



EARLY

STAGES

STRONG BEGINNINGS • BRIGHT FUTURES

SOCIAL- EMOTIONAL MILESTONES

What Does it Mean?

Social-emotional development is how a child expresses emotions, follows rules and directions, creates relationships, and builds confidence. A child's home and school environments, life experiences, and biology can affect this type of development.



Refer your child for a **free screening** to learn how to support their needs!

AGES 0-3:

Refer to Strong Start

eip.osse.dc.gov

202-727-3665

AGES 3-5:

Refer to Early Stages

www.earlystagesdc.org

202-698-8037



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

When social-emotional development is on track, children are more likely to:

- Learn better in a classroom
- Make friends with other children their age
- Develop stronger speech and problem-solving skills
- Follow rules at home and at school
- Concentrate and work through a challenge
- Have confidence to try new things

The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) lists the following milestones:

By 2 Months, Most Children...

- Calm down when spoken to or picked up
- Look at your face
- Seem happy to see you when you walk up to them
- Smile when you talk to or smile at them

By 4 Months, Most Children...

- Smile on their own to get your attention
- Chuckle (not yet a full laugh) when you try to make them laugh
- Look at you, move, or make sounds to get or keep your attention

By 6 Months, Most Children...

- Know familiar people
- Like to look at themselves in a mirror
- Laugh



By 9 Months, Most Children...

- Are shy, clingy, or fearful around strangers
- Show several facial expressions, like happy, sad, angry, and surprised
- Look when you call their name
- React when you leave (looking, reaching for you, or crying)
- Smile or laugh when you play peek-a-boo

By 1 Year, Most Children...

- Play games with you, like pat-a-cake



By 18 Months, Most Children...

- Move away from you, but look to make sure you are close by
- Point to show you something interesting
- Put hands out for you to wash them
- Look at a few pages in a book with you
- Help you dress them by pushing arm through sleeve or lifting foot

By 2 Years, Most Children...

- Notice when others are hurt or upset, like pausing or looking sad when someone is crying
- Look at your face to see how to react in a new situation

By 30 Months, Most Children...

- Play next to other children and sometimes play with them
- Show you what they can do by saying, "look at me!"
- Follow simple routines when told, like helping to pick up toys when you say, "it's clean-up time."

By 3 Years, Most Children...

- Calm down within 10 minutes after you leave them, like at a childcare drop off
- Notice other children and join them to play



By 4 Years, Most Children...

- Pretend to be something else during play (teacher, superhero, dog)
- Ask to go play with children if none are around, like "can I play with Alex?"
- Comfort others who are hurt or sad, like hugging a crying friend
- Avoid danger, like not jumping from tall heights at the playground
- Like to help
- Change behavior based on where they are (place of worship, library, playground)



By 5 Years, Most Children...

- Follow rules or take turns when playing games with other children
- Sing, dance, or act for you
- Do simple chores at home, like matching socks or clearing the table after eating