

Early

# Learning & Education PROGRAMS

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## Exploring Social and Emotional Development

Ryan toddles into the room holding his mom's hand. He looks around the room until his eyes focus in on Ms. Ana. A smile slowly warms his face as he and his mom walk toward her. She smiles at Ryan and says, "Good morning Ryan. I'm so happy you're here today!" Ms. Ana asks, "Would you like a hug?" Ryan lets go of his mom's hand and walks to Ms. Ana holding up his arms. After the hug, Ms. Ana says, "It's time for mom to go to work. Let's say goodbye and wave until the door closes." Ms. Ana holds one of Ryan's hands while he waves goodbye with the other hand.

Once Ryan's mom has left, Ms. Ana begins to point out different things that are happening in the room. She is giving Ryan time to adjust to the new environment

before he decides what he would like to do. Once he begins to play, Ms. Ana moves to greet another child who has arrived. Ryan builds with blocks, but every few minutes he looks up to see where Ms. Ana is. She catches him watching her and smiles. Ryan smiles back and returns to his play.

Infants and toddlers learn about themselves and the world through relationships. Take a moment to think about Ryan and Ms. Ana. It is evident that Ms. Ana has established a welcoming morning ritual and positive relationship with Ryan because he looks for her when he enters the room and willingly goes to her.

Ms. Ana is also sensitive to Ryan's personality and needs. This is evident when



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## READING WITH BABIES

Holding infants and toddlers in your lap while you read to them strengthens your relationship and develops their language and cognitive skills. Choose durable books such as the following board books:

- *Baby Dance* by Ann Taylor
- *Barnyard Dance* by Sandra Boynton
- *Counting Kisses: A Kiss and Read Book* by Karen Katz
- *Do You Want To Be My Friend?* by Eric Carle
- *Freight Train* by Donald Crews
- *From Head To Toe* by Eric Carle
- *Global Babies* by The Global Fund for Children
- *Peek-A-Who?* by Nina Laden
- *Signing Smart: My First Signs* by Michelle Anthony and Reyna Lindert
- *Everywhere Babies* by Susan Meyers





## Talking about Emotions

Communication is the foundation of developing social, language, and literacy skills. Through meaningful conversations, children learn to express thoughts, feelings, and ideas, and to formulate plans and solve problems. Practicing conversations allows children to learn the social rules for talking and listening to others, forming friendships, and socializing.

Introduce infants and toddlers to emotional literacy by reading books or singing songs like *If You're Happy and You Know It*. Even if infants are not yet talking, ask questions about how they feel and wait for a response. Make emotion puppets available daily. Children can make puppets by gluing pictures of faces onto wooden craft sticks. They can use them to identify emotions, create stories, and act out routines or events they have experienced.

Start conversations by selecting an emotion face and saying, "I felt like this when I woke up today. How did you feel when you woke up?" Then name the emotion. Engage in emotion check-ins like this throughout the day, and talk about any changes in their feelings. Pair the puppets with books about emotions and invite children to act out the story as you read. Take time to pause during the story to discuss what is happening. For example, "She just took his bear. How do you think he feels?"

Set aside a specific time of day for preschool and school age children to discuss emotions and make a plan for managing them. Prepare for the activity by writing down ideas based on what you observe during playtime onto index cards. Place the cards in a special conversation box. Children can take turns pulling one card each day for everyone to discuss. For example, "How would you feel if someone said 'I'm not your friend?' What would you say?" These scenarios can help children consider a situation and prepare a plan for how they might respond. Record their thoughts on the back of the cards. By talking about emotions and practicing ways to manage them, you can help children form healthy relationships.



# Supporting Special Needs

Building an inclusive environment that supports special needs involves developing a strong relationship with parents, educating yourself, and following a routine for evaluating and adapting elements of your program. Invite parents to share information about the specific needs and abilities of their child. Discuss the parent's expectations for both the child and your program. If the child has an assessment such as an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), be sure to discuss the plan with the parents to ensure that you assist in meeting the goals outlined in the plan.

Schedule regular meetings to discuss the child's developmental achievements and learn about what is working for the family at home. Keep information confidential, and hold meetings in a private space. If daily medications or medical intervention for emergencies are needed, you are required to make an Incidental Medical Services (IMS) Plan that describes the child's special needs

and instructions for emergencies. Consult your Community Care Licensing Program Analyst if you need assistance with developing an IMS Plan. You can also find useful forms, policies, and information about specific medical conditions on the California Childcare Health Program website at <https://cchp.ucsf.edu/content/forms>.

