



**EARLY
CHILDHOOD
SERVICES**

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants
Montgomery County Health & Human Services

Understanding Social-Emotional Development

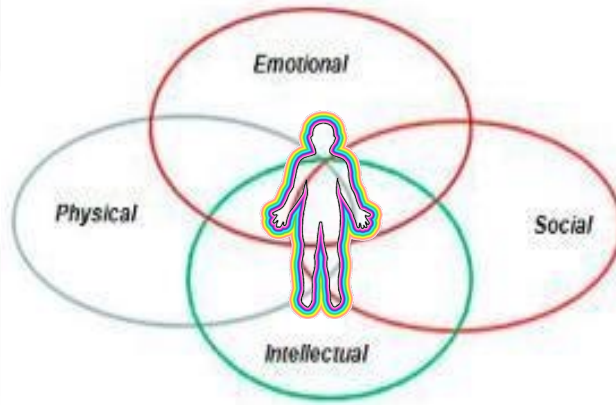
Agenda

- » **Learn** about social-emotional development as it pertains to mental health and Kindergarten readiness.
- » **Understand** the how to observe, track and foster your child's social-emotional milestones.
- » **Gain** valuable information on resources to help your child if there is a developmental concern.



What is Mental Health?

- Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being.
- It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.
- Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.



- When your child is sick, you take them to the doctor.
- When your child has social-emotional needs, you enlist the help of a mental health professional.

Healthy body + healthy mind = total health



What is Early Childhood Mental Health?

Early childhood mental health has been defined as a young child's ability to experience, regulate and express emotions; form close and secure interpersonal relationships; and explore the environment and learn all in the context of family, community and cultural expectations for young children.





A Strong social-emotional Foundation

lasts a lifetime



Success now and in the future!



What is Social-Emotional Development?

A child's capacity to:

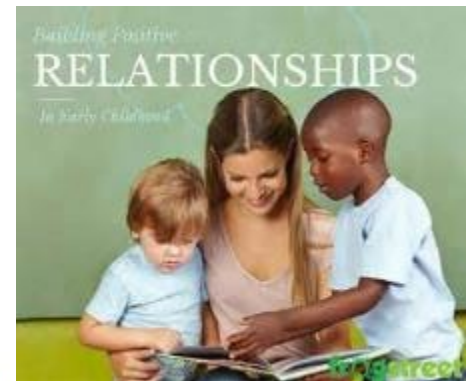


Social-emotional development occurs within the context of a child's family, community and culture. The foundation for social-emotional development is typically formed between birth and 5 years old.



Form Secure Relationships

Social Competence defines your child's ability to develop and maintain trusting bonds with familiar people in their lives such as parents, relatives and other nurturing caregivers.



Fostering Your Child's *Attachment and Relationships*

Attachment/relationships are the caring connections between a child and the important people in his/her life.

If Now...	Then Forever...
<p>Your child usually says good-bye without getting upset when you drop him off at preschool.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “See you later, Dad.”	<p>He'll enjoy and value the time he spends alone or with friends.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “I'm going over to Adam's house to work on our homework.”
<p>Your child enjoys being around other children and adults.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Can Tamika come over to our house?”	<p>She'll make and keep friends over a long period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Can you believe we have been friends for 15 years?”
<p>Your child enjoys the company of others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Lee and Ashton and Sara played tag with me today.”	<p>He'll get along well with coworkers and supervisors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Would you like to work together on that project?”
<p>Your child lets you know he needs help when something is difficult.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “I can't get this toy to work; can you help me?”	<p>She'll know it is okay to ask for help, and she'll offer to help others as well.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Ms. Johnson, can I help you with those packages?”

Strategies to Help Support Attachment/Relationships

- Hug and cuddle together.
- Respond when your child wants to talk and play with you.
- Use your child's name often.
- Create special hello and goodbye routines.
- Show your child how to make friends and help your child make and keep friends.
- Talk with your child about things he/she does well.



Experience & Regulate Emotions

Emotional Competence defines your child's ability to effectively regulate emotion's and accomplish one's goals.



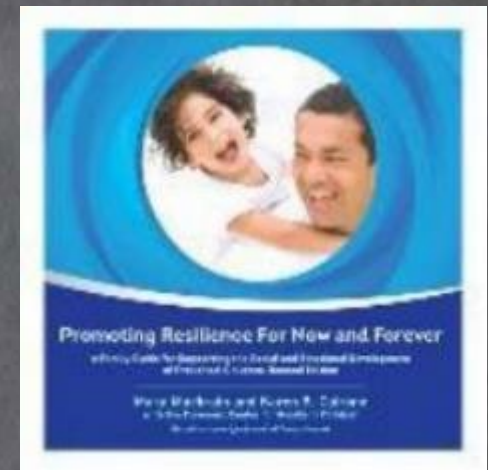
Fostering Your Child's *Self-Regulation*

Self-regulation is a child's ability to show various feelings and be able to cope with the feelings in ways that do not hurt others.

