

Social and Emotional Development

- Social Relationships
- Self Regulation
- Sense of Self

One of the primary goals of a quality program for infants and toddlers is to foster social and emotional development. When babies and young children feel emotionally and physically secure, they have the opportunity to freely explore their environment. They are able to interact with adults and other children, and gain a sense of identity through an understanding and confidence in themselves as individuals.

The key to social and emotional development is strong, positive, secure relationships. Infants and toddlers need consistent, nurturing adults who are supportive and responsive. Caring adults provide safe, stable, and predictable environments that support young children's growing independence. Such environments promote a healthy sense of self and connections with others.



Strategies to support inclusive learning environments:

- ❖ Carefully observe child to child and child to adult interactions, and provide opportunities that will promote positive relationships
- ❖ Provide opportunities for natural, ongoing interactions with typically developing and socially competent peers
- ❖ Provide choices so children have more control over their environment

Some general accommodations to support children with special learning or developmental needs can be found on page 9 of this document, and in NDE Rule 51.

Social Relationships

Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child is responsive in interactions with others and shows evidence of attachment process
 - Develops an attachment with caring adults
 - Begins to develop a curiosity about others
 - Shows an interest in things in the environment
 - Displays pleasure when with familiar people

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Responds to familiar adults' and childrens' interactions (gazes, cuddles, accepts assistance from familiar adult, etc.)
- Engages in social games with familiar people through playful back and forth interactions (exchanges smiles, coos, plays peek-a-boo, etc.)
- Expresses self using verbal and nonverbal cues (cries, laughs, turns head away, reaches for familiar adult, etc.)

The Adult

- Knows and builds a trusting relationship with each child
- Understands and responds to different temperaments of children
- Provides opportunities and participates in back and forth communication (uses eye contact and allows sufficient time for children to respond)
- Interacts playfully with babies, verbally describes infants' actions
- Meets infants' bodily needs for comfort (responds to cries, holds baby when bottle feeding, makes eye contact while diapering, etc.)
- Provides opportunities and support to help children develop close relationships with caring adults (responds to children's cues, talks to them during routine care, etc.)
- Provides opportunities for non-mobile infants to interact with other children
- Uses a calm, soothing voice; holds and cuddles each child routinely throughout the day
- Provides opportunities for children to develop an awareness of their own feelings, as well as ideas and actions of others

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Unbreakable mirrors and accessible materials for independent choice
- Interesting toys and materials that represent families and diverse cultures (family photographs, sturdy picture books, etc.)
- Predictable schedules and routines, individualized for each child

Social Relationships

Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child is responsive in interactions with others and begins to build relationships
 - Develops and maintains secure relationships with caring adults
 - Demonstrates growing interest in interactions with adults and other children
 - Imitates the social interactions of others
 - Shows awareness of and responds to the feelings of others
 - Develops social play (peek-a-boo, patty cake, finger plays, etc.)

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Engages in social games (playful give and take, itsy-bitsy spider, etc.)
- Recognizes familiar people, in person or in a photograph
- Expresses self verbally and nonverbally (laughs, cries, says "No", names the emotion, etc.)
- Responds to and initiates interaction with others (offers toy, hugs, pats, asks to be read to, etc.)
- Begins to show empathy toward others (identifies feelings of others, comforts or offers a comfort item, etc.)
- Plays alongside a peer, imitating actions or using similar materials

The Adult

- Knows the children and families as individuals, and appreciates differences in values and backgrounds
- Provides opportunities for children to develop an awareness of their own feelings, as well as ideas and actions of others
- Provides opportunities for children to feel accepted in the group
- Comforts children when they are distressed
- Builds trust by providing support while children are interacting with others
- Speaks to child in a calm voice at eye level
- Provides consistent routines (group time, lunch time, nap time, etc.)
- Interprets children's communication attempts to other children and adults ("You said, 'ba'- do you want the ball?")
- Encourages turn-taking and cooperation during communication and play

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Duplicate materials and accessible equipment that allow for young children to explore alone or together with others
- Interesting toys and materials that represent families and diverse cultures (family photographs, dolls, play materials, books representing other cultures, etc.)

