Oregon Early Childhood Foundations
Ages Three to Five

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Early Childhood Foundation Areas:
- Self Concept
- Self Control
- Cooperation
- Social Relationships
- Knowledge of Families and Communities

Overview
One of the essential goals of quality early education and child care programs is to promote the healthy social and emotional development of young children. Current research on brain development encourages careful attention to social/emotional development and well-being of our children. Dr. Stanley Greenspan, in his book, *Growth of the Mind*, states: “In recent years, through our research and that of others, we have found unexpected common origins for the mind’s highest capacities: intelligence, morality, and sense of self. We have charted critical stages in the mind’s early growth, most of which occur even before our first thoughts are registered. At each stage certain critical experiences are necessary. Contrary to traditional thinking, however, these experiences are not cognitive but occur through a series of subtle emotional exchanges. In fact emotions, not cognitive stimulation, serve as the mind’s primary architect.”

Children and their learning are dependent upon strong positive, secure relationships with adults and peers. Children are observers of their world, learning as they play and interact with their environment and others (Vygotsky). Children’s natural curiosity about themselves and others helps to define their personal identity and acceptance of others. Children who learn and play with others in a caring community of parents, extended family, caregivers, community organizations and schools learn self control, respect and how to be cooperative.

When children participate in learning environments and with adults and peers who are positive and supportive of their development they acquire a positive self concept and discover how to interact well with others. A cooperative learning environment enables children to learn and negotiate rules and consequences, responsibilities and challenges, empathy, equality and fairness. Social/Emotional health helps ensure each child can reach their individual potential and become successful future students in the public school system and ultimately productive citizens of society.

*Oregon K-12 Standard:* There are no Oregon Standards for this Foundation Area.
*Head Start Child Outcome Framework:* Social Emotional Development
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Early Childhood Foundation: Self Concept
Children express awareness of self by:
- Developing independence and confidence
- Identifying common features such as name, age, gender, family etc.
- Initiating and maintaining play with others

Indicators: Observable Behaviors
The Child
- Is willing to try new things (play dough, finger painting, cooking, etc.).
- Willing to stay with a task for a meaningful period of time.
- Expresses confidence and pride in accomplishments.
- Demonstrates independence in a range of activities, routines and tasks.
- Initiates play and work activities with others.
- Expresses awareness of self in terms of specific abilities, characteristics and preferences (“I am taller than this rock!”).

The Adult
- Provides time and space for children to experience with their developing competence and independence during play and other routines.
- Supports children’s developing knowledge of their gender and culture.
- Demonstrates self confidence and positive relationships in interactions with children and adults.
- Encourages children to help each other and/or engage in cooperative play.

Supportive Learning Environments Include
- Play spaces and materials that encourage exploration and experimentation.
- Play opportunities that allow interactions with other children.
- Exposure to materials/food/events that encourage children to learn about their own culture and the culture of others.
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Early Childhood Foundation: Self Control
Children demonstrate self control or self regulation by:
- Expressing feelings
- Responding to words and feelings in the context they were shared
- Following simple rules and participating in routines

Indicators: Observable Behaviors
The Child
- Uses words to express feelings ("I don’t like…," or "I’m happy!").
- Manages feelings and is able to calm self.
- Follows simple rules and participates in routines (waits in line).
- Successfully completes transitions (moves from play to clean up; leaves toys when asked to come for a ride within normal time expected).
- Develops understanding of how his/her actions affect others.
- Attempts to resolve conflicts by using a variety of strategies other than aggression.

The Adult
- Models how to share feelings and helps children recognize and understand their own feelings.
- Helps children find appropriate ways to express needs and wants.
- Gives children positive feedback when self control occurs.
- Establishes classroom rules and routines.
- Maintains consistency in expectations and daily schedules.

Supportive Learning Environments Include
- Clearly stated and age-appropriate rules that provide positive guidance.
- Scheduled times for lunch, bath, quiet time, play time.
- Space and materials that support and encourage individual and cooperative play (blocks, sand areas, backyard play equipment).
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Early Childhood Foundation: Cooperation
Children build and sustain cooperative relationships by:
- Playing, working and cooperating with adults
- Playing, working and cooperating with peers
- Using problem solving skills with peers and adults

Indicators: Observable Behaviors
The Child
- Interacts with others and actively participates by taking turns, sharing materials and interacting positively.
- Works in small and large group settings with adult support.
- Enters a group and plays cooperatively.
- Accepts guidance and direction from adults in the environment.
- Uses compromise and discussion while working, planning, playing and resolving conflicts with peers.

