



UCLA



Childrens Hospital

# Child Development

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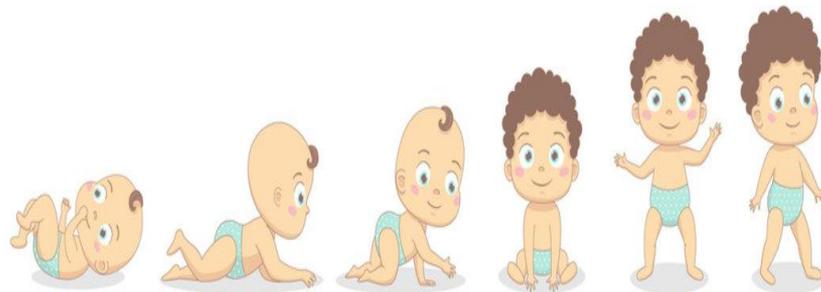
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Children's Discovery & Innovation Institute

# What is Child Development

- Changes in skills as children grow older
- Physical changes in children's skills are easy to understand and recognize such as:
  - sitting-up
  - crawling
  - taking a first step
  - waving "bye-bye"



# What is Child Development?

- Child development also focuses on other skills and abilities as children get older, **beyond physical** movements and abilities.
- Often changes in children's skills are described using these categories:
  - Physical:
    - Gross motor
    - Fine motor
  - Language
  - Cognitive
  - Emotional

# Example #1: Child Development

## Physical Skills

Gross motor: sits, using arms to play

*Fine motor:* holds a toy, brings to mouth

## Language skills

- babbles
- understands when talked to

## Emotional skills

- smiling
- understanding joy



## Cognitive skills

- learning texture of toy
- learning to make sound with toy

## Social skills

- interacting with mom
- adapting to mom's feedback



# Example #2: Child Development

## Physical Skills

Gross motor: standing, arms to mix

*Fine motor:* holding a whisk

## Language skills

- talking using 2-3 words
- understand 2-step commands

## Emotional skills

- experiences joy from playing
- expresses joy with smiling, words



## Cognitive skills

- pretend play
- series of baking steps  
(pouring, beating with whisk)

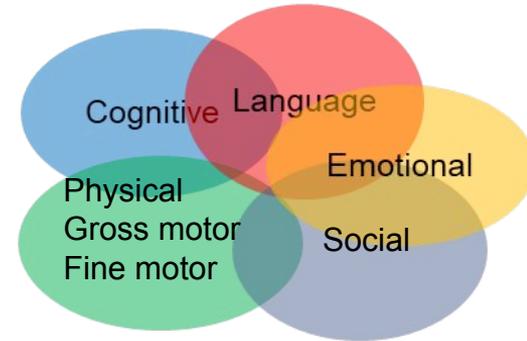
## Social skills

- interacts with teacher
- adapts to teacher's positive feedback



# Additional Concepts of Child Development

- All these areas of development are **connected**
- We should always think about the **whole** child
- Examples:
  - once children learn to use words, it is much easier for them to express their emotions
  - once children begin to crawl, they begin to explore more, learn, and remember where to find mom's purse



# Additional Concepts of Child Development

## Highly Interactive and Dynamic Process

Example: A 2-month infant has the developmental ability to make good eye contact and smile

- Infant will **interact, adapt, and continue** to do this as long as caregiver continues to talk and play with infant
- If there is no interaction or reciprocation, infant will **adapt** to this environment and develop poor eye contact, lack of brightening and smiling on seeing caregiver



# What is Social and Emotional Development? Why Does it Matter?

## Social Skills

- ability to interact with others
- development of relationships (family, friends, & teachers)
- ability to cooperate, share

## Emotional Skills

- ability to identify own feelings
- ability to express feelings
- development of empathy, response to others feelings
- ability to manage own and strong emotions



# What is Social and Emotional Development?

## Infants

- Respond positively to touch
- Smiles
- Laugh
- Play peek-a-boo
- Anxiety when separated from caregiver



## Toddlers

- Recognizes self in mirrors and smiles
- Helps puts things away
- Helps dress self
- Sing, clap or dance
- Watches children play

