

# Social /Emotional Development

Here's a look at some important milestones in the area of social/emotional development that take place during a child's first six years.

## Children may

0  
to  
2



- ▶ be increasingly alert to sights and sounds.
- ▶ follow you with eager eyes and warm to the sight of your face.
- ▶ smile in response to your expressions.
- ▶ engage, disengage, then reengage with you for short periods of time.
- ▶ begin to respond to your gestures with gestures of their own.
- ▶ imitate interactions and look expectantly for your response.
- ▶ express desires and wants by pointing.

2  
to  
3



- ▶ engage in pretend play with others.
- ▶ enlist your help to do pretend dramas dealing with closeness, nurturing, and care; enjoy pretend play alone.
- ▶ use words or combine gestures to express feelings.
- ▶ communicate their desire for closeness by gesturing.
- ▶ develop the ability to recover from anger.

3  
to  
4



- ▶ at times begin to distinguish between what is real and what isn't; use logical thinking.
- ▶ make pretend play more complex so that one theme leads to another.
- ▶ follow rules and respond to limits; feel optimistic and confident.
- ▶ begin to reason about feelings and connect them to behaviors (for example, behaving nicely pleases you); try hard to learn to do something.

4  
to  
5



- ▶ enhance pretend play by adding complexity and depth to themes and roles.
- ▶ enjoy participating in rule making and talking about what is fair and what is not.
- ▶ talk about their own feelings and begin to understand the feelings of others.
- ▶ feel and express empathy.

5  
to  
6



- ▶ enjoy playing and working independently.
- ▶ enjoy taking care of their own needs.
- ▶ engage in cooperative play.
- ▶ react to normal frustrations in constructive ways.
- ▶ understand and accept limits and routines.
- ▶ show an understanding of personal rights and responsibilities.