If Now...	Then Forever...
<p>He tells others how he feels, rather than act out in anger.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "I don't like it when you say that."	<p>He'll respect and talk about his concerns with others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Mr. Johnson, can I talk with you about my test score?"
<p>She stays calm when frustrated by a toy, activity, or experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "These berries are too sour for me. May I please have a banana?"	<p>She'll adapt to changes in her life and cope well with difficult situations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "It took a while, but now I am used to my new job."
<p>He gets along with other children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "This game is fun!"	<p>He'll contribute to group activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "We can work on the science project at my house."
<p>She finds something else to do when you are busy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "I'll set up the dolls for us."	<p>She'll find another option when her first choice isn't available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Since Mrs. Garcia can't help me with my homework question, I will ask my brother for help."

Strategies to Support Self-Regulation

- Help your child learn to calm down when frustrated.
- Wait until your child is calm to talk about a situation.
- Name and discuss your feelings, as well as your child's.
- Practice taking turns.
- Offer different choices.
- Have simple rules and be consistent.
- Let your child know that all feelings are okay.
- Use warnings to help your child get ready for change.
- Explain what to do (tell your child what to do, rather than what not to do).



**Actively
Explore
and Learn**

Encouraging the important work of exploring the world while continuing to be a responsive and consistent presence provides your child with a sense of safety and trust, while increasing their understanding of self and the environment.



Fostering Your Child's *Initiative*

Initiative is when children have the ability to think, plan, and do things on their own.

If Now...	Then Forever...
<p>She tries different ways to solve a problem- her own with other children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “That didn’t work. Maybe we could try to...”	<p>She’ll look for new ways to solve problems and complete daily tasks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “I’ve got a plan for getting us out of the house on time each morning.”
<p>He chooses to do something challenging.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Can I try the new puzzle.”	<p>He’ll explore new interests, hobbies, and skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Join the softball team at work? I haven’t played before; but sure, I’ll try!”
<p>She looks forward to events that will happen in the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Next week we’re going to my cousin’s house.”	<p>She’ll plan for the future- for herself and for her family.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Every month I put money in Sara’s college fund.”
<p>He invites other children to play.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Want to ride bikes?”	<p>He’ll organize a club at school or take on a special project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Can you help with the park cleanup next weekend?”

Strategies to Support Initiative

- Get involved in your child's play.
- Let your child teach you how to do something.
- Encourage your child's interests.
- Involve your child in doing simple daily tasks.
- Provide help if needed as your child learns something new.
- Talk out loud as you help your child to solve a problem.



Kindergarten Readiness

- Much more than academic readiness.
- Need a solid social-emotional skill set to be successful in Kindergarten (and beyond).
- Ability to handle rigorous curriculum.
- Strong social-emotional skills help children flourish in school, both academically and socially.

Key Social Emotional Skills Children Need as They Enter School

- Confidence
- Capacity to develop good relationships with peers and adults
- Concentration and persistence on challenging tasks
- Ability to effectively communicate emotions
- Ability to listen to instructions and be attentive
- Ability to solve social problems

What do children do when they don't have each of these skills?


gearing up for
Kindergarten





- Remember, academic skills are taught in Kindergarten, but social-emotional skills are not.
- Children are expected to have basic social skills in place when they enter Kindergarten.
- Social skills are taught through play and interaction with other children and adults.
- YOU are your child's first teacher!



When children do not have these skills, they often exhibit challenging behaviors.

We must focus on TEACHING the skills!

0-5 is the time for children to learn social-emotional skills.

Things you can do to help foster your child's social-emotional health and development



- ❖ Lead by example- modeling positive behaviors (both verbal and non-verbal) that support healthy, positive connections.
- ❖ Be considerate of your child's feelings, wants, and needs.
- ❖ Respect your child's viewpoints- be sure to listen to him/her.
- ❖ Express pride in your child's accomplishments- offer lots of praise.
- ❖ Provide your child encouragement and support during times of stress.
- ❖ Express interest in and be involved in your child's daily activities.
- ❖ Create and use routines across all settings.
- ❖ Offer choices when having to do tasks. Be sure that choices are simple, reasonable, positive, and available.

