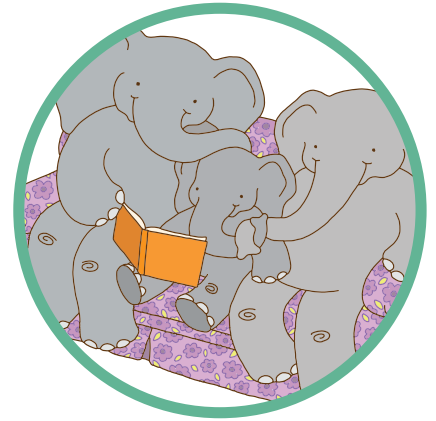








Spending Time Together

Children learn and thrive in the context of secure relationships. Maintaining a warm and responsive relationship between parent and child promotes healthy social, emotional, and cognitive development.



Everyday ways to enhance your child's social and emotional development:

-  **Talk and listen to your child.** Talk out loud about what you are doing, seeing, hearing, and thinking during the day. Babies “talk” using many sounds, gestures, and actions. When he babbles, talk back. Show excitement when he begins to say words.
-  **Read, play, and explore together.** Be actively involved – it’s the best way to learn and build relationships at any age. Explore outside. Consider the child’s interests and personality when choosing activities. Young children need physical activity every day ... and so do parents.
-  **Give kindness and understanding.** Respond to your child’s needs promptly; be gentle and speak kindly. Show empathy when your child is upset. Treat your child with the same manners and respect you show others. Your child is just as important as they are.
-  **Make eye contact; smile.** Facial expressions show children that they are loved and cherished. Attentive eye contact and a warm, adoring smile builds a child’s sense of confidence, self-worth, and security. Make a conscious effort to slow down and focus on your child.
-  **Be consistent; establish routines.** Children are happiest when life is predictable and they know what to expect. Provide meals and snacks on a regular schedule. Establish routines for daily events.
-  **Provide a safe environment.** Be alert to safety hazards and health issues. Respect your child’s feelings; comfort and stay near when your child is afraid.



The
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