

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In Montana, we want what's best for our kids. We want them to be confident, respectful, and make healthy choices. Developing social and emotional skills are essential for their success. Social and emotional development can be defined as how people learn skills to understand and manage how they act, how they relate to others, and how they make responsible choices. Social and emotional development is a lifelong process. It starts at birth and continues throughout adulthood.

Here is a quick reminder about ways to develop social and emotional skills with your child.

Visit ParentingMontana.org to learn about tools that develop social and emotional skills while addressing issues like chores, stress, peer pressure, homework, and family rules and expectations for children at every age.

Help your child build skills to understand and manage themselves by teaching them to:

- Identify emotions
- Recognize strengths
- Control impulses
- Manage stress
- Be self-disciplined

Help your child build skills to relate to others by teaching them to:

- Empathize
- Respect others
- Communicate
- Demonstrate teamwork

Help your child build skills in making responsible choices by teaching them to:

- Problem solve
- Think through consequences
- Make ethical decisions
- Reflect on decisions



Social and emotional skills can be taught and practiced in everyday interactions and situations.

Recognize cues (facial expressions, movements, and sounds) and respond

- *"You are rubbing your eyes and yawning. It makes me think you might be tired. Lets cuddle for a minute and then take a nap."*
- *"You seem really upset about this. Are you feeling sad?"*

Notice and name the skill you want to develop

- *"Great problem solving!"*
- *"I just noticed that you paused and reflected for a second before you responded to your brother."*

Ask your child to name the skill

- *"Your sister just did something different, what did you notice her do?"*
- *"You used a great skill right now, what did you notice you did?"*
- *"That conversation went really well, why do you think that is?"*

Model the skills

- *"I am going to step back and take a minute to think this through."*
- *"I can only imagine how upset you are right now, so I am just going to listen to you, so I hear you fully."*

Focus on decision making

- *"Why did you make that decision?"*
- *"What did you consider when you made that decision?"*
- *"What were some of the consequences you thought about when you made that decision?"*

Practice

- *"It sounds like you have some ideas about how to respond to your friend. Try it with me, and I will pretend I am your friend. What specifically would you say?"*
- *"Let's redo that conversation and try it a little differently."*

**ParentingMontana.org has information
and tools for parents of
children at every age.**