Parenting is hard, and all families need help to prepare their children for success in school and beyond. It's normal to have questions and concerns about your child's development and behavior.

**IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR CHILD, TALK TO  
YOUR PEDIATRICIAN OR CHILD CARE PROVIDER.**

Visit [Triadbrightfutures.org](https://www.triadbrightfutures.org) to find:

- Local resources to support families
- Child care and programs for school-age kids
- Parenting education programs
- Support for early childhood mental health
- Family-friendly events and more!

