Raising Happy Kids

Social & Emotional Development

Even though they are different, we often speak about emotional and social development together. Development of emotions occurs mainly **through** social experiences. It's through relationships- social experiences with caregivers and other people- that the child acquires emotional understanding. Through social experiences, a child learns how to use their emotions and experiences in different contexts.

Effective social experiences require awareness and control of their emotional expression, for example, a child's ability to wait for a toy while another child is playing with the toy! However, an **emotion** is a strong feeling such as love, fear, or anger, an instinctive or intuitive feeling as distinguished from reasoning or knowledge

What affects social development
- Temperament
- Attachment type
- Experiences in the environment
- Relationships
- Culture

There are 8 primary emotions: joy, anticipation, anger, disgust, sadness, surprise, fear and trust.

Social Milestones
Birth to 1 year
- Birth
- Read and respond to adult cues and signals
- Use simple gestures to start or reciprocate interactions
- Seek and develop relationships with one adult
- Demonstrate interest in others
- Influence the reactions and behaviours of others

1 to 2 years
- Engage with others through complex back-and-forth interactions
- Begin to take turns with support from adults
- May exhibit antisocial behaviour
- Begin to move from parallel to more interactive play as the child nears 24 months.

2 to 3 years
- Become more aware of gender differences
- Enjoy wider range of relationships; eager to meet new people
- Able to work cooperatively with peers
- Communicate about experiences and other's thoughts and feelings
- Share their own ideas
- Share and exchange materials and objects with others

3 to 5 years
- Become more aware of gender differences
- Enjoy a wider range of relationships; eager to meet new people
- Able to work cooperatively with peers
- Communicate about experiences and other's thoughts and feelings
- Share their own ideas
- Share and exchange materials and objects with others

Emotional Milestones

Birth to 1 year
- Show awareness of signals from caregivers
- Shows some control over display of emotions
- Begin expressing their needs

1 to 3 years
- Expressing a variety of emotions and notices emotions in self
- Begins to self-regulate when experiencing big emotions
- Begins social referencing

3 to 6 Years
- Tantrums decrease - experience guilt feelings for 'losing control'.
- Language/cognitive processing skills give more skills to self-regulate
- Social expectations help with self-regulation
- Emotions become 'socialised' and can be faked.

Summary
- Closely related to emotional development
- Contributes to healthy emotional development
- Relies on secure attachment
- Milestones help us observe and support the child.
- Offer a nurturing environment and be responsive to a child's needs
- Help a child understand their feelings, show them you have confidence that they can cope.
- Help a child see other points of view, which encourages empathy.
- Help a child express their feelings in age-appropriate ways.
- Demonstrate supportive and reliable relationships
- Offer opportunities to practice their developing skills in emotion regulation
- Remove obstacles by supporting, communicating, and accepting differences in feelings and expression.
- Learn how to be comfortable in creating a safe space for toddlers to express big emotions.