Remember, *you* are your child's first teacher!

Things you can do to help foster your child's social-emotional health and development



- ❖ Engage in child-centered play with your child.
- ❖ Set up time for your child to play with other children outside of preschool/childcare.
- ❖ Go to: www.cdc.gov/actearly where you will find information on how to help your child learn and grow depending on what age your child is.
- ❖ Within the CDC's milestone tracker, there are suggestions, as well as videos, to show you what to do with your child depending on your child's age.
- ❖ Go to: www.ecmhc.org/materials_families.html
This is the Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation. Here you will find tools and resources to help you build a positive relationship with your child.

Remember, *you* are your child's first teacher!

Growth & Development

Kids develop skills in five main areas:

- 1. Cognitive (or thinking) skills:** This is the ability to think, learn and solve problems. In babies, this looks like curiosity. It's how your child explores the world around him with his eyes, ears and hands. In toddlers, it also includes things like learning to count, naming colors and learning new words.
- 2. Social and emotional skills:** This is the ability to relate to other people. That includes being able to express and control emotions. In babies, it means smiling at others and making sounds to communicate. In toddlers and preschoolers, it means being able to ask for help, show and express feelings, and get along with others.
- 3. Speech and language skills:** This is the ability to use and understand language. For babies, this includes cooing and babbling. In older children, it includes understanding what's said and using words correctly and in ways that others can understand.
- 4. Fine and gross motor skills:** This is the ability to use small muscles (fine motor), particularly in the hands, and large muscles (gross motor) in the body. Babies use fine motor skills to grasp objects. Toddlers and preschoolers use them to do things like hold utensils, work with objects and draw. Babies use gross motor skills to sit up, roll over and begin to walk. Older children use them to do things like jump, run and climb stairs.
- 5. Activities of daily living:** This is the ability to handle everyday tasks. For children, that includes eating, dressing and bathing themselves.

According to the CDC and the US Dept. of Education, all young children need *both* developmental monitoring and developmental screening.

Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive! (From the US Dept. of Ed.)

Birth to 5: Watch Me Thrive! encourages healthy child development, universal developmental and behavioral screening for young children, and support for the families and providers who care for them.

Developmental Screening Goals:

- **Celebrate Milestones.**
Every family looks forward to seeing a child's first smile, first step, and first words. Regular screenings with early childhood professionals help raise awareness of a child's development, making it easier to celebrate developmental milestones.
- **Promote Universal Screening.**
All children need support in the early years to stay healthy and happy. Just like hearing and vision screenings assure that children can hear and see clearly, developmental and behavioral screenings assure that children are making developmental progress, in areas such as language, social, or motor development.
- **Identify Possible Delays and Challenges Early.**
With regular screenings, families, teachers, and other professionals can assure that young children get the services and supports they need as early as possible to help them thrive.
- **Enhance Developmental Supports.**
Families are children's first and most important teachers. Tools, guidance, and tips recommended by experts, can help families support their children's development.

- Use a developmental milestone checklist to track your child's development.
- Check off the milestones your child has reached, as well as your concerns.

**App search: CDC's
Milestone Tracker**



The most comprehensive milestone tracker available.

CDC Milestone Tracker App



Social-Emotional Developmental Milestones and Areas of Concern

- **Milestones are things most children can do by a certain age.**
- **Children reach milestones in how they play, learn, speak and act.**
- **All children develop at their own pace, however, most children reach milestones around the same age.**