Evaluate the accessibility of your program's learning spaces and materials. Are all children able to access all areas and use all materials? What adaptations can you make to improve accessibility? For example, taping sponges around crayons, markers, and pencils can make them easier for children to grip, adding a basket of earmuffs or headphones with the cords cut off can help children who are sensitive to sound, and using pictures to create a daily schedule can help children who experience difficulty with transitions. Creative thinking can go a long way!



# Exploring Social and Emotional Development

she asks his permission to hug and gives him time to transition into the environment when he is dropped off. During his play, Ryan “checks in” with Ms. Ana, which shows that he trusts her to care for him and support him while he learns. By building a relationship with Ryan and establishing consistent routines, Ms. Ana has supported his social and emotional development.

According to the *California Infant/Toddler Curriculum Framework*, “Social-emotional development includes the child’s experience, expression, and management of emotions and the ability to establish positive and rewarding relationships with others” (p. 63). Caregivers can enhance the social and emotional development of infants and toddlers by learning from the child’s family, developing curriculum that focuses on making relationships, observing children closely, responding to their cues, respecting their individuality, and establishing an environment that is conducive to building social-emotional skills.

An environment that welcomes social exchanges is important for the overall development of infants and toddlers. Place pictures of the children, their families, pets, and caregivers low on the walls where children can easily see them. Provide enough toys for every child and encourage parents to share familiar items from home such as pillows, blankets, or books. Include materials that build social-emotional skills such as soft photo albums; books that illustrate different emotions; dramatic play toys such as puppets, soft dolls, and stuffed animals; and other role-playing items like plastic telephones, dishes, or food. When you build warm, respectful relationships with infants and toddlers, you give them the sense of safety they need to feel free to explore and learn.

Source: *California Infant/Toddler Curriculum Framework* by the California Department of Education (Sacramento, 2012).

## FAMILY KNOWLEDGE

Parents have invaluable knowledge that can help you develop an individualized plan for supporting the healthy development of their child. Invite parents to share information about their child’s feeding and napping routines, favorite toys, and fears to help develop a caregiving plan.

Keep in mind that there are also cultural considerations to discuss with families such as how they express emotions or guide behavior. Making a plan together before the child starts will show parents that you want to meet their expectations and value their knowledge as a parent. This communication can also help prevent future misunderstandings.

Reflect upon how you can use the daily care routines of feeding, diapering, sleeping, and playing to build social and emotional skills in infants. How can you model respect? What can you do to build emotional literacy? How can you foster friendships between infants? Write these goals down in the infant’s caregiving plan.

Source: *California Infant/Toddler Curriculum Framework* by the California Department of Education (Sacramento, 2012).

## RECIPES

### Apple Treats

#### Apple Muffins

##### Ingredients for 15 muffins

- 2 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 2 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 large eggs
- 2/3 cup pure maple syrup
- 1/3 cup coconut oil
- 1/3 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 cups grated apples

Preheat the oven to 425° and line a muffin tin with cupcake liners or grease the wells. In a bowl, combine flour, baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt. In a separate bowl, whisk together eggs, maple syrup, melted coconut oil, applesauce, and vanilla extract. Pour the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients and slowly fold them together. Then add the grated apples. Stir the mixture just enough to combine the ingredients. Fill the muffin tins to the top and bake at 425° for 5 minutes and then decrease the temperature to 350° and bake for 12-18 minutes. Bake until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

Source: Adapted from <https://www.superhealthykids.com> in July 2020.



#### Apple Smoothie

##### Ingredients for 4 servings

- 2 medium apples
- 2 medium bananas
- 1 cup orange juice
- 1/2 cup milk

Wash, core, peel, and chop the apples. Add all of the ingredients to a blender and blend until smooth. Add ice and continue blending again until the desired consistency is reached.



# Joyful Music

Music allows children to be creative, express themselves, dance, sing, play instruments, and socialize. Music teaches children rhythm, patterns, counting, sequencing, coordination, language, and the science of sound. Use music to introduce new vocabulary and concepts. Listening to music, or playing a musical instrument can also help reduce stress.



