

Relationships that Nurture

Monthly tips provided by St. David's Center in partnership with Mom Enough

Social and Emotional School Readiness

Audio can be heard at the end of the [10/17/11 ME interview](#)

Foundational Skills in School Readiness

As science uncovers new knowledge about how young children's brains develop, that research is informing us about the path to school readiness and the key developmental tasks necessary for a successful start in school. What are these foundational skills and how do parents help their children build them? How can parents tell if their children have built them and are ready for the next challenge?

I. Underlying issues

A growing body of scientific evidence tells us that emotional development begins early in life and is closely connected with the emergence of cognitive, language and social skills.

Early emotional development lays the foundation for later academic performance, mental health and the capacity to form successful relationships. A child's capacity to regulate emotions develops in a complex interaction with his or her environment and ongoing cognitive, motor and social development.

"School readiness" encompasses much more than the 3 Rs and includes all domains of development.

The social and emotional competence of young children also predicts their academic performance in the first grade over and above their cognitive skills and family backgrounds

II. Signs of Social Emotional School Readiness in Preschool-aged Children

Parents can ask themselves some questions that will help them think about how ready their child is for school.

- Does my child function successfully as part of a group?
- Does my child perform self-help skills independently (getting dressed, toileting, etc)?
- Does my child make friends and play cooperatively?
- Does my child resolve conflict with peers appropriately?
- Does my child follow directions and safety rules?
- Does my child regulate his/her emotions and separate from me easily to be with other caregivers?
- Does my child communicate with grown-ups/teachers when he/she needs help?

III. Resources

Parents should give children ample opportunity for social interaction with peers and provide gentle guidance and coaching to help children build these skills.