Sense of Self

Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child initiates, explores and plays with objects and materials
- Child begins to distinguish self from others
- Child shows likes and dislikes for people and materials
- Child shows growing independence in a range of activities, routines and tasks

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Begins to discover self (puts fingers or toes in mouth, coos and babbles, touches own image in the mirror, etc.)
- May become upset when an unfamiliar person approaches them
- Notices and mimics responses as reflected by adults
- Explores materials and the environment freely by looking, tasting, smelling, feeling and hearing
- Engages in natural problem solving activities (looks at or reaches for desired object, repeats an action to make something happen, etc.)
- Provides cues to indicate needs (turns head away when full, reaches for bottle, feeds self finger food when ready for table food, etc.)

The Adult

- Observes child and responds based on individual needs throughout the daily routine
- Consistently nurtures and responds to the physical and emotional needs of the child
- Provides a variety of interesting materials for children to explore using their senses (different textures, colors, scents, tastes, etc.)
- Models self-confidence and positive attitude in interactions with children and others
- Promotes independence and self-help skills
- Follows child's lead during play and exploration

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Safe space with interesting materials that encourage children's interaction, involvement, exploration and experimentation (mirrors, water and sand play areas, shape sorters, etc.)
- Materials that reflect the lives of the children and their families, and the world around them (family photos, pictures, books, dolls, foods, etc.)

Sense of Self

Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child begins to distinguish self from others
- Child develops independence, confidence, and competence
 - Likes self and shows pride in accomplishments
 - Shows growing independence and problem solving in a range of play activities, routines and tasks
 - Shows initiative through decision making and exploration
 - Shows increasing concentration or persistence on tasks

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Identifies self and others in person, in the mirror, and through photographs
- Openly expresses moods, emotions and desires (laughs, cries, states desires, "Me do it", "Mine", "Up", "No", etc.)
- Selects and explores chosen materials and activities independently, engages in pretend play
- Practices problem solving skills (crawls out from under a table before standing up, going around an object that is in the way of the push toy, etc.)
- Does things for self (assists with dressing, feeding, drinking from a cup, etc.)
- Accomplishes part or all of tasks (begins to use the toilet, washes hands, etc.)

The Adult

- Observes child and responds based on individual needs throughout the daily routine
- Provides individualized care throughout the daily routine
- Consistently nurtures and responds to the physical and emotional needs of the child (answers questions, responds to attempts at language, reflects emotions, etc.)
- Provides a variety of interesting materials for children to explore using their senses (different textures, colors, scents, tastes, etc.)
- Models self-confidence in interactions with children and others
- Promotes independence and self-help skills
- Invites families to share traditions, special games, foods, dance, etc.

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- Safe space with materials that encourage children's interaction, involvement, exploration and experimentation (mirrors, water and sand play areas, shape sorters, etc.)
- Materials that reflect the lives of the children and their families, and the world around them (family photos, pictures, books, dolls, foods, etc.)

Self Regulation

Infants (Birth to 18 Months)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child expresses emotions and begins to initiate ways to calm self
- Child explores the environment freely, responding to supportive guidance
- Child provides cues indicating wants and needs through purposeful actions and gestures
- Child depends on frequent reminders to learn boundaries

Learning in Action: Examples

The Infant

- Communicates feelings through nonverbal cues (smiles, cries, laughs, gestures, etc.)
- With support from trusted adults, recovers from distress and calms self with familiar comfort items (sucks thumb, touches and smells a favorite blanket, etc.)
- Calms when adults provide nurturing and consistent responses to children's signals throughout the daily routine (for attention, food, diaper change, rest, etc.)
- Responds appropriately to repeated reminders and redirection

The Adult

- Establishes a trusting, caring, relationship with each child
- Provides words and positive responses to guide children's behavior
- Models how to treat people and materials gently
- Maintains consistent and individualized routines to meet the physical and emotional needs of the children
- Soothes and calms the child in response to the child's feelings and behaviors

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- A consistent daily routine designed to meet the individual needs of each child
- A safe space for exploration (low shelves, carpeted and tile areas, grass, etc.)
- Softness and harmony to promote relaxation (soft lighting, comforting music, and gentle voices, etc.)