## Preschoolers

- Share toys, take turns
- Play with other children
- Compare self with others
- Develops friendships
- Express more awareness of others feelings
- Change activity with little frustration



# Why Does Social and Emotional Development Matter?

- Social, emotional and cognitive development are highly interrelated
- Socio-emotional health is the foundation for school success, and success later in the workplace, and with health

Socio-emotional Development	Relationship to School Success
Emotional self-regulation (recognize, label, manage own emotions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child can re-join class and continue learning after being teased or hit</li><li>• Child can sit still to learn during story time or instruction</li></ul>
Aware of others feelings Response to others feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child may give toy back after taking it from another child who is now crying</li><li>• Child becomes upset or cries after seeing another child cry</li></ul>
Communicating needs and feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child able to ask questions and ask teacher for help</li><li>• Child can communicate anger and ask for help rather than “act out”</li></ul>
Ability to play and share Develop relationships with peers, teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child can share crayons, wait for a color and finish a worksheet</li><li>• Child can feel happy and proud after receiving positive feedback from teacher</li></ul>

# What Shapes Healthy Socio-emotional Development?

- Socio-emotional development is a highly *interactive* and *dynamic*

- Important “inputs” that shape healthy socio-emotional development:

- nurturing caregiving
- stability/routines
- protection/safety
- responsive caregiving
- proper nutrition
- exercise
- sleep

- Parents, caregivers, family play most important role in providing “inputs”

- Teachers and peers also provide quality relationships and interactions



# COVID-19 and Social and Emotional Development

Inputs for Healthy Development	Potential Impacts of COVID-19
Nurturing/responsive caregiving	• parental stress      • not visiting grandparents/extended family
sleep	• change in routines      • disrupted if not feeling safe/secure
stability/routines	• unpredictable schedules      • school closures      • loss of housing
protection/safety	• illness and deaths      • caregiver job losses      • why masks?      • what is COVID?
proper nutrition	• food insecurity      • food stores closed/shut down
exercise	• physical distancing requirements      • school closures      • park closures
Teachers, peers	• no interactions      • limited interactions      • virtual interactions

# COVID-19 and Social and Emotional Development

- Infants and children are hard-wired to experience security and love
- Infants and young children are affected adversely when significant stress threatens their family and environments
- Changes to “inputs” of healthy development increase risk for difficulties in learning and behavior, physical and mental health



# Strategies to Adapt and Thrive Despite Adversity are Critical

- Strengthening or developing new supportive relationships
- Effective coping skills for both parents and children
- Practical strategies and tips to communicate crises or traumatic events
- Routines, routines, routines, routines, and routines!
  - Promotes “inputs” for healthy socio-emotional development
    - Predictability which is critical for children to feel safe
    - Schedules for sleep, exercise, healthy snacking and eating



# Communication Strategies

- Talk about the event with your child
  - Not talking makes event more threatening to child, too horrible to even speak of
- Ask what your child has heard about the events and what he/she understands
- Encourage questions and answer them directly
- Amount of helpful information depends on age of child
- Limit television viewing events or disasters for younger children
  - View with older children, discuss what is being seen, how it makes you and child feel
- Reassurance - steps taken to promote safety in schools, homes, & communities



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# Let's Continue the Conversation

## Perspectives and Strategies from Panelists



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# Developmental Milestones

- Skills such as taking a first step, and smiling for the first time are often learned at a certain age □ *developmental milestones*
- Milestones can be used to monitor children's development
- Milestones **give general idea** of changes to expect as child grows older



# Monitoring Child Development

- It's helpful to be familiar with milestones but...
  - **give general idea** of changes based on child's age
  - variations in milestones are normal
  - children develop at their own pace, every child is unique
- Parents/caregivers, healthcare providers, early care and education providers can all play an important role in monitoring
- **A parent/caregiver knows child best**
  - trust your instincts



# Healthy Child Development

- 90% of a child's brain development happens before age five
- Pregnancy to age 5 is the most rapid brain growth period compared to any other window of time over the lifespan

