



Strong Foundations in Mental Health
for Social & Emotional Well-Being



NATIONAL CENTER ON
Early Childhood Health and Wellness

Strong Foundations in Mental Health for Social and Emotional Well-Being Newsletter

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National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day is May 4! More than 150 national organizations and 1,100 communities across the country will focus on the importance of integrating children’s mental, emotional, and physical health. These events will showcase best practices in communication between behavioral health and primary care providers, youth, and families. Evidence-based community programs will also be highlighted.

In support of Awareness Day, the Office of Head Start (OHS), the American Art Therapy Association (AATA), and Youth M.O.V.E. National have curated a digital art exhibition addressing the theme, “I am a work of art.” All featured artwork was created by children, youth, and young adults ages 3–25. One of the founding principles of OHS was the promotion of social competence. That

strong commitment to nurturing children’s mental health continues today. Head Start recognizes that social and emotional skill development is closely linked to children’s school readiness. Early educators and families are better able to support children’s learning and development in this area when they are knowledgeable about early childhood mental health. Resources in this issue focus on promoting children’s social and emotional development.



[For Practitioners](#)

These resources were developed for staff and consultants working in early childhood settings. Some resources may also be useful to families.

[Healthy Gender Development and Young Children: A Guide for Early Childhood Programs and Professionals](#)

Find practical guidance on healthy early childhood gender development for all staff who work with children and families. It draws on decades of research and experiences of early childhood educators, pediatricians, and mental health professionals. This guide was developed in line with the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

[Mental Health: Tips for Health Managers – What Is Early Childhood Mental Health?](#)

Social and emotional development sets the foundation for all other areas of development and learning for young children. This tip sheet for managers and staff explores the importance of early childhood mental health and provides relevant resources.

[Establishing a Level Foundation for Life: Mental Health Begins in Early Childhood](#)

Sound mental health is the foundation that supports all other aspects of human development, from the formation of friendships to success in school. This working paper from the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child explains how early childhood experiences can strengthen or disrupt a child's emotional well-being.

[Head Start Bulletin No. 80: Mental Health](#)

Promoting mental health is a vital component of the work done every day to enrich the lives of Head Start children and families. Head Start program staff may benefit from the strategies and approaches discussed in this bulletin.

[Infant Toddler Temperament Tool \(IT³\): Supporting A “Goodness of Fit”](#)

The compatibility between adult and child temperaments can affect the quality of relationships. This compatibility is often called “goodness of fit.” Goodness of fit happens when an adult's expectations and methods of caregiving match the child's personal style and abilities. This tool examines nine temperament traits and provides positive support strategies for infants and toddlers. IT³ was developed for the Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, an Innovation and Improvement Project funded by the OHS.

[News You Can Use – Foundations of School Readiness: Social and Emotional Development](#)

For infants and toddlers, social and emotional development is “the developing capacity to experience and regulate emotions, form secure relationships, and explore and learn—all in the context of the child's family, community, and cultural background.” This issue of News You Can Use is meant to be used with the sample goals in [Program Level School Readiness Goals for Early Childhood Programs](#).





For Families

These ready-to-print resources were designed for families with young children.

Mental Health: Tips for Families – What Is Mental Health?

Families play a crucial role in supporting the social and emotional development of their young children. This family-friendly tip sheet provides an overview of early childhood mental health for children from birth to 5. It also explains how families can nurture their child's development.

Social Emotional Tips for Families with Infants

Parents are their baby's first teacher. The resource provides information about infants' social and emotional development and practical strategies for supporting children's learning and well-being through care routines.

Social Emotional Tips for Families with Toddlers

Learn more about the role of parents and caregivers in nurturing toddlers' mental health. The resource provides information about toddlers' social and emotional development and practical strategies for supporting children's learning during daily routines.

Multimedia Resources

Check out these multimedia resources focused on early childhood mental health.

Classroom-Based and Parent-Focused Interventions for Promoting Social and Emotional Competence in Young Children

This Front Porch Series Broadcast Call presents an overview of 10 classroom approaches that focus on enhancing children's social and emotional competence. The video also explores eight parenting interventions. They are based on a review that used the adoption criteria introduced by Joseph and Strain (2003). Results and the implications for teachers, families, and children are also discussed.

Head Start CARES: The Implementation and Impacts of Preschool Social-Emotional Interventions at Scale

The Head Start CARES study is a large-scale trial of three social and emotional interventions in Head Start programs: Incredible Years Teacher Training, Preschool PATHS, and Tools of the Mind – Play. Dr. Mattera describes the system put in place to support the enhancements, including training, coaching, monitoring, and technical assistance, as well as how they were used in the classroom. She also presents lessons learned and the impacts of each enhancement on teacher practices and child outcomes.

How Emotional Development Unfolds Starting at Birth

In this podcast for families, Dr. Ross Thompson describes how early emotional development unfolds. Discover what families can do to nurture their child's social and emotional skills starting at birth.



InBrief: Early Childhood Mental Health

The science of child development shows that the foundation for sound mental health is built early in life. Early experiences, including children's relationships with parents, caregivers, relatives, teachers, and peers, shape the architecture of the developing brain. This video and brief explore the many facets of early childhood mental health and how adults can support healthy development.

Understanding and Using Evidence-Based Social Emotional Curricula

This presentation explores recent research on social and emotional curricula. It offers guidance on the implementation of the curricula in preschool classrooms.



[MyPeers: A Collaborative Platform for the Early Care and Education Community](#)

MyPeers is an online social and learning network for Head Start and Early Head Start program staff and partners to dialogue and share thoughts. This is a virtual community for exchanging ideas, sharing resources, and lending support to the early childhood community.

Currently, the NCECHW have the following open communities on MyPeers:

1. Child Care Health Consultants
2. Health, Safety and Wellness
3. I am Moving I am Learning (IMIL)
4. Staff Wellness
5. and two state-specific early childhood health communities for Oregon and South Dakota.
6. Mental Health Consultation Community



Register for
MyPeers

To join one of these communities, register at <http://www.123formbuilder.com/form-2230355/My-Peers>. Once registered, you will be able to join new communities to meet your specific needs.

Please watch your email for announcements from the National Centers or others as they initiate new communities.

The National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness welcomes your feedback on this newsletter issue, as well as your suggestions for topics for future issues. Please forward your comments to The National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness Feedback health@ecetta.info or call 888-227-5125.

School readiness begins with health!