What if I have concerns about my infant or toddler's social-emotional development?

- Speak with your child's pediatrician or primary healthcare provider
- Contact Baby Watch or your local early intervention program to request a FREE evaluation for services

Resources

For more information about social-emotional development in infants and toddlers, please contact:

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Baby Watch Early Intervention Program

utahbabywatch.org

800 961 4226

Infant and Toddler
Social-Emotional Development

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Baby Watch Early Intervention Program

2020

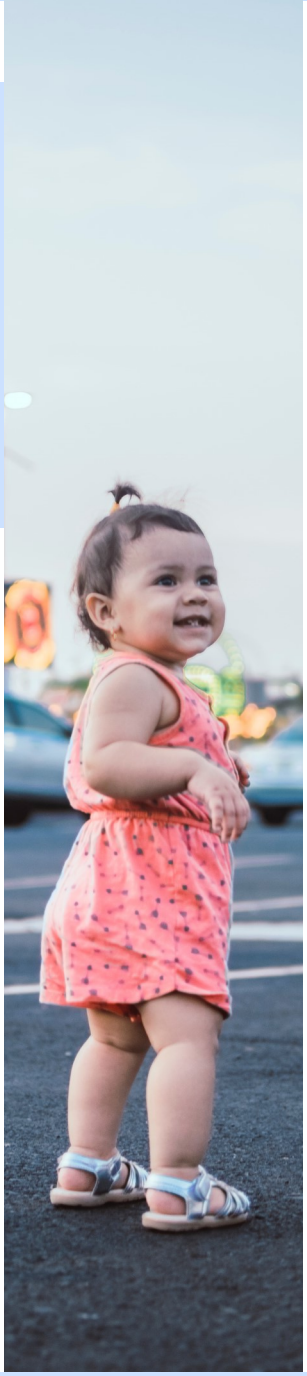
What is Social-Emotional Development?

Sometimes called early childhood mental health or infant mental health, social-emotional development refers to a child's capacity to:

- Experience, manage, and express the full range of positive and negative emotions
- Develop close, satisfying relationships with other children and adults
- Actively explore their environment and learn

What social-emotional skills do...	
BABIES Need to Learn?	**TODDLERS** Need to Learn?
♦ Building relationships with familiar adults ♦ Responding to unfamiliar adults cautiously ♦ Seeking to find comfort in new situations ♦ Expressing feelings and emotions through facial expressions, sounds, or gestures ♦ Showing interest in and awareness of other children	♦ Responding to and interacting with other children ♦ Recognizing and responding to other children's feelings ♦ Beginning to show concern for others ♦ Using words and behaviors to express feelings ♦ Managing their own behavior and showing self-regulation ♦ Understanding simple routines, rules, or limits

Utah Early Learning Guidelines Birth to Age Three



What can parents and caregivers do to support the healthy social-emotional development of infants and toddlers?

DURING BABY'S FIRST YEAR:

- Cuddle and touch your baby gently.
- Respond to your baby's coos and cries.
- Hold your baby while you feed them.
- Be predictable and consistent.
- Describe feelings using words like happy, mad, and sad.

AROUND AGE 1:

- Set fair and consistent limits, and enforce those limits by saying no in a calm but firm voice.
- Develop and maintain consistent routines.
- Encourage curiosity.

AROUND AGE 2:

- Be calm and comforting after outbursts.
- Be consistent about what your toddler is and is not allowed to do.
- Teach your toddler words to describe feelings.
- Encourage and praise your child.

AROUND AGE 3:

- Help your child include others in playing, sharing, and taking turns.
- Encourage your child to develop trust in other adult caregivers.
- Support appropriate expression of feelings.

Adapted from Help Me Grow Minnesota

"I'm convinced that when we help our children find healthy ways of dealing with their feelings—ways that don't hurt them or anyone else—we're helping to make our world a safer, better place." Fred Rogers