Child's Age

Social-Emotional Milestone

Area of Concern

**48 months/
4 years old**

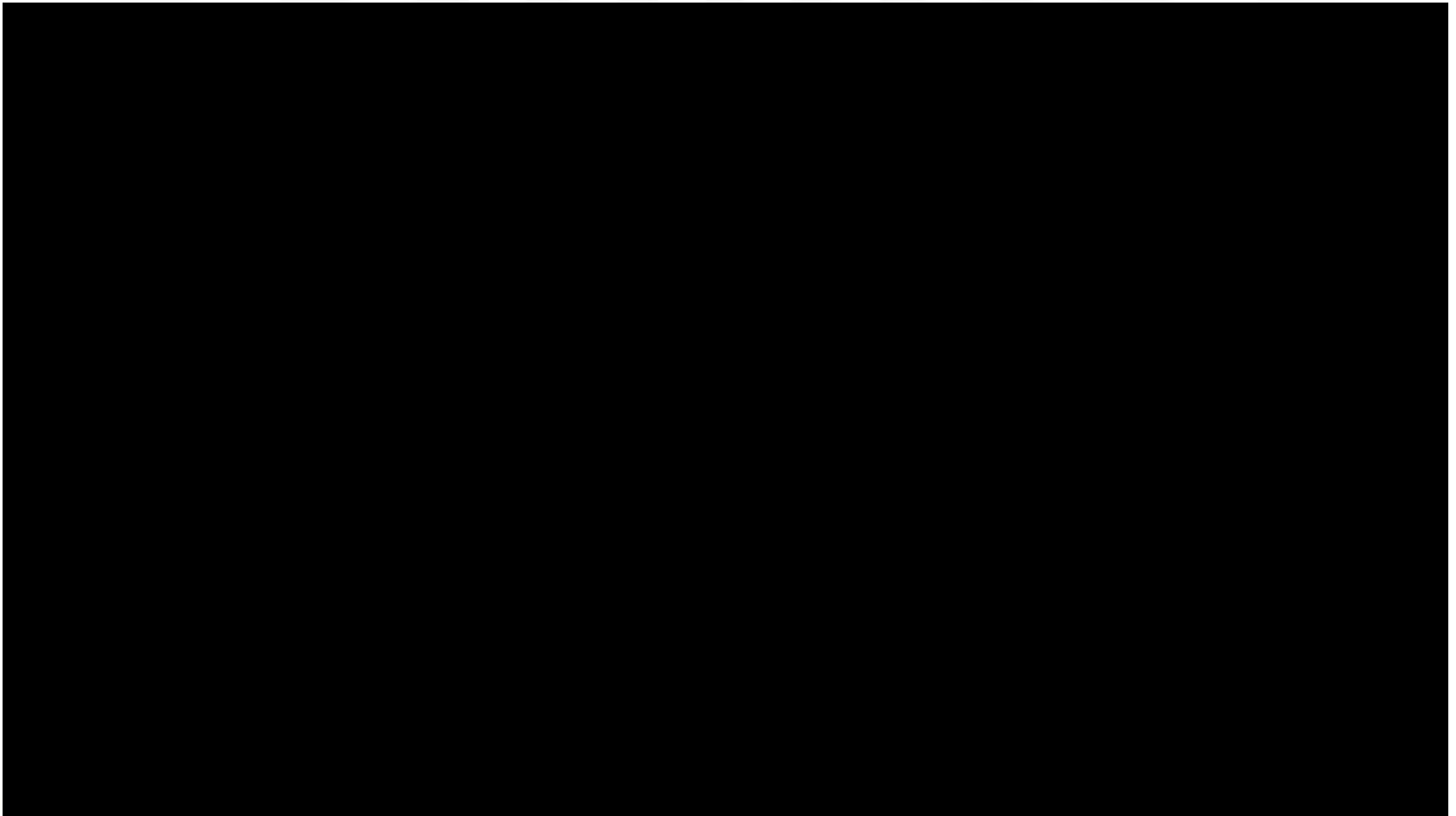
- **Enjoys doing new things.**
- **Plays “Mom” and “Dad”.**
- **Is more and more creative with make-believe play.**
- **Would rather play with other children than by himself.**
- **Cooperates with other children.**
- **Often can't tell what's real and what's make-believe.**
- **Talks about likes and interests.**

- **Shows no interest in interactive games or make-believe.**
- **Ignores other children or doesn't respond to people outside the family.**
- **Can't retell a favorite story.**
- **Doesn't use “me” and “you” correctly.**
- **Loses prior skills.**

