



Early Childhood Mental Health

August Newsletter

Social Skills for Young Children

Learning how to interact with other people is one of the most important things a child will learn. So how can you tell if your child is learning all that he or she needs to know? One way is by knowing *developmental milestones*.



Developmental milestones tell us when children should have learned and mastered certain skills. By knowing at what age most children learn a particular skill, you can know whether your

child is on track or needs some extra help. Remember that these skills do not just develop on their own! Children are born with the ability to eat, sleep, pee, and poop. Otherwise, they must be taught to do almost everything else! If you see any areas where you think your child may need some help, talk to your child's teacher or the mental health consultant at your center to see what you can do.

Here are some of the social skills children learn:

Babies

- Babies calm down when comforted by their parent or caretaker.
- 5 months: Babies respond to other people and begin to show facial expressions of emotion.

- 9 months: Babies are socially interactive and play simple games like patty-cake with caretakers.
- 11 months: Babies start to show separation anxiety. Babies begin to play alone.

Toddlers

- 1-2 years: Toddlers recognize self in pictures or a mirror.
- 1-2 years: Toddlers refer to themselves by their name.
- 2 years: Toddlers help to put things away.
- 2 years: Toddlers imitate motions and words.
- 2 years: Toddlers begin to play beside others and start using symbolic play (like pretending to feed a baby doll).

How Can I Work on Social Skills at Home?

There are many simple ways to work on social skills at home. The most important thing is that your child has lots of chances to be with other people, like parents, grandparents, siblings, and friends. It's hard to learn to be social if you are alone all the time!

One great way to work on social skills is to play games with your child. If your child is under 2 years old,

try games like rolling a ball back and forth, peek-a-boo, and patty-cake. If your child is over 2 years old, you could play "Ring Around the Rosey", "Duck Duck Goose", or "Follow the Leader".

These are simple ways to teach your child how to play with you. Include other children when you play if possible. For instance, if you have an older child at

home, they can join in with you.

Remember that skills like sharing toys, being a good friend, and understanding "good" and "bad" behaviors do not develop until a child is 3-5 years old. Until that time, use opportunities to teach your child about sharing, friendship, and following rules, but don't worry if they aren't getting it yet.

Behavioral & Educational Solutions, P.C.

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Book of the Month

Read to your child! Kids love hearing their parents read books. You don't have to read the exact words. Sometimes it's fun to ask your child questions about the pictures instead.

© *All By Myself* by Mercer Mayer

Songs of the Month

Ask your child to sing with you! Even young children like to "sing along" with their parents. If you don't know what song to sing, here are some ideas:

- © Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star
- © ABC's (The Alphabet Song)



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We are dedicated to delivering multi-disciplinary, culturally sensitive, systems focused on developmentally appropriate services. At Behavioral & Educational Solutions, P.C. (BES) we believe that children do not grow-up within vacuums; hence, our services are driven by the goal of establishing strong, collaborative, engaged relationships between the family, school, and other systems.

Behavioral & Educational Solutions, P.C., is an allied health/related services support company serving DC and Montgomery County. We are a fully bilingual (English/Spanish) company.



Meet Us!

Our mental health consultants have over 20 years of combined experience helping families and teachers of young children. We are available to meet with parents, observe children, and help teachers support healthy social-emotional development.

Each daycare center has its own mental health consultant. Look here to find the contact person for your child!



Andrea Howard

Centers:

- H.D. Woodson HS
- Azeeze Bates
- C.W. Harris
- Paradise



Angelina Nortey

Centers:

- Atlantic Gardens
- Frederick Douglas
- Ballou HS
- Anacostia HS
- Luke C. Moore HS
- Dunbar HS



Mawule Sevon

Centers:

- Educare
- Rosemount



Cindy Cruz

Centers:

- Edgewood
- Roosevelt
- UPO Home Visitors