



EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH CONNECTION

MOVING LIVES FORWARD

HELPING CHILDREN GROW

Early childhood development: we hear this term used quite often when it comes to the health and wellbeing of our children. We hear this term used from educators, pediatricians, mental health providers, and other professionals in the early childhood field. But what does this mean? Early childhood development is how children develop from birth up until age eight, and often refers to various milestones that we use to track development. This can be anywhere from when a child learns to crawl or walk all the way up until they begin to engage with their peers more socially. Something that is very important to remember is that not all children develop at the same rate and it is perfectly okay if one child learns something before another child. One example is when we hear someone say their child walked at an earlier age than our own children—that is okay! Sometimes children may also seem like they are learning things at an extremely fast rate and other times it feels like things take a little more time. This can be especially true when different factors come into play with social and emotional development in young children. Grief, trauma, and adverse situations can have an effect on children and how they develop in certain areas as they grow. It's important to promote healthy development with children, but also keep in mind where the child is in their own journey of growth. For example, a child may be six years old but emotionally the child is closer to four due to different situations they have been experienced in their life. Keeping this in mind can really help the child learn new skills that are more realistic for them. Another example is when a child has an emotional reaction to something that seems like a minor situation to us as adults. For the child, this situation is more upsetting and can trigger certain feelings they have and can't always control. When things in their environment change or are not consistent, this can affect how children process and react to different situations that arise. This is especially true with the many changes we are seeing each day in the world around us! Here are some ways to promote healthy social/emotional development with your child, even as things may look a little differently right now:

- Love your child and show your affection for them. Hug, cuddle, read, and talk with them throughout the day.
- Encourage your child to try new things. Help them see what they are capable of. Let your child know you are pleased with their accomplishments.
- Give your child opportunities to play with other children their age. Help them explore their world and get to know the people in it. Model kind and generous behaviors when interacting with other adults and children.
- Show your feelings. Let your child see when you are happy or sad. This helps them to develop empathy for others.
- Establish daily routines. Your child will feel confident and secure. They will learn that events can happen in an organized way.
- Create routines that are predictable but flexible.
- Acknowledge your child's feelings. Help them talk about what they feel and how they are feeling. Comfort your child when they are upset. Hold them and speak softly and calmly.

(Source: <https://www.lapetite.com/blog/2015/02/promoting-social-emotional-development-in-your-child/>)

Cheryl's Corner of Caring

"At many times though out their lives, children will feel like the world has been turned topsy-turvy. It's not the ever-present smile that will help them feel more secure. It's knowing that LOVE can hold many feelings, including sadness, and that they can count on the people that they love to be with them until the world turns right side up again." Fred Rogers

Helpful Resources:

<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/mar2018/promoting-social-and-emotional-health>

https://childmind.org/guide/developmental-milestones/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMI_qDZ87y87gIVDuPACCh1P8AbpEAAYAyAAEgLAW_D_BwE

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/checklists/all-checklists.pdf>

<https://www.rasmussen.edu/degrees/education/blog/early-childhood-development/>

<https://pathways.org/all-ages/milestones/>

www.zerotothree.org

MEET CENTENNIAL'S EARLY CHILDHOOD CONSULTATION TEAM



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Cheyenne, Elbert, Kit Carson,
Lincoln & Yuma

For additional support during
the COVID-19 Pandemic you
can call Centennial's
**COMMUNITY
SUPPORT LINE**

You can do this by calling your
nearest Centennial office:

Akron - 970.345.2254

Burlington - 719.346.8183

Cheyenne Wells - 719.346.8183

Elizabeth - 303.646.4519

Fort Morgan - 970.867.4924

Holyoke - 970.854.2114

Julesburg - 970.474.3769

Limon - 719.775.2313

Sterling - 970.522.4392

Wray - 970.332.3133

Yuma - 970.848.5412

Contact your local Centennial Mental Health Center for assistance with any Early Childhood need.

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