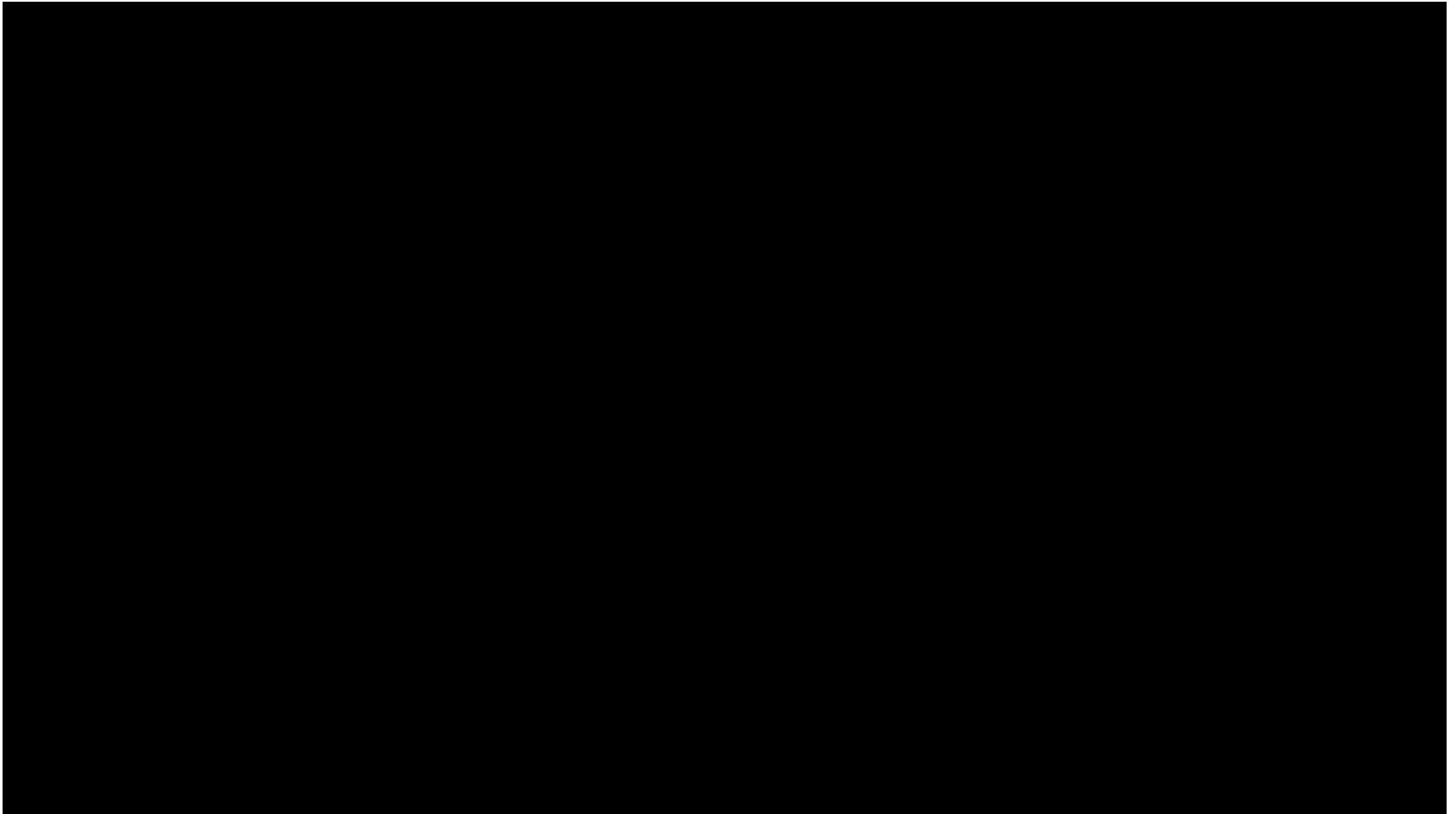


<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html>

