



Early Learning and School Readiness: Social and Emotional Development Tip Sheet

For Early Head Start/Head Start (EHS/HS); Refugee Resettlement; Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS);
Early Care and Education Providers

All providers can support families to build a strong, positive relationship with their child, within a stimulating and culturally responsive environment. This will contribute to the child's healthy brain development. This Social and Emotional Tip Sheet corresponds to page 21 of the [Raising Young Children in a New Country: Supporting Early Learning and Healthy Development Handbook](#).

Conversation Starters: (or staff, families, and partners can design program-specific questions)

- Tell me about your child: How does your child play when alone? How does your child play with others?
- When your child's behavior is difficult, what do you do?
- What behaviors and social skills are important to your family (e.g., interacting with others)?
- How are relationships and expectations similar to and different from when you were a child?



Cultural Considerations:

- Cultural practices vary regarding how families show affection and praise towards children and between adults; some may wonder whether too much affection will “spoil” children. Some cultures practice more indirect than direct forms of affection and praise.
- Some families from communal cultures may place a high value on skills that promote sharing, caring for others, and getting along. They may feel conflicted about teaching children skills that promote independence or individualism.
- Families from some cultures may be uncomfortable talking about feelings and emotions.
- Many refugee families come from hierarchical cultures where respect for elders is highly valued, and adults may worry that their children will lose this important value. The ways in which children may be taught to address adults (e.g., using “Mr.” or “Mrs.”



rather than first names), or respond to adults (e.g., looking down rather than directly in the eye, or not questioning an adult's authority), can indicate respect for elders.

Remember to Mention:

- Social emotional development refers to the skills needed to build strong attachments and healthy relationships with adults and peers, regulate emotions, and develop positive self-concept and identity.
- A strong, healthy social and emotional foundation, developed in the context of a family's culture, is important for a child's learning and can predict positive outcomes for children's school readiness and success.
- A learning environment that respects and reflects a child's culture can support positive identity development. For example, staff speaking the home language, books and materials reflecting cultures represented in the classroom, and staff using families' cultural practices (when appropriate).

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Remember to Mention:

Young children have temperaments (inborn preference in responding to the environment) and vary in how they engage with others (e.g., some children easily adapt to new situations; some are easily upset, or wake at irregular hours; others can be shy or quiet and slowly warm up to people and events).

- Young children may cry when their parent leaves them, but after a period of time they are typically able to engage with others until their parent returns.
- Bonding (spending time with children, responding to their interests, etc.) helps build trust and supports children's social relationships and emotional development.
- Modeling and encouraging socially and culturally appropriate ways of expressing feelings and interacting with others can

support young children's social and emotional development. For example, adults can help children calm down by comforting, holding, and teaching them to take deep breaths. They can also help by naming emotions and showing how to best express them. Additionally, adults can show how to get along with others, make friends, and follow simple rules.

- Warm, supportive relationships can help protect young children from the effects of negative experiences that may compromise their social and emotional wellness (e.g., parental mental health issues; moving, resettlement or homelessness; trauma or domestic violence; separation from, or death of, a family member; economic stress; natural disasters).

Applicable Head Start Program Performance Standards:

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/hspss/1304>

45 CFR 1304.21 Education and early childhood development (a)(1)(i)(iii)(iv)

45 CFR 1304.40 Family partnerships (a)(3)(i)(A)(B)(C)(D)(E)

45 CFR 1304.21 (b)(1)(i)(ii)

45 CFR 1304.21 (b)(2)(i)

45 CFR 1304.21 (c)(iv)(v)(vi)

Resources on ECKLC:

Early Head Start National Resource Center

- **News You Can Use: Foundations of School Readiness: Social Emotional Development.** <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/docs/nycu-social-emotional-development.pdf>
- **School Readiness Goals for Infants and Toddlers in Head Start and Early Head Start Programs: Examples from the Early Head Start National Resource Center.** <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/docs/school-readiness-goals-infants-toddlers.pdf>



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National Center of Health

- **Parent Tip Sheets and Cards: Welcome to Group Care** <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/health-literacy-family-engagement/family-education/tip-sheets-cards.html;QWl5bmhIbnRlcg==>
- **Health tips for Families – What is Mental Health?** <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/health-literacy-family-engagement/family-education/mental-health-family-tips.pdf>
- **Social & Emotional Development: What is the Link Between Health and Social & Emotional Development** <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/link-between/emotional-dev.html>

National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning

Tips for Families:

- **Fostering Connections: Strong Relationships Help Your Child Learn** <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/docs/fostering-connections-family-tips-strong.pdf>
- **Being Aware of Children's Needs: Look at Me!** <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/docs/childrens-needs-family-tips.pdf>
- **Creating a Caring Community: How Does Your Child Feel?** <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/teaching/docs/caring-community-family-tips-feel.pdf>

