Growing STRONG
Supporting social-emotional development all year long

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Resolve to
protect & support
young children

This Year, I Will:
This year, resolve to support your child’s social-emotional development every day at home. Here’s a short checklist of positive resolutions you can make:

- Take time each day to play with my child
- Use redirection techniques to address my child’s inappropriate behaviors
- Do a safety check at home to make sure it’s safe for my child
- Use more positive comments and language with my child
- Uncover the why behind my child’s negative behaviors and modify the environment to encourage positive behavior
- Establish consistent, age-appropriate mealtime and bedtime routines
- Give my child predictable limits and consequences
- Pay attention to my child’s verbal and nonverbal communication and learn the best ways to respond
- Provide my child with books, toys, and activities that match his or her developmental level

Sleep Well

Parenting can be stressful even with a full night’s rest—but when you and your child aren’t sleeping well, that stress can skyrocket. Improve your family’s sleep with these strategies:

♥ Create a schedule and stick to it. A regular schedule for going to bed and waking up in the morning is essential.

♥ Bedtime routine. Have a bedtime routine that lasts 30 minutes. This can include putting on pajamas, brushing teeth, and reading together.

♥ Restrict activities. Homework, playing, or other activities shouldn’t happen in bed. Make the bed a special place only for sleeping.

♥ Exercise. Make sure your child gets regular exercise during the day. Both of you should avoid exercise right before bed.

♥ Create a comfortable sleeping space. Reduce noise and light in bedrooms and keep them at a consistent temperature.

♥ Limit caffeine. Steer clear of caffeinated foods or drinks within 6 hours of bedtime.

Adapted from Optimistic Parenting: Hope and Help for You and Your Challenging Child, by V. Mark Durand, Ph.D., Brookes Publishing Co.
Set smart screentime limits

While technology has many benefits, it's important to avoid screentime overload, which can have a negative social-emotional impact on young children. Here are some suggestions:

♣ The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under 18 months limit screentime to video chatting only. For children 2 to 5 years, limit screentime to 1 hour a day.

♣ Schedule “real,” screen-free playtimes for your child—both for you and your child together, and with other children.

♣ Choose TV shows and tablet games for your child that show positive role models.

♣ Talk about real vs. pretend. Young children may have a hard time understanding that what they see on TV isn’t real.

♣ Show your child that you’re setting limits by turning off screens several hours before bedtime.

♣ Limit your own screen use when you’re with your child so you can give him or her your attention.

Adapted from ASQ®:SE-2 Learning Activities & More, by Elizabeth Twombly, M.S., Leslie J. Munson, Ph.D., & Lois M. Pribble, Ph.D., Brookes Publishing Co.
Support dual language learners

Teacher Tips

Here are some tips teachers can use to support social and emotional learning for dual language learners during the school day:

› Learn how to say basic feeling words in Spanish and other languages represented in your classroom

› Ask families to help translate a list of feeling words to use in the classroom

› Provide children with opportunities to practice social and emotional skills with different partners

› Learn to recognize child’s emotion cues: facial expressions and body language

› Find opportunities to model to children how to give an apology

› Use books and images of characters showing different feelings

› Maintain respect for each family’s decision of how to approach social and emotional skills

› Encourage families to share what they do at home regarding their child’s emotions

Adapted from 45 Strategies That Support Young Dual Language Learners, by Shauna L. Tominey, Ph.D., & Elisabeth C. O’Byron, Ph.D., Brookes Publishing Co.
New Social Skills Bloom and Develop

As they develop emotionally, children in the kindergarten and primary grade levels experience many emotional changes and acquire new skills. In the next couple years, the young children you care for should be learning to:

- Initiate effective social interactions with other children
- Develop friendships
- Engage socially with individuals outside the family
- Negotiate and compromise
- Be empathetic or understand the feelings of another person
- Use humor appropriately
- Learn to use new emotional words
- Develop a sense of self-control
- Learn that how something appears is not always how it is

Summertime Tips

Keep summer stress at bay by taking care of your social-emotional needs. Whether you’re a teacher or parent, these 5 self-care tips can help wash your worries away:

- **Start a summer journal.** A journal is a good place to process difficult emotions, express gratitude, and reflect on the roots of stress in your classroom.
- **Get enough sleep.** To help you drift off earlier, try cutting out late-night TV and replace it with a warm bath or a good comfort read.
- **Experience beauty.** Set aside a little time every day to focus on the beauty of the world around you. Lose yourself in a beautiful beach sunset. Notice the brilliant feathers on a bird.
- **Call a friend.** Social support lowers stress—talking to someone who loves you makes self-compassion come easier.
- **Use guided imagery.** Find a quiet space and use concrete images to let go of your burdens—for example, imagine yourself walking all your stress to a dump and tossing it in the trash.

More tips at the Brookes Inclusion Lab blog: http://bit.ly/14SelfCare

Adapted from LittleKids, Big Worries: Stress-Busting Tips for Early Childhood Classrooms, by Alice Sterling Honig, Ph D, Brookes Publishing Co.
Teaching Acceptance

Studies show that the roots of bullying start during the critical first years of attitude development. Reduce bullying by helping students respect and accept each other’s differences with these three strategies:

★ Keep it simple. Kids will have questions about people and cultures unfamiliar to them. Provide simple, age-appropriate explanations and answer questions in honest, matter-of-fact ways.

★ Highlight similarities. Increasing your students’ awareness of our common ground as humans will help them develop positive feelings about all their classmates and engage in respectful behavior.

★ Offer positive feedback and praise. If your students bring up a specific challenge, use moments like these to provide positive solutions, so children have a model to follow for future social interactions.

