

# PROMOTING SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH BEGINS  
AT BIRTH AND LAYS A FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN TO:

**MANAGE EMOTIONS**  
**HAVE POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS**  
**RESOLVE CONFLICTS PEACEFULLY**  
**TAKE CARE OF OTHERS**

### WHAT IS SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The process of learning these social and emotional skills begins at birth, as infants build attachments and trust with caregivers, learn how to calm themselves down, and later, to recognize emotions.

Like any skill, children develop social and emotional abilities gradually - with lots of support from caregivers as they learn.

Social-emotional well-being allows children to manage and express emotions in healthy ways, form close relationships, and learn.

As early childhood professionals, we play a key role in supporting the healthy development of the children in our care.

Starting at birth, caring and consistent relationships give children a foundation of safety and encouragement to explore the world around them. Supportive relationships allow children to express their feelings in a healthy way, have compassion for others, and learn the difference between right and wrong.

Positive relationships support healthy social-emotional development, which supports good mental health throughout life.

### MENTAL HEALTH IS A KEY PART OF OVERALL HEALTH

We all have mental health - even babies! Just as physical health enables us to have the energy we need to work and live our lives, mental health allows us to have positive relationships, cope with life's challenges, and manage our emotions.

Just as we take care of children's physical health with nutritious foods, plenty of rest, and safe environments, we must also take care of their mental health. We can do this by actively supporting their social-emotional development.

As early childhood professionals, we need to understand the underlying reasons for challenging behavior and work with families in order to help children manage "big" feelings that impact behavior. If challenging behaviors continue, there are trusted resources in our community to help.

## SUPPORTING HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

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You promote healthy social-emotional development by integrating support into daily programming and encouraging families to do the same at home.

- Providing warm, responsive and consistent care
- Showing appreciation for children's diverse cultures and backgrounds
- Modeling positive behavior and care for others
- Offering choices throughout the day
- Focusing on and encouraging positive behavior
- Setting and sticking to predictable routines
- Coaching children to share, play together and find common ground
- Building relationships with families so children feel secure and comfortable with early childhood professionals

But as trusted advisors to parents, we are in a position to do even more.

**These aren't always easy conversations to have, but we need to help parents understand milestones in children's social and emotional development and give them tools to support it.**

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**CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR IS THE WAY  
CHILDREN COMMUNICATE TO US THAT THEIR  
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL NEEDS ARE NOT  
BEING MET OR ARE NOT AS WELL DEVELOPED.**

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## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Children's mental health is critical to their overall health. It is normal to have concerns and questions about children's behavior and development - and there are resources in our community to help.

We offer early childhood professionals a variety of resources and training opportunities to help you support the social-emotional well-being of the children you serve.

### THERE ARE SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES IN OUR COMMUNITY:

If you have concerns about your child or a child in your program an Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant maybe able to help.

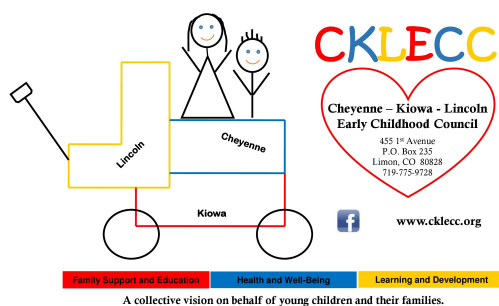
Visit [www.cklecc.org](http://www.cklecc.org) or call (719) 775-9728 for a list of available local resources and information for an Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist.

## GET IN TOUCH

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This project is supported by the Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Early Childhood.