



7. **When your child “acts up,” try to uncover the real reason for her behaviour.** A young child doesn’t “act up” because she’s “bad”. She “acts up” because there is something going on with her that she can’t handle or put into words yet. She may be scared, frustrated, hungry, sick, tired, or sad - there are lots of possibilities. If you can find out what’s causing these feelings, you can help meet her needs and reduce the troubling behaviour.



8. **Don’t let your child witness family violence.** Don’t let anyone physically abuse or hurt your child with words. This type of trauma is very painful for young children. It can cause long term problems, including depression.



9. **Take care of your own social-emotional health.** All parents of young children feel stressed at times. Young children need so much care and parents have to juggle so many responsibilities. It seems impossible to take time for yourself. But you must. If you’re always at the end of your emotional rope, your family will pay the price. If you’re going through divorce, depression, unemployment, illness, or some other difficult situation, it’s even more important for you to seek the support you need.

10. **Taking care of yourself -** is taking care of your kids.



## Please call if you require...



⇒ information about  
Child Development Programme

⇒ support that will provide  
positive opportunities for the  
growth and development of  
your child

⇒ information about  
diagnosed developmental  
conditions

⇒ information about  
community services

## Information Website

Great Start (birth to age 5)

[www.ecic4kids.org](http://www.ecic4kids.org)

Child Development Programme

Tynes Bay House

37 Palmetto Road

Devonshire DV 05

Bermuda

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# SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL HEALTH



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA

Ministry of Education

## The Child Development Programme



## 10 Ways to Support Your Child



# 10 Ways to Support Your Child's Social and Emotional Health

## 1. Gently hold and cuddle your child often.

This will help your young child to bond with you. Also, physical touch can generate brain connections that will support all areas of your child's development (e.g., social-emotional, language, physical coordination, etc.).



2. Respond to your child's efforts to communicate with you. When your infant coos, coo back. When he looks at you, make eye contact and talk with him. When he lifts his arms up to you, pick him up and let him know you are happy to hold him. When your toddler or preschooler wants to tell you something, get down to her level and take time to listen.



These immediate responses tell your child that communications are important and effective. This will encourage him to continue to develop these skills. He will learn to be a good listener and a good communicator with the people in his life.



## 3. Enrich your child's daily routines (e.g., meal, bath and nap times) by making eye contact and sharing smiles, conversations, stories and books.

These day-to-day interactions are a way for you and your child to continue building strong ties to each other. This is very important. If your child has a good relationship with you, she'll be able to have good relationships with other people throughout her life. Also, reading books to your child while you are snuggling together will help her learn to read later on. This is true even if she's



## 4. Take time to follow your child's lead. Join her in floor-time play and talk with her about her activities whenever possible.



Making time to get down on the floor and play with your child gives her a sense of safety and encourages her to take initiative and explore. Really listening to your child makes her feel understood and tells her that she's important to you.



## 5. Gently guide your child through social situations.

Babies love to look at other babies. Toddlers and preschoolers learn to socialize by practicing with help from caring adults. If you support your child in social situations, he will learn how to make friends and get along with others. As you acknowledge the range of feelings he experiences during peer interactions, he learns to recognize and successfully use those feelings. This is an important first step in teaching children to handle conflicts.



## 6. Be sure your expectations match what your child is socially-emotionally ready to do.

When a parent expects a child to do something that he is not socially-emotionally ready to do, it's frustrating for both parent and child. For example, a parent may expect her 2-year-olds to share his toys. When he refuses, she gets angry. She doesn't know that most 2-year-olds aren't ready to share. If she keeps insisting on it, they both become very upset. The child may even start to feel bad about himself. (How would you feel if your loved one kept demanding that you do something you just don't have the ability to do?) What you can expect from a 2-year-old is different from what you can expect from an older or younger child. That's why it's so important for parents to know about social-emotional development at every age.