Self Regulation

Toddlers (18 Months to 3 Years)

Widely Held Expectations

- Child expresses emotions and shows concern for others
 - Expresses emotions nonverbally, eventually developing the communication skills to express self verbally or through other alternative means
 - Shows awareness and responds appropriately to the feelings of others
 - Calms self after excitement or frustration
- Child begins to develop an understanding of boundaries and routines, and follows them when reminded
 - Responds appropriately to supportive guidance
 - Anticipates daily events in a consistent routine

Learning in Action: Examples

The Toddler

- Expresses feelings and emotions through gestures, sounds, and words
- Calms self with familiar comfort items and reminders (touches and smells a favorite blanket, looks at pictures of familiar adults, etc.)
- Begins to participate in the daily routine (assists with picking up before going outside, washes hands before meal time, etc.)
- Begins to learn behaviors to deal with aggressive feelings (uses words, finds adult, walks away, etc.)
- Carries out simple rules when stated in positive, brief statements and are reminded in advance ("We walk down the hall," "Feet on the floor," etc.)

The Adult

- Establishes trusting, caring and reassuring relationships with each child
- Assists and encourages child to use language rather than aggressive actions in their relationships with others (asks peers to share, expresses feelings, etc.)
- Remains calm and supportive during children's struggles with independence
- Coaches and reinforces positive social interaction (turn-taking, hugs, playing side by side, etc.)
- Anticipates the actions of toddlers to prevent them from getting hurt or hurting others
- Maintains consistent and individualized routines to meet the physical and emotional needs of the children
- Provides reminders of ways that children can calm themselves

THE ENVIRONMENT INCLUDES

- A consistent daily routine that allows for a variety of active and quiet times, movement, and time to explore alone or with others
- A safe space for exploration (low shelves, carpeted and tile areas, grass, etc.)
- Spaces and/or materials that allow children to calm themselves (cozy area, books, soft toys, stuffed animals, etc.)

Resources

Baby Minds: Brain Building Games Your Baby Will Love -- Linda Acredolo and Susan Goodwyn

Bright Futures in Practice: Mental Health -- Michael Jellinek

The Developing Child (10th Edition) -- Helen Bee and Denise Roberts Boyd

Magic Trees of the Mind: How to Nurture Your Child's Intelligence, Creativity, and Healthy Emotions from Birth Through Adolescence -- Marian Diamond and Janet Hopson

Me, Myself and I: How Children Build Their Sense of Self: 18 to 36 Months -- Kyle D. Pruett

Play Time/Social Time: Organizing Your Classroom to Build Interaction Skills -- Samuel L. Odom

Right from Birth: Building Your Child's Foundation For Life -- Craig T. Ramey and Sharon L. Ramey

Tender Care and Early Learning: Supporting Infants and Toddlers in Child Care Settings -- Jacalyn Post and Mary Hohmann

Touchpoints -- T. Berry Brazelton

Books for Children

Animal Kisses -- Barney Saltzberg

Baby Faces -- Roberta Grobel Intrater

The Baby's Lap Book -- Kay Chora

Be Gentle! -- Virginia Miller

The Chocolate-Covered-Cookie Tantrum -- Deborah Blumenthal

Counting Kisses -- Karen Katz

I Can -- Helen Oxenbury

"More More More" Said the Baby -- Vera B. Williams

Pat the Bunny -- Dorothy Kunhardt

Peek-A-Boo! -- Janet Ahlberg and Allan Ahlberg

You're Just What I Need -- Ruth Krauss