



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

WHEN TO BE CONCERNED

- Changes in behavior or mood— restlessness, nervousness, paranoia, irritability, defensiveness, or lack of interest in appearance or activities.
- Changes in friends— switching friends and being reluctant to introduce you to new friends.
- Problems at school or at home— poor attendance, drop in grades, or rebelling against rules.
- Changes in sleep or appetite.

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



Promoting Your Child's Social and Emotional Development

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF TEN TO TWELVE YEAR-OLDS



**BUILDING HEALTHY FOUNDATIONS
FOR A LIFETIME OF SUCCESS**

10 TO 12 YEAR-OLDS	EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL	THINKING AND LEARNING
WHAT TO EXPECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start to form stronger, more complex friendships and peer relationships—it is more emotionally important to have friends, especially of the same sex • Experience more peer pressure • Become more aware of his/her body as puberty approaches—body image and eating problems sometimes start around this age 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face more academic challenges at school • Become more independent from the family • Begin to see the point of view of others more clearly • Have an increased attention span
WHAT YOU CAN DO: POSITIVE PARENTING TIPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend time with your child—talk with her about her friends, accomplishments and possible challenges she will face • Be involved with your child’s school—attend school events; meet teachers • Encourage your child to join school and community groups such as: sports, clubs or volunteer groups • Help your child develop his own sense of right and wrong—talk with him about risky things friends might pressure him to do, like smoking or dangerous physical dares • Help your child develop a sense of responsibility—involve your child in household tasks like cleaning and cooking; talk with your child about saving and spending money wisely • Talk with your child about respecting others, encourage her to help people in need, talk with her about what to do when others are not kind or are disrespectful • Help your child set his own goals—encourage him to think about skills and abilities he would like to have and about how to develop them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make clear rules and stick to them: talk with your child about what you expect from her (behavior) when no adults are present; provide reasons for rules—it will help her to know what to do in most situations • Use discipline to guide and protect your child, instead of punishment to make him feel badly about himself • When using praise, help your child think about her own accomplishments—saying “you must be proud of yourself” rather than simply “I’m proud of you” can encourage your child to make good choices when nobody is around to praise her • Talk with your child about the normal physical and emotional changes of puberty • Encourage your child to read every day—talk with him about his homework • Be affectionate and honest with your child, and do things together as a family • Meet the families of your child’s friends
HOW TO STAY HEALTHY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect your child in the car—the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recommends that you keep your child in a booster seat until she is big enough to fit in a seat belt properly; your child should still ride in the back seat until she is 12 years of age because it’s safer there; motor vehicle crashes are the most common cause of death from unintentional injury among children of this age • Know where your child is and whether a responsible adult is present—make plans with your child for when he will call you, where you can find him, and what time you expect him home • Make sure your child wears a helmet when riding a bike or a skateboard or using skates; riding on a motorcycle, snowmobile, or all-terrain vehicle; or playing contact sports • Many children get home from school before their parents get home from work—it is important to have clear rules and plans for your child when she is home alone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide plenty of fruits and vegetables—limit foods high in solid fats, added sugars, or salt, and prepare healthier foods for family meals • Keep televisions and computers out of your child’s bedroom—limit screen time, including recreational use of computers, phones, tablets and video games, to no more than 1 to 2 hours • Encourage your child to participate in an hour a day of physical activities that are age appropriate and enjoyable and that offer variety—make sure your child is doing three types of activity: aerobic activity like running, muscle strengthening like climbing, and bone strengthening (like jumping rope) at least three days per week • Children today are exposed, through the media and their peers, to many issues dealing with violence, sexuality, and substance abuse—discuss these issues openly with your children to share concerns or correct misconceptions; set limits to ensure children will be exposed to certain issues only when they are ready

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

