

A Guide for Families: Supporting Social-Emotional Development Through Play

As the caregiver of a young child, you may have heard of physical skills such as crawling and running; cognitive skills such as long-term memory and pattern recognition; and academic skills such as reading and subtraction. However, have you heard of social-emotional skills?



Social-emotional skills act as the backbone for conversations, relationships, and a person's ability to work through emotions in a healthy, productive way. To succeed in school, the workplace, and their personal lives, children need to develop social-emotional skills. Without them, children are more likely to experience difficulties maintaining relationships, self-regulating their emotions, and demonstrating self-control throughout their lifetimes.

Children's early experiences with their loved ones have a big influence on what skills they develop. Because of this, caregivers must consider what social-emotional

skills or patterns they are modeling or practicing themselves. Children develop skills and patterns based on what they were taught or exposed to in early childhood. While these patterns can change over time (in childhood and adulthood), the earlier a child practices these skills, the better.

To help caregivers better understand social-emotional development, Trying Together created this family guide. In it, Trying Together explores social-emotional skills and at-home activities caregivers can use to support their child's development.

Resources

If you are interested in learning more about social-emotional development and other early childhood topics, consider utilizing the resources listed below.

Developmentally Appropriate Parenting Series

Developmentally Appropriate Parenting⁵ is a family resource content series developed by Trying Together as an effort to empower caregivers to create high-quality experiences at the earliest stages of their child's life.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children

The **National Association for the Education of Young Children**⁶ (NAEYC) works to promote high-quality early learning for all young children, birth through age eight, by connecting early childhood practice, policy, and research. Their website includes resources on **building social-emotional skills at home**, working through **challenging behaviors**, and more.

Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative

The **Playful Pittsburgh Collaborative** is a group of organizations dedicated to advancing the importance of play in the lives of children, families, and communities in the Pittsburgh region. **Read their blog**⁷ to learn about playful activities for children of all ages.

Fred Rogers Center

The Fred Rogers Center works to extend the legacy of Fred Rogers to today's generation of children and the adults who love and care for them. Visit their website (**fredrogerscenter.org**) to access resources on simple interactions, child wellness, and digital learning.

5 tryingtogether.org/parenting-resources

6 naeyc.org

7 bit.ly/playful-blog

To learn more, visit: tryingtogether.org/parenting-resources