See these strategies in action at the Brookes Inclusion Lab blog: http://bit.ly/YCDiversity

coach kids through changes

Gentle Transitions

The end of summer and the start of a new school year can signal change—and stress—for many families. Here are six simple ways to support your young child in times of change:

☛ Prepare children for changes. Changes such as starting preschool can be stressful to young kids. Discuss the details of changes with them. Knowing what to expect will help decrease their fears.

☛ Talk to your child about feelings. Ask your child how they’re feeling. Teach emotion words such as happy, scared, mad, or worried.

☛ Keep children away from scary situations. This includes fictional scares in TV shows or video games.

☛ Be comforting. When a child is scared or worried, offer comforting words and actions. Later, when your child is calm again, talk to them about what happened.

☛ Limit talk about your own worries. When your child is near, try to be as positive as you can.

☛ Offer a mix of activities. A mix of active and quiet activities will give your child many ways to deal with stress.

Adapted from ASQ® SE-2 Learning Activities & More, by Elizabeth Twombly, M.S., Leslie J. Munson, Ph.D., & Lois M. Pribble, Ph.D., Brookes Publishing Co.
Soothing Stress

Some children experience stress when separated from their primary caregivers. Try these strategies for intervening with children who have separation anxiety:

1. **Have parents stay positive.** They might try words like: “It looks like you’re having a good time with your friends at the sensory table! I’ll see you at the playground this afternoon.” This may help make the separation a predictable, comfortable part of the child’s day.

2. **Create a nurturing environment.** If the teacher spends enjoyable time with the child, the child may learn to trust and value time with the teacher. Once the child sees school as an environment filled with loving and attentive adults, separation anxiety may ease.

3. **Incorporate the child’s preferences.** Scheduled activities can be carefully selected to incorporate a child’s preferences and interests. This may help the child become more engaged and less anxious.

Helping with Limits

Toddlers are known for testing limits—say “no,” and they’re likely to do it again just to see what will happen. Help your toddler learn limits and become more independent with these tips for everyday routines:

- **Grooming.** Allow the child to help, but finish the toothbrushing and washing so they’re done regularly and thoroughly.
- **Mealtime.** Provide choices of foods and snacks, but avoid becoming a short-order cook by limiting the number of options.
- **Shopping.** Give snacks and treats only when the child is being good—not after he or she starts crying or screaming.
- **Playtime.** For the child who refuses to clean up, choose an energetic cleanup song to make the task more enjoyable.
- **Bedtime.** Your child might start to delay bedtime by one more story, one more drink, or one more song. Put a stop to stalling by establishing set guidelines: one drink, two songs, one story.

Adapted from Early Intervention Every Day: Embedding Activities in Daily Routines for Young Children and Their Families by Merle J. Crawford, M.S., OTR/L, & Barbara Weber, M.S., CCC-SLP, Brookes Publishing Co.
Diverse Families

The family lives of diverse young children are foundational to their social-emotional development. Use culturally responsive practices to support not only each child’s social-emotional skills, but also their home culture.

- Share how you’re helping children expand their vocabulary to talk about emotions, and give families suggestions for supporting children’s ability to express emotions at home.
- Recognize that some families may not encourage children to express emotions, and that the rules families use at home may be deeply grounded in culture and tradition.
- Stress that what families do at home is important, and knowing more about what they do at home may help you support their child at school.
- Let families know that you value and respect their home culture and family rules, even when they differ from the rules at school.
- Teach families about research-based practices that work well at school, with the understanding that the tips may or may not be welcomed and incorporated into home life.
Happy Holidays

The holidays are full of joy and anticipation for most young kids...but schedule changes, stressed-out adults, and excitement overload can cause some children to act up and act out. To avert challenging behaviors in your child during the holidays—and all year round—follow these four strategies:

1. **Provide high rates of positive attention.** Praise them for being nice more than you correct them for being naughty. Try to provide attention for your child’s positive behavior at a rate of at least five times the amount of corrective feedback.

2. **Maintain a predictable daily schedule.** Children do better and have fewer challenging behaviors when the family has regular routines. Try to keep routines as consistent as possible (even during the holiday season!).

3. **Develop consistent routines within routines.** For example, family members can decide what they want to eat together, one member can set the table, another member can pour the juice, and so on.

4. **Define behavioral expectations.** Different routines may have different rules. Children need to be taught the specific boundaries of desired behavior in all routines, including playtimes, mealtime, and bedtime.

Adapted from *Prevent, Teach, Reinforce for Families: A Model of Individualized Positive Behavior Support for Home and Community*, by Glen Dunlap, Ph.D., Phillip S. Strain, Ph.D., Janice K. Lee, M.Ed, BCBA, Jaclyn D. Joseph, MSW, BCBA, Christopher Vatland, Ph.D., & Lise Fox, Ph.D., Brookes Publishing Co.
Boost social-emotional development every day!

Enhance the social-emotional development of infants and young children with this treasure trove of learning activities, handouts, and more! Specially developed to complement ASQ-SE-2, this essential resource makes it a snap to share social-emotional strategies with parents of children from birth to age 6.

In this book and CD-ROM set, you’ll get:

- **Social-emotional learning activities:** More than 90 fun, developmentally appropriate activities that promote adult–child interaction and key social-emotional skills.
- **Newsletters for parents:** These nine engaging newsletters explain important social-emotional milestones, share practical tips, and offer parents encouraging words of wisdom.
- **Topic-specific handouts:** Get one-sheets that answer parents’ urgent questions about topics important to social-emotional development: feeding, sleeping, and calming, choosing child care, establishing routines, and more.


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