**Activity:** It's Raining

**Age group:** Infants

**What you need:** No materials are needed.

**What you do:** Place the infant in front of you. Sing the following chant to the tune of *The Farmer in The Dell* while you wiggle your fingers and move them up and down like rain falling from the sky. Chant: "The rain is falling down, the rain is falling down, pitter-patter, pitter-patter, hear the rain fall down." End by gently dancing your fingers on baby's tummy and say, "Splash!" Try this on a rainy day when infants can watch the rain. Place aluminum foil outside a door or window to hear the rain better.

**What they learn:** Infants develop eye muscles by following the movements of your hands, hear new words, and enjoy bonding with you. The repetitive nature of the song is soothing to babies and easy for toddlers to learn.

**Activity:** Stop and Go Dancing

**Age group:** Toddlers

**What you need:** Children's music and a large space for dancing.

**What you do:** Start the music and begin dancing. Invite children to join. Stop the music and say, "Dancers sit down." Repeat this a few times, modeling what to do. Through repetition, toddlers will understand what to do with the musical cues. Stopping and starting is challenging for toddlers, but sitting makes it easier for them to stop. Once they understand the concept, try introducing different music styles such as classical, jazz, or music from other cultures.

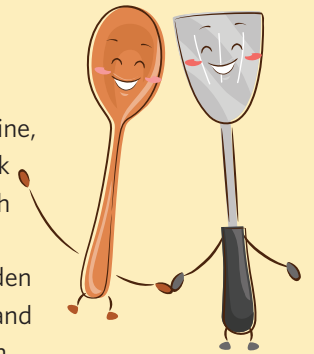


**What they learn:** Toddlers learn to move in time with music, follow directions, and practice self-regulation (self-control).

**Activity:** Music on a String

**Age group:** Preschool

**What you need:** A sturdy, long length of rope or clothesline, smaller lengths of rope or thick yarn, light kitchen utensils with holes in the handles such as colanders, large spoons (wooden and/or metal), spatulas, etc., and two points from which you can hang the clothesline/rope (such as a fence or two trees/poles with space between them).



**What you do:** This is an outdoor activity that needs to be prepared ahead of time. String the long rope or clothesline along the fence and attach it securely by tying the ends to the fence, or tie one end of each side of the rope to a different pole/tree at a height between the child's waist and shoulder so they can easily bang on objects. Use the short lengths of rope to hang the kitchen items from the clothesline. Leave about a foot of space between each item so children are not crowded, and make sure items are low enough to be reached. Invite children to make music by hitting the pots and pans with the spoons and spatulas.

**What they learn:** Children can experiment with rhythm patterns and the science of sound. They can create their own music, and they get to be loud!

# Joyful Music

**Activity:** Make a Frame Drum

**Age group:** School Age

**What you need:** Each child will need 6 inch PVC piping, 4 PVC connectors, packing tape, and a wooden dowel.

**What you do:** Each child can insert the pipes into the connectors in order to make a square frame. Next, they take the packing tape, and starting at one end, begin to wrap it around the frame, until the front and back are completely covered. It is important to pull the tape as tight as possible while wrapping it in order to create a stiff drumming surface. Children may need to work in pairs taking turns to hold/wrap each other's drums. When done, children can use wooden dowels, rhythm sticks, or a wooden spoon to drum. Encourage them to drum to different rhythms and music styles, and challenge them to drum in unison. Watch the video below to see these steps.

**What they learn:** Children learn the mechanics of making a frame drum, practice working cooperatively with each other, follow rhythm patterns, experience different music styles, and enjoy making music.

**Source:** <https://youtu.be/FwkX2jlwa7M>



## ABOUT CHS

For over 129 years, Children's Home Society of California (CHS) has adapted to the changing needs of children and families. Since 1891, CHS has worked diligently to protect our community's children and strengthen their families through diverse programs and services.

At CHS, we view a child not in isolation, but in the context of each family's health, stability, and resources. We believe that families are fundamentally strong and resilient. The mission of CHS is to reach out to children and families at risk with a range of services to ensure every child the opportunity to develop within a safe, healthy, and secure environment.

Therefore, CHS provides a variety of services to children and families in California and nationwide, working to improve their quality of life by offering vital information, education and resource services, and child care assistance.

CHS also serves as an expert resource for child care providers, other social service agencies, and government agencies at the local, state, and national level. To learn more about CHS and resources available to you, please visit our website at [www.chs-ca.org](http://www.chs-ca.org).

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