

# PROMOTING SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



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.



## 5-8 YEARS

At this age, children continue to learn skills that provide a strong foundation for lifelong learning. Children this age are learning how things are the same and different. They are learning how to talk and write about their thoughts and ideas. They are continuing to build their relationship skills by making friends and connecting with adults. Children this age are still learning to follow rules and directions and to control their impulses. They are also learning to keep trying when at first they don't succeed.

### TRY THESE TIPS:

- Ask questions about what they are learning in school
- Instead of asking, "How was your day?" ask, "What did you do in art class today?" or, "What game did you play at recess?"
- Visit their classroom and go to school events; talk to their teachers if you have questions
- Give them healthy food, encourage exercise, and make sure they get enough sleep
- Take them to the doctor regularly; talk to your doctor if you have questions or concerns about your child's development or behavior
- Encourage your child's friendships and help her solve conflicts
- Set limits that are appropriate for your child's age and help them understand why limits are important
- Encourage them to try new and different activities
- Help them understand that sometimes doing new things is hard but they will get easier with practice

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

**Challenging behavior - or acting out - is how children communicate that their social and emotional needs are not being met. 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!

