



NATIONAL CENTER ON
Early Childhood Health and Wellness



Promoting Positive Relationships

Early relationships are the foundation of healthy development. Positive relationships between primary caregivers and young children are linked to long term positive outcomes such as children’s social relationships, school adjustment, and ability to pay attention and focus. Positive relationships encourage optimal brain development and teach young children that:

- The world is safe and they are worthy of kindness and care from others.
- They can manage their emotions, solve problems, and get along with others.

The resources here assist EHS/HS staff members and other caregivers in promoting positive relationships between children and families, children and early childhood educators, and children and their peers.

For Practitioners

[Young Children Develop in an Environment of Relationships: Working Paper No. 1](#)

Relationships are crucial for the optimal development of a child’s brain architecture, which lays the foundation for academic performance, mental health, and interpersonal skills. This working paper from the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child explains how these relationships shape child development and identifies ways to strengthen policies that affect those relationships in the early childhood years. Links to related materials are available.



Interpersonal experiences directly influence how we mentally construct reality.

[Mirroring the Early Parent-Child Bond for Infants and Toddlers](#)

Learn about the importance of supporting early bonding and attachment in child-parent relationships and child-caregiver relationships. Explore strategies useful for Head Start and Early Head Start center-based, home-based, and family child care program options.

[Caring Relationships: The Heart of Early Brain Development](#)

In this article, learn how relationships and day-to-day interactions affect early brain development. The needs of the child at developmental stages from birth to age 3 are defined, with suggestions for appropriate caregiver responses.

Classroom Strategies

[Fostering Connections](#)

View this 15-minute in-service to learn about ways teachers can build meaningful, positive relationships with children in their classrooms. Ancillary presentation materials include training videos, presenter notes, activities, and handouts.

[Building Positive Teacher-Child Relationships](#)

This brief resource provides an overview and examples of various strategies and teacher behaviors that support positive relationships with children.

[Building Positive Relationships with Young Children](#)

Building positive relationships with young children is an essential task and a foundational component of good teaching. All children grow and thrive in the context of close and dependable relationships that provide love, nurturance, security, and responsive interactions. This resource provides concrete strategies for building relationships with young children in the classroom and program settings.

Supporting Children's Peer Relationship

[The Adult's Role in Supporting Peer Relationships](#)

This webinar and ancillary materials answer four main questions regarding peer relationships: Why are friendships important? Why are friends hard to find? How can adults facilitate the development of friendships between young children? How can adults help children navigate their own search for friends?

[Two's Company, Three's a Crowd: Peer Interactions in a Preschool Social Triangle](#)

This article provides a fascinating in-depth exploration of a sample preschool peer relationship triad and their preferences and conflicts. Appropriate teacher responses are also provided.



[Using Environmental Strategies to Promote Positive Social Interactions](#)

Teachers and other caregivers can provide a structure that encourages positive social interactions between children in the classroom. These vignettes and examples show early educators how to create an environment that supports peer interactions.

Engaging Families

[Positive Parent-Child Relationships](#)

These materials are part of the Office of Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework and present research, proven interventions, and program strategies for improving the parent-child relationship.

[Supporting Positive Parent Child Relationships \(for Home-Based Programs\)](#)

This video supports home visitors in providing strategies that help parents build positive relationships with their young children.

For Families

[Responding Positively to Your Child's Behavior](#)

Parents who nurture themselves and their children are teaching their child positive lifelong relationship skills. This information provides tips and tools to respond positively to your child's behavior.

[How to Help Your Child Learn to Share](#)

This one-page tip sheet provides strategies that parents can use to support sharing skill development at home and school.

[How to Help Your Child Recognize and Understand Jealousy](#)

Provide this resource to parents that lists strategies for helping their children to identify and respond to their feelings of jealousy at home and at school.

[Tips on Helping Your Child Build Relationships](#)

This article describes how parents can support a child's social skills, offering examples of relationship building experiences. It provides concrete ideas for how to encourage positive relationships with infants and toddlers.



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Contact Us: The National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness welcomes your feedback as well as your suggestions for topics for future resources!

Please forward your comments to: health@ecetta.info or call us at 888-227-5125.

School readiness begins with health!