



## Help Your Child Get Along With Others

Your child's social and emotional development – how your child gets along with others, handles emotions, and expresses thoughts and feelings – is one of the biggest signs of how ready he is to start school. These are all ways of building your child's social and emotional readiness for school. Every day, you as a parent can help your child grow:

### YOUR INFANT:

- Touch, hold and cuddle your baby often. Respond to your baby's cries. Feed her when she is hungry. Pick her up when she needs to be held. This teaches her that you will be there when she needs you,
- Sing to your infant. Tickle him if he likes it. Repeat the things that make him smile and laugh.
- Talk to your baby in a soothing voice. Respond to your baby's reactions.
- Hold your baby in front of a mirror and let her see herself. Let her see your face in the mirror, too, as you talk and laugh with her.

### YOUR TODDLER:

- Let your toddler put on or take off his own clothes, wash his hands, pick up toys off the floor, or do other things he can safely handle. Make a game of it at bedtime: "How fast can you...?"
- Whenever you can, give your toddler two things to choose between so that she can feel some control. For instance, instead of saying "It's time to stop playing and have your snack," you could say, "You can keep playing with your toy, or you can have a snack. Which would you like?"
- Let your toddler help you to sweep the floor, unpack groceries, or sort clothes for laundry. Praise him and let him know that his help is important.
- Include your toddler in family conversations, and in phone conversations with relatives, to help her learn how to talk with grownups.

### YOUR PRESCHOOLER:

- Be clear with your preschooler about how you expect him to behave: saying "please" and "thank you," holding an adult's hand when crossing the street, not talking to strangers, taking proper care of toys, sharing, etc.
- Give your preschooler chances to play, both alone and with others. Make arrangements for safe playtime with other children.
- Using a doll, pretend that you and your child are taking care of a baby. Say, "Oh, the baby is crying. I think we need to change baby's diaper," and show your child what to do. Or, pretend that the two of you are friends having coffee together. Set the table, sit down, and start a conversation. You can ask, "So, tell me something that made you laugh this week."

ParentTips is a monthly resource for parents with young children.  
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