The Adult
- Asks open-ended questions to encourage discussion and understanding (“What do you think will happen next?”, “Why do you think Jacob made that choice?”, “How did he get under there?”, etc.).
- Encourages children to help each other and plan together.
- Ensures opportunities for children to work together with others where each child has responsibility and specific “things to do”.

Supportive Learning Environments Include
- Materials and equipment that provide children opportunities to take turns and have conversations and discussions with peers and adults.
- Opportunities for children to participate in projects with others.
- Clear guidelines and modeling of expectations and rules for working together.
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Early Childhood Foundation: Social Relationships
Children build social relationships by:

- Demonstrating empathy (awareness of others feelings)
- Cooperating with others
- Interacting with peers and adults

Indicators: Observable Behaviors

The Child

- Communicates with a range of familiar adults; responds to and initiates conversation.
- Initiates, engages and sustains peer interactions; shares toys and materials during play.
- Builds a relationship with at least one other child; shows loyalty to a friend.
- Develops friendships with peers.

The Adult

- Models “awareness” of feelings, ideas and actions of others (“DeMauri, helped Toi when she fell down,”; “Brogen looks happy today.”).
- Creates opportunities for children to talk with and listen to others.
- Provides support to help children build relationships with peers and adults during play and daily routines.
- Recognizes and positively labels cooperative behavior in real situations as they occur.

Supportive Learning Environments Include

- A variety of play settings where children can interact together.
- Time and spaces for children to constructively and appropriately express and physically work off energy and possible frustrations.
- Space for quiet, private time.
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Early Childhood Foundation: Knowledge of Families, Community and Diversity
Children show knowledge of family and community by:

- Recognizing familiar locations
- Describing the roles and relationships in families
- Understanding similarities and differences among families and communities (Joseph says hello in some other language).

Indicators: Observable Behaviors

The Child
- Understands assigned family roles and tasks.
- Identifies other people in their roles and what they do (policeman).
- Identifies his/her personal characteristics including name, age and gender.
- Recognizes familiar places in the environment (home, school, parks, stores, restaurants, etc.).
- Describes similarities and differences among families and communities (Joseph says hello in some other language).

The Adult
- Helps children recognize, describe and appreciate their own unique characteristics and those of others.
- Encourages family and community members to interact with the children and talk about what they do.
- Invites family and community members to share cultural traditions, food, games, etc.
- Arranges for visits to essential community locations within the community (hospital, fire station).

Supportive Learning Environments Include
- Opportunities for children to “experience” multiple roles and career possibilities in dramatic play or reading.
- A variety of opportunities for children to learn about “their world” (their families, school and community).
Resources

Building Moral Intelligence; Michelle Borba

Caring Classrooms/Intelligent Schools" The Social Emotional Education of Young Children; Jonathen Coher

Easy to Love, Difficult to Discipline; Becky A. Bailey

The Emotional Development of Young Children; Marilou Hyson

First STEP to Success (Preschool Edition); Hill Walker

Fostering Children’s Social Competence: The Teacher’s Role; Lillian G. Katz and Diane McClellan

Managing it Better: Activities for Children Living in a Stressful World; Barbara Oehlberg

Magic trees of the Mind: How to Nurture your Child’s Creativity, Intelligence, Creativity, and Healthy Emotions; Marian Diamond

The Power of Guidance: Teaching Social-Emotional Skills in Early Childhood Classrooms; Dan Gartrell

Promoting Social and Moral Development of Young Children: Creative Approaches for the Classroom; Carolyn P. Edwards

Raising Self Reliant Children in a Self-Indulgent World: Seven Building Blocks for Developing Capable Young People; H. Stephen Glenn and Jane Nelsen

Teaching Children to Care: An Empathy Curriculum for Preschooler; Nancy Mullin-Rindler and Maureen Crowley

Books for Children

- Abuela; Arthur Dorros
- Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good Very Bad Day; Judith Viorst
- Amazing Grace; Mary Hoffman and Caroline Binch
- Friends; Hime
- Love You Forever; Robert N. Munsch
- Mama Do You Love Me; Barbara M. Joosse
- Stellaluna; Janell Cannon
- Tacky the Penquin; Helen Lester
- Whoever You Are; Mem Fox
- Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge; Mem Fox