



Parenting the Preschooler

Social Competence & Emotional Well-Being Fact Sheets

How do you maintain a loving relationship with your preschooler?

Ages & Stages

PRESCHOOLER A child who is 3 to 5 years of age.

YOUNG CHILD A child who is 0 to 8 years of age.

Minding Our Language

Families come in all shapes, sizes, and styles. A “family” may include people who are related by blood, by marriage, and by choice. “Parents” may be biological, step-, foster, adoptive, legally appointed, or something else. When we use the words “family” and “parent” in these materials, we do so inclusively and with great respect for all adults who care for and work with young people.

You are the most important person in your preschooler’s life! Being close to your preschooler is just as important now that they are older as it was when they were a baby. Preschoolers need to know that the person they love most cares about them and what they need. They need to trust that you will be there for them no matter what and that you will love them forever. Having a close relationship with you will help your child feel good about themselves, the people who love them, and the world. Also, what they learn from you will help them to become closer to others as they get older. To make sure that you and your preschooler build this important relationship, try the following ideas:

- Spend time talking to and playing with your child every day.
- Know what they want and need by paying attention with your eyes, ears, and heart.
- Give your child what they need to feel loved, safe, and cared about.
- Acknowledge their feelings.
- Touch your child lovingly every day with hugs, snuggles, pats on the back, or high fives.
- Praise them for who they are and what they do.
- Tell your preschooler how important they are to you and that you love them.
- Ask your child what activities they would like to do and do those activities with them.

Find Out More

MSU Extension provides the following resources for parents and caregivers of preschoolers and young children at no or low cost. Be sure to check out these and other MSU Extension resources available at www.extension.msu.edu.

Extension Extras (<https://bit.ly/2LC2vdX>) – These compilations of news articles, activities, parenting tips and advice are published online Monday through Friday. The resources are designed for parents and caregivers of young children who are home all day during the novel coronavirus pandemic. Each day has a theme: Mindful Mondays, Tips on Tuesday, Working Wednesdays, Thinking Thursday, and Fun Fridays.

Extension Extras Enrichment Kits (<https://bit.ly/35QAplQ>) – These kits feature five or six early childhood activities with learning goals focused in areas such as social and emotional health, literacy, and STEM; a supply list; suggested children's books; introduction letters explaining how to use the materials; and an evaluation. The kits are available as free downloads.

Early Childhood Videos (<https://bit.ly/3ioyEkS>) – These short videos offer parents and caregivers of young children information on parenting topics. Titles include "Perspective Taking," "Family Movies," "Goals of Misbehavior," "Using Thinking and Feeling Words," "The Waiting Game," and "When Siblings Fight."

Building Early Emotional Skills (BEES) in Young Children (<https://bit.ly/38XW4Kl>) – This page provides links to a variety of free online parenting courses, workshops, and events offered by MSU Extension for parents and caregivers of young children aged 0 to 3.

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