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.