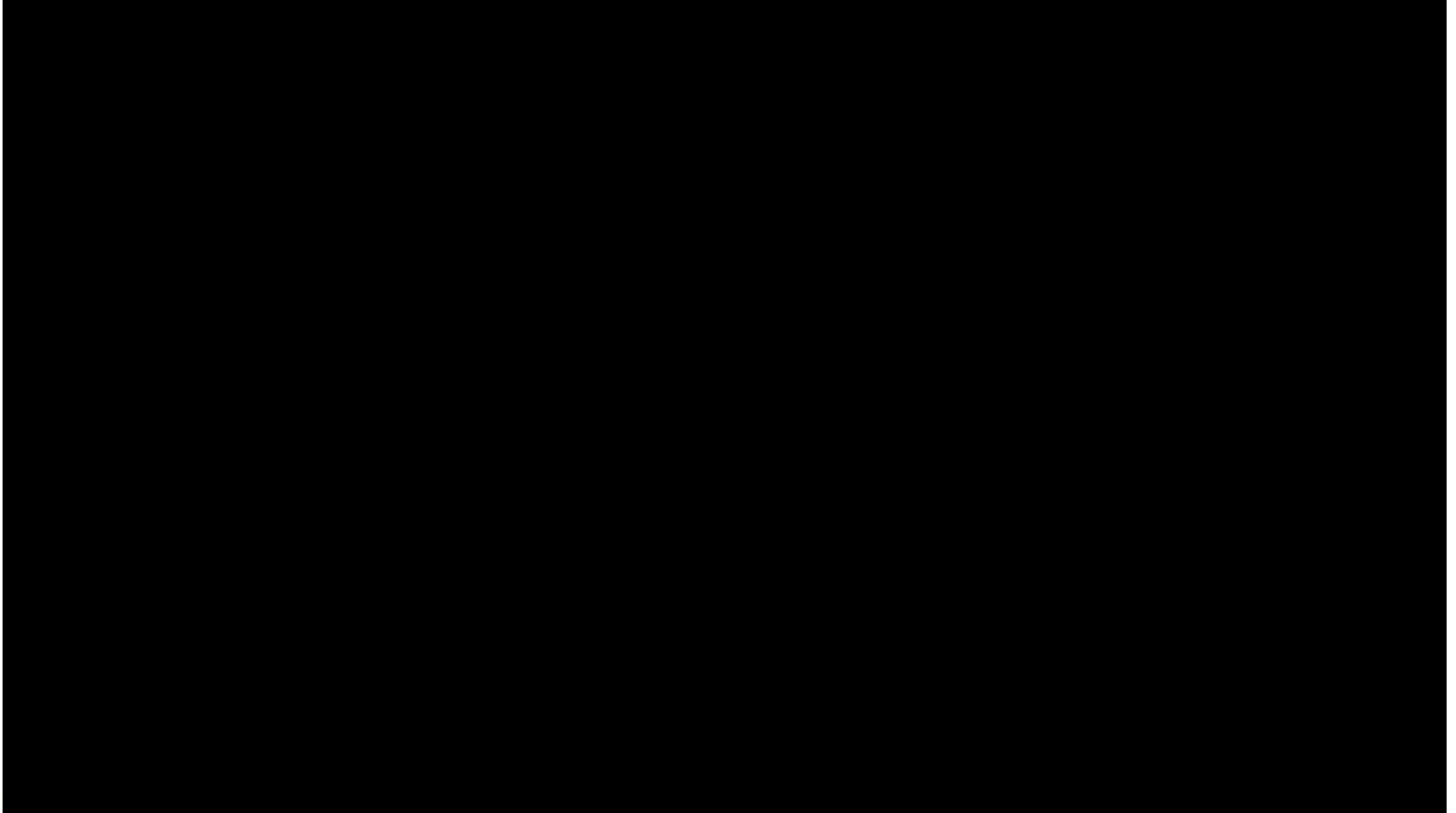
**4 year olds would rather play with
others than by themselves**



