

# Social and Emotional Competence of Children

## The Value of Social and Emotional Competence of Children

Family and child interactions that help children develop the ability to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate their emotions and establish and maintain relationships.

Children who have these skills are likely to grow up to have healthier behaviors, better peer relationships and a higher capacity to respond to stress. Helping children to develop these skills can also improve family relationships and prevent abuse and neglect. When parent-child relationships are mutually rewarding, there is greater enjoyment, increased responsiveness, and decreased likelihood of maltreatment.

## Everyday Actions that Help Build Social and Emotional Competence of Children

### Concrete Examples of Everyday Actions

1 Can you share any tools or specific activities that you use when you talk to your children about their emotions?

- An emoji feelings chart
- Ask how they are feeling and listen
- Reassure them that they are loved
- Draw pictures and make "feelings" masks
- Use mindfulness practices/yoga together
- We use mirrors to recognize emotions

2 What are some ways you model nurturing and support to your children?

- Snuggling
- Active listening
- Allow space for emotions and confirm them
- Engaging in their interests
- For families with multiple kids: One-on-one relaxing time in nature
- Hugs are always important

3 What are some activities you have done with your child out in your community (perhaps sponsored by your school, house of worship, or other organization), that you feel may be contributing to your child's social-emotional development?

- Community classes (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual)
- Great outdoors/nature
- Volunteering
- Outings: museums, science centers, libraries and the zoo
- Playdates
- Creative expression opportunities (art, music, etc.)

4 How do you help your child celebrate who they are as a person? How do you help them celebrate and respect the uniqueness of others who may seem different or unfamiliar?

- Praise verbally
- Acknowledge their interests
- Acknowledge what makes them special (talents, abilities, attributes, etc.)
- Celebrate the uniqueness of their identity

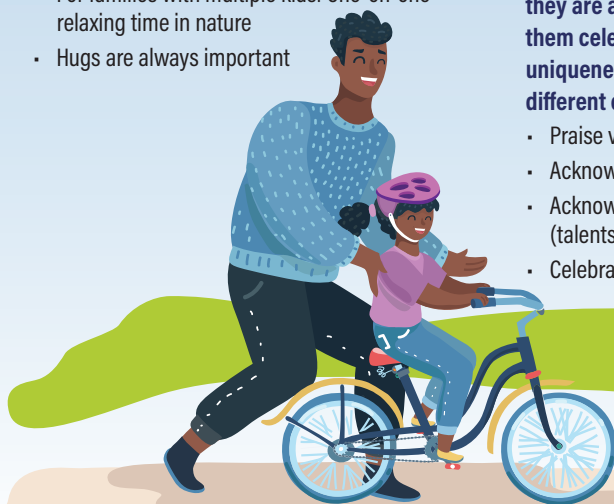
- 1 Help parents foster their child's social emotional development
- 2 Model nurturing support to children
- 3 Include children's social and emotional development activities in programming
- 4 Help children develop a positive cultural identity and interact in a diverse society
- 5 Respond proactively when social or emotional development seems to need support

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5 What do you do to help your child manage their emotions - working with them so that they can get to the next step?

- Pause to give them some direct attention
- Create a safe space for expression and to talk
- Give them some time to reflect
- Practice and model coping strategies or do breathing exercises
- Seek outside help if needed
- Share your experiences
- Label expressed emotions and talk through them together



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**need2know**

Resource from the ANPPC



**CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND Alliance**

National Parent Partnership Council (ANPPC)

For more parent-to-parent tools visit  
[ctfalliance.org/partnering-with-parents/  
anppc/#resources](https://ctfalliance.org/partnering-with-parents/anppc/#resources)

# Social and Emotional Competence of Children within the Framework

**Social and Emotional Competence of Children** is one of the five protective factors. Each of the protective factors is essential but most important is what they do together to build strength and stability in families.

Social and Emotional Competence might come in the form of a positive peer connection (Social Connections). It could show up when parents help children name and claim their emotions at all stages of development (Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development). A resilient parent might use everyday moments to sit, listen, and process things with their child when they are having a hard time (Parental Resilience).

The protective factors work together to help make your family strong!

## Parents Help Define Social and Emotional Competence of Children

Many parent groups have defined the protective factors in ways that are relatable for their community and their lives. These ideas help us appreciate and honor family strengths in diverse geographical and cultural settings from across the country. Here are some ways parents have defined this protective factor – **Social and Emotional Competence of Children** – in ways that are meaningful for them.

## Defining the Five Protective Factors

Families are supported to build:

### Parental Resilience

The ability to recover from difficult life experiences, and often to be strengthened by and even transformed by those experiences.

### Social Connections

The ability and opportunity to develop positive relationships that lessen stress and isolation and help to build a supportive network.

### Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

The ability to exercise effective parenting strategies to guide and know what to expect as children develop in multiple domains (physical, cognitive, language and social and emotional).

### Concrete Support in Times of Need

Access to supports and services that reduce stress and help to make families stronger.

### Social and Emotional Competence of Children

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### Colorado Department of Human Services – Children's Trust Fund

*Help your child manage feelings and relationships. Help children develop skills so they can manage their emotions and build healthy relationships with their peers and adults.*

### Michigan Great Start Collaborative (Charlevoix, Emmet and Northern Antrim Counties)

*Give your child words to express how they feel. Teaching your child to effectively communicate and interact builds relationships and makes your family strong.*

### New Hampshire Children's Trust

*My child feels loved, has a sense of belonging and the ability to connect with others.*

### Prevent Child Abuse Arizona – Strengthening Families Arizona

*All kids need to feel that they belong. To become successful adults, kids need to learn to communicate clearly, deal with their emotions and get along well with others.*

### Alaska Child Welfare Academy

*Help your child manage feelings and relationships.*

### Hawaii Child and Family Services – The Parent Line

*I know my child feels loved. I know how to help my child talk about their feelings.*

### Community Café Collaborative

*My child feels loved, a sense of belonging, and can get along with others.*

### Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board – Five For Families (fiveforfamilies.org)

*Helping Kids Understand Feelings – Showing your kids how to name, understand and manage emotions, express themselves and get along with others.*

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