

# Understanding social and emotional development from childhood to adolescence

By

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# Introduction

- Infants experience, express, and perceive emotions before they fully understand them.
- In learning to recognize, label, manage, and communicate their emotions and to perceive and attempt to understand the emotions of others, children build skills that connect them with family, peers, teachers, and the community.

# Intro. Contn'd

- These growing capacities help young children to become competent in negotiating increasingly complex social interactions, to participate effectively in relationships and group activities, and to reap the benefits of social support crucial to healthy human development and functioning.
- It is always important for children to feel secure, valued and cared about, and to develop strong social-emotional skills.

# Intro. Contn'd

- Social-emotional development includes the experience, expression, and management of emotions and the ability to establish positive and rewarding relationships with others (Cohen and others 2005).
- It encompasses both intra- and interpersonal processes.

# Intro. Contn'd

The significance of social and emotional development is seen in every area of a child's life.

- A child will have a strong foundation for later development if he or she can manage personal feelings,
- understand others' feelings and needs, and
- interact positively with others.

# Intro. Contn'd

Differences in social and emotional development result from:

- A child's inborn temperament
- Cultural influences
- Disabilities
- Behaviors modeled by adults
- The level of security felt in a child's relationships with adults
- The opportunities provided for social interaction

# Elements of Social-Emotional Development

- Social-emotional development consists of three main areas of children's self regulation which are:
  1. **Acting** (behaving in socially appropriate ways and ways that foster learning),
  2. **Feeling** (understanding others' emotions and regulation of one's own emotions) and
  3. **Thinking** (regulating attention and thoughts).

# Acting

Examples of behavioral self-regulation include:

- interacting with teachers and peers in positive ways (e.g., sharing, taking turns);
- inhibiting negative impulses (e.g., hitting, pushing, yelling);
- solving problems with increasing independence; and
- negotiating solutions to conflicts with peers.



# Feeling

Examples of emotional understanding and self-regulation include:

- accurately identifying emotions in themselves and others;
- managing strong emotions such as excitement, anger, frustration and distress; and
- being empathic and understanding others' perspectives.

# Thinking

Examples of cognitive self-regulation include:

- focusing attention on a lesson or an activity;
- screening distractions; and
- planning steps or strategies to complete a task or activity.

# Age trend (1 to 2 Years)

## Emotional:

- Shows pleasure when familiar adults are nearby.
- Knows own name.
- Is keenly observant of others' emotional reactions.
- Experiences a wide range of emotions.

## Social:

- Is aware of others.
- May make simple overtures to familiar children.
- When a conflict occurs with another child or adult, he or she often acts out physically or emotionally.
- Shows "contagious distress"

# 2 to 3 years

- Copies adults and friends
- Shows affection for friends without prompting
- Takes turns in games
- Shows concern for a crying friend
- Understands the idea of “mine” and “his” or “hers”
- Shows a wide range of emotions
- Separates easily from mom and dad
- May get upset with major changes in routine
- Dresses and undresses self



# 3 to 4 years

- Enjoys doing new things
- Plays “Mom” and “Dad”
- Is more and more creative with make-believe play
- Would rather play with other children than by himself
- Cooperates with other children
- Often can't tell what's real and what's make-believe
- Talks about what she likes and what she is interested in



# 4 to 5 years

- Wants to please friends
- Wants to be like friends
- More likely to agree with rules
- Likes to sing, dance, and act
- Is aware of gender
- Can tell what's real and what's make-believe
- Shows more independence (for example, may visit a next-door neighbor by himself [adult supervision is still needed])
- Is sometimes demanding and sometimes very cooperative



# 6 to 8 years

- Show more independence from parents and family.
- Start to think about the future.
- Understand more about his or her place in the world.
- Pay more attention to friendships and teamwork.
- Want to be liked and accepted by friends.

# 9 to 11 years

- Start to form stronger, more complex friendships and peer relationships. It becomes more emotionally important to have friends, especially of the same sex.
- Experience more peer pressure.
- Become more aware of his or her body as puberty approaches. Body image and eating problems sometimes start around this age.



# 12 to 14 years

- Show more concern about body image, looks, and clothes.
- Focus on themselves; going back and forth between high expectations and lack of confidence.
- Experience more moodiness.
- Show more interest in and influence by peer group.
- Express less affection toward parents; sometimes might seem rude or short-tempered.
- Feel stress from more challenging school work.
- Develop eating problems.
- Feel a lot of sadness or depression, which can lead to poor grades at school, alcohol or drug use, unsafe sex, and other problems.

# 15 to 17 years

- Have more interest in the opposite sex.
- Show more independence from parents.
- Have a deeper capacity for caring and sharing and for developing more intimate relationships.
- Spend less time with parents and more time with friends.
- Feel a lot of sadness or depression, which can lead to poor grades at school, alcohol or drug use, unsafe sex, and other problems.

# How to Support Positive Social and Emotional Development

- Lead by example, by modeling positive behaviors
- Be affectionate
- Be considerate of feelings, wants and needs
- Express interest in daily activities
- Respect their viewpoints
- Express pride in accomplishments
- Provide encouragement and support during times of stress