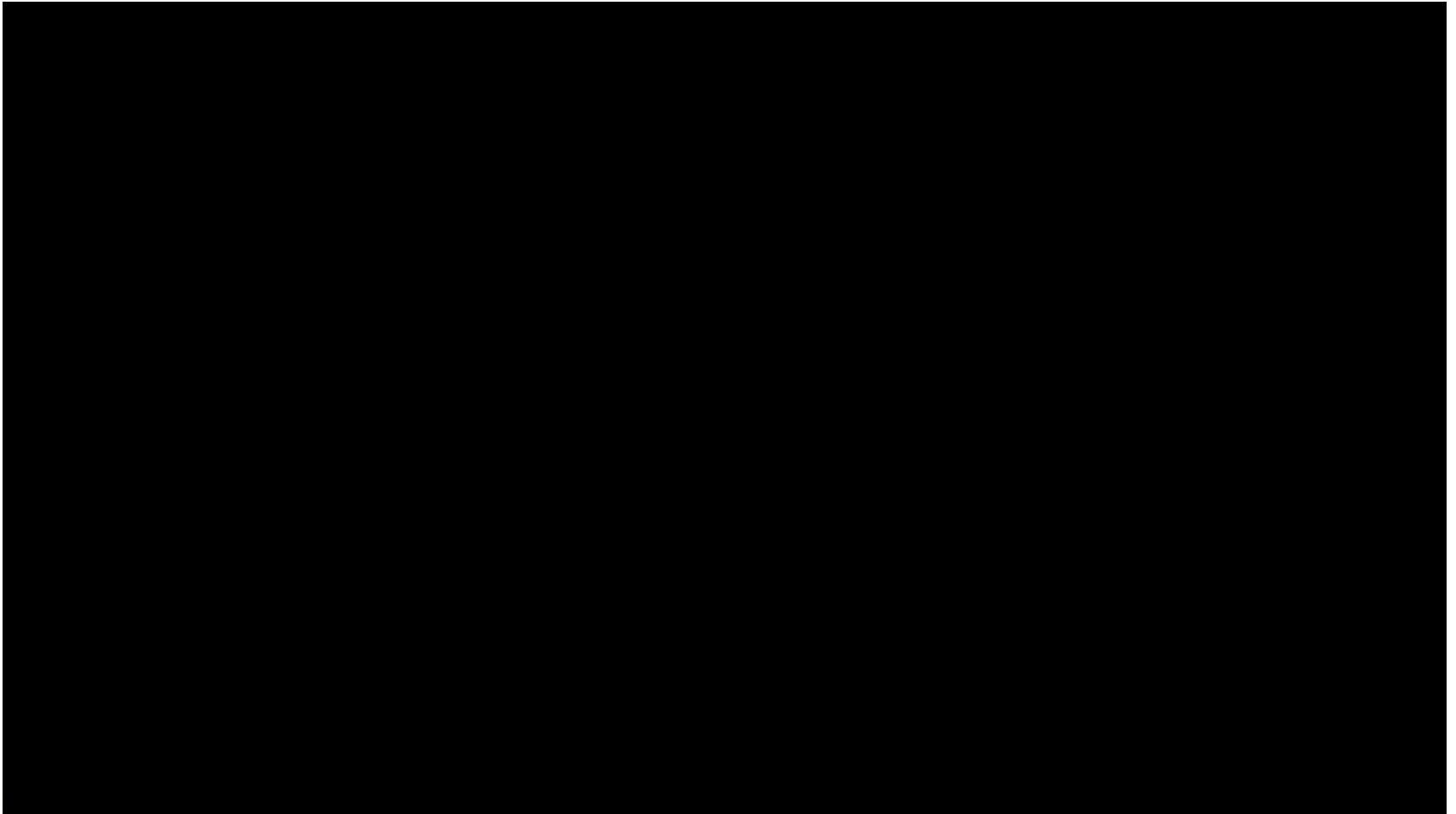
4 year olds enjoy doing new things



4 year olds talk about their likes and interests



4 year olds are more creative with make-believe play



YOU OR YOUR CHILDCARE PROVIDER HAVE A CONCERN



Could there be a delay in my child's social-emotional development?



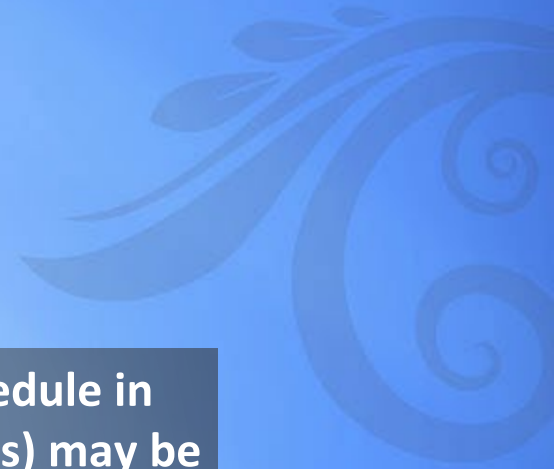
DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY VS. DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY



Is there a difference?



Developmental Delay



Developmental delay: A condition in which a child is behind schedule in reaching milestones of early childhood development. The delay(s) may be caused by short-lived issues, such as a speech delay being caused by hearing loss from ear infections. Delays may also be early signs of learning and attention issues. While it's not always clear what is causing the delay, early intervention can often help kids catch up. Some kids can still have delays in skills when they reach school age.



Developmental Disability

Developmental disabilities are a group of conditions due to an impairment in physical, learning, language, or behavior areas. These conditions begin during the developmental period, may impact day-to-day functioning, and usually last throughout a person's lifetime. They are issues that kids don't outgrow or catch up from, though they can make progress. They aren't the same as learning disabilities, but they can make learning more difficult.

There is no one cause of developmental delays, but some risk factors include:

- ~ **Complications at birth:** Being born too early (prematurely); low birth weight; not getting enough oxygen at birth.
- ~ **Environmental issues:** Lead poisoning; poor nutrition; exposure to alcohol or drugs before birth; difficult family situations; trauma.
- ~ **Other medical conditions:** Chronic ear infections; vision problems; illnesses, conditions, or injuries that have a significant and long-term effect on a child's day-to-day activities.

If a child isn't catching up as quickly as expected, a specialist like an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant, may suggest doing an evaluation to get a better sense of what's going on. It could also help guide the types of services and supports that would meet the child's needs.

