SUPPORT YOUR CHILD’S SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Your child’s social and emotional development (mental health) — how he or she manages emotions and relates to others — is as important as physical health. Social and emotional development is not as obvious as physical health, but it’s vital for future success — in school and in life.

WHY IT MATTERS

Your child’s social and emotional development affects every part of his or her life. Children who develop good social and emotional skills:

• Make and keep friends
• Understand and express emotions
• Are ready for school
• Think clearly and learn new things

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Your love and attention are as important as food and a place to live. When you play with your child and praise good behavior, you’re supporting your child’s social and emotional development — and building a foundation for a lifetime of success.

INSIDE YOU’LL LEARN ABOUT:

• Social and emotional milestones for your child
• How to support your child’s social and emotional development
• When to be concerned
• Where to go for help

HOW TO GET HELP

If you have concerns, talk to your doctor. Your pediatrician or family doctor can provide health information, developmental and medical health screenings and referrals.

OMH CUSTOMER RELATIONS: 800-597-8481

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL OMH FIELD OFFICE:

Central New York Field Office       (315) 426-3930
Hudson River Field Office         (845) 454-8229
Long Island Field Office         (631) 761-2886
NYC Field Office                 (212) 330-1650
Western New York Field Office      (716) 533-4075

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| YOUR CHILD AT HOME | • Enjoys doing things as a family  
 • Understands other people’s feelings and points of view  
 • Cooperates and is helpful  
 • Has lots of energy  
 • Has control over her behavior and negative feelings  
 • Is proud of new skills  
 • Can bounce back after failure  
 • Occasionally worries, has challenges with self-esteem and self-confidence  
 • Makes friends with other children  
 • Wants to participate in activities, such as after-school arts and sports | • Encourage your child to make friends and involve him in activities with children his age  
 • Know who your child is around and stay involved in her friendships  
 • Encourage your child and praise good behavior  
 • Be a good role model: show understanding, respect and patience  
 • Take breaks from technology to play with your child  
 • Ask how your child is feeling, such as: “You seem angry”; “Are you upset about something?”  
 • Set clear rules and limits— If you’re angry, calm down before disciplining your child  
 • Explain why helping or sharing is important  
 • Help your child solve and cope with problems | • Clings to you or wants to stay home all the time  
 • Withdraws, or acts out by hitting  
 • Has temper tantrums over little things  
 • Can’t calm herself or be soothed by you  
 • Says negative things about himself or others  
 • Often seems out of control or takes unsafe risks  
 • Cries or laughs excessively or engages in other extreme behavior  
 • Thinks only of herself; can’t tell how her actions make others feel  
 • Witnessed violence or had a traumatic experience |
| YOUR CHILD AT SCHOOL | • Is included in group activities  
 • Follows rules and routines  
 • Gets along with the teacher  
 • Makes new friends and spends time with other children after school  
 • Solves simple problems, such as sharpening a pencil when it breaks  
 • Expresses many feelings  
 • Seeks praise, wants to be best and first  
 • Takes reasonable risks, such as speaking in front of the class | • Get to know your child’s teacher  
 • Listen and talk to your child about school  
 • Ask about the best and worst parts of your child’s school day  
 • Talk to your child about classmates and friends  
 • Get to know parents of your child’s classmates  
 • Volunteer at your child’s school  
 • Get involved in your child’s activities  
 • Encourage creativity by involving your child in art, music, writing or games | • Acts out in class  
 • Refuses to go to school  
 • Is worried about failing or making mistakes  
 • Feels left out or rejected  
 • Doesn’t listen to directions or does the opposite of what the teacher asks  
 • Is overly nervous or shy  
 • Is aggressive or bullies others  
 • Gives in to peer pressure to do things he wouldn’t do on his own  
 • Won’t share or take turns  
 • Doesn’t have friends |

YOUR CHILD DEPENDS ON YOU
It is important to take care of yourself, too. Talk to your doctor if you:
• Feel tired, depressed, worried or overwhelmed, and these feelings don’t go away  
• Don’t enjoy spending time with your child  
• Are having a hard time with your own emotions and relationships  
• Witnessed violence or had a traumatic experience