

Supporting Adult-Child Relationships

Young children thrive when the adults around them show they care. Young children learn they have value and develop a sense of self-worth through warm interactions with primary caregivers. Your children learn from your words and actions whenever they are with you.

Playtime is practice time

Your child practices social and communication skills during playtime by learning to share ideas, take turns, and express emotions. As you play, demonstrate kindness, thoughtfulness, and working together to solve problems.



Build connections

Encourage your child's connections with relatives, neighbors, child care providers, and teachers. He will turn to these safe adults for help when he has a problem. Say, "This is such a nice drawing. I think Uncle Joe would like it. Let's send it to him."



Set a good example

Your child learns how to treat people kindly by watching you. Show your child cooperative and kind behaviors when you interact with other adults. He notices when you say "Thank you" when a cashier hands you change or when you say "Excuse me" to the stock clerk in the grocery store when you need help finding an item.

Use appropriate language

Explain appropriate ways to talk to adults.

Teach your child to use kind words and polite manners. Your child notices your tone of voice and body language. This includes using appropriate ways to address people such as calling the dentist "Dr. Patel" or calling a neighbor "Mrs. Jones" if that is how she prefers to be addressed.

KIDS Social and Emotional Development 3 – Relationships and Social Interactions with Familiar Adults

Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this tip sheet are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois State Board of Education.



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