**EARLY
INTERVENTION
IS KEY**



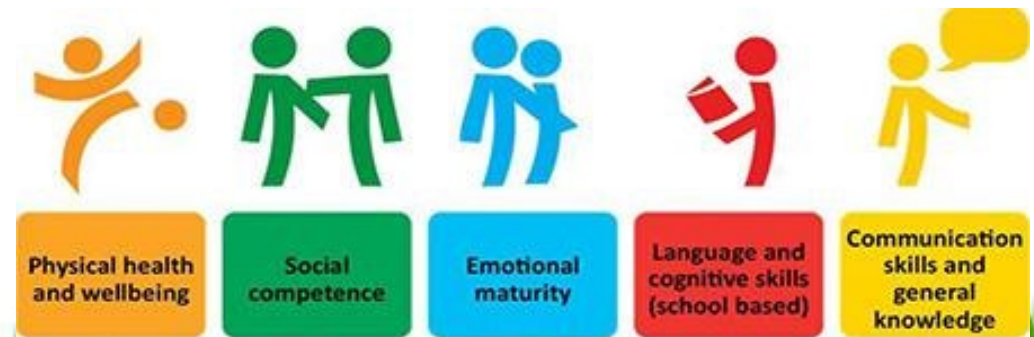
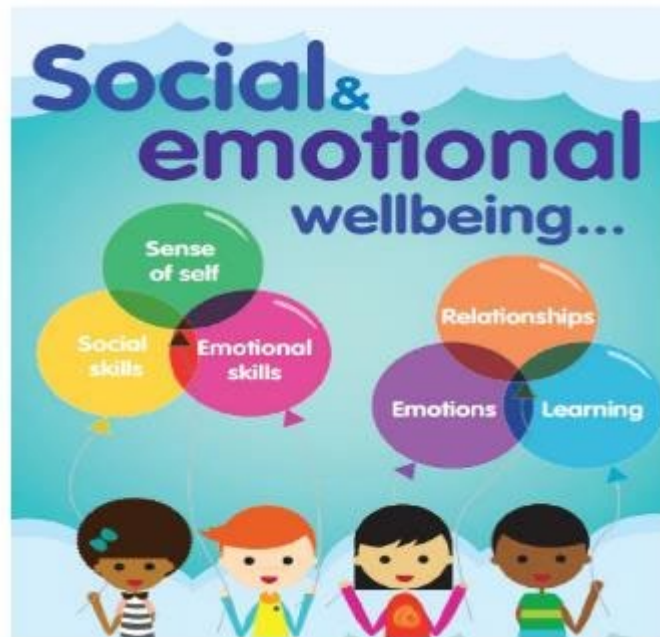
Learn the Signs. Act Early.
www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly

Learn the Signs.
Act Early.



What is Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation?

- ECMHC is focused on providing services that benefit children who are in early care and education settings.
- ECMHC seeks to promote positive outcomes for children by helping caregivers develop the attitudes and skills necessary to effectively support the social and emotional development of the young children in their care.
- ECMHC is grounded in the belief that consultants and caregivers (providers and families) are equally valuable team members with unique and important perspectives and knowledge to contribute.
- ECMH addresses the full spectrum of young children's mental health needs, from promotion of healthy social-emotional development to prevention of mental health problems to early intervention for young children demonstrating challenging behaviors.



You are your child's best advocate!

Sometimes parents worry that they might have contributed to their child's delays. That's usually not the case. For example, teaching a child more than one language does *not* lead to speech or language problems.

And as we have heard many parents say, even though it can be “heartbreaking” to hear that your child may not be developing the way you had hoped, it's better to focus on next steps and ways to help your child because early intervention is key.



Benefits of Learning the Signs and Early Action

- Early action helps lead families to early intervention services, which:
 - Improve skills and outcomes.
 - Increase school readiness.
 - Enable families to develop strategies and obtain resources needed for successful family functioning.



Early identification and intense interventions are the keys to eliminating developmental delay as a primary need.

Guide to Accessing Social-Emotional Development Support & Resources



Once you have completed any checklists, marked off milestones reached and noted your concerns, contact your child's pediatrician to schedule an appointment.



Discuss your questions and concerns with your child's pediatrician and provide the information you have gathered from the developmental checklist. Ask the doctor his/her suggestions, next steps, and request a developmental screening and/or a referral to a specialist.



**EARLY
CHILDHOOD
SERVICES**
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Contact your Montgomery County's Child Link at 240-777-GROW (4769) for information and resources for children ages birth to five years old.

QUESTIONS???





**EARLY
CHILDHOOD
SERVICES**

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant
Montgomery County Health & Human Services

Thank you for your participation and
dedication to enhancing the social-
emotional development of your child!