

# Parenting NEWS & VIEWS

EARLY LEARNING AND  
EDUCATION PROGRAMS

## The Value of Relationships

Relationships are the foundation for infant and toddler social and emotional development.

Strong relationships teach infants about self-care, emotions, social situations, empathy, language, and learning. Secure relationships provide infants and toddlers with the feeling of safety that they need in order to comfortably explore and learn. Family members give infants their first experience with relationships and routines.

Relationships with infants are built through eye contact, touch, and talking.

Parents strengthen their relationship with their baby during play and care routines like feeding, diapering, and bathing. Parents can take advantage of these routines to talk, sing, and smile with their baby.

Through these interactions, parents are also introducing language, identifying emotions, modeling social skills, and promoting critical thinking. Consider what happens in the following story about James, who is taking care of his seven month old daughter Laura:



*Laura throws down the rattle she was playing with and begins to kick her feet. James picks up the rattle, holds it where she can see it, shakes it, and says, "Do you still want to play music?" Laura looks away and begins to pull one of her ears. James knows that she usually pulls on her ear when she is sleepy. He scoots closer to her, places a blanket in his lap, and says, "I see you tugging your ear. That usually means you are tired. Are you sleepy?" Laura says, "Da-da-da" and*

*continued on back*

### What's Inside

Expressing Emotions 2

White Bean Soup 2

Helping with Homework 3

### LEARNING ABOUT FRIENDSHIP

Children learn about themselves and the world around them by creating relationships with family, friends, and caregivers. Sometimes, children struggle with meeting new people. Talking about the characters and situations in children's books can help children explore the social and emotional concepts that are tied to making friends. Here are a few books to try:

- *Do You Want to Be My Friend?* by Eric Carle
- *Thank you, Omu!* by Oge Mora
- *Evelyn Del Rey Is Moving Away* by Meg Medina
- *The Big Umbrella* by Amy June Bates and Juniper Bates
- *I'll Always Be Your Friend* by Sam McBratney
- *The Day You Begin* by Jacqueline Woodson
- *Stick and Stone* by Beth Ferry
- *Strictly No Elephants* by Lisa Mantchev



CHILDREN'S  
HOME  
SOCIETY OF  
CALIFORNIA  
[www.chs-ca.org](http://www.chs-ca.org)

# Expressing Emotions

A child who develops strong social and emotional skills will be more comfortable asking for help, work more easily with others, adjust to new situations with less stress, manage disappointments, resolve conflicts in positive ways, and achieve success with more confidence. One way to help children become socially and emotionally competent is to build their emotional literacy, which involves learning to identify and manage their own emotions.

Introduce infants and toddlers to emotional literacy by reading books or singing songs such as *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. 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. When reading with children, ask them how they think the people in the story feel, and use books like *The Way I Feel* by Janan Cain, or the *Little Critter* books by Mercer Mayer to start conversations about emotions.

Another way to offer support to children is to help them identify the emotions they are feeling, and make suggestions of strategies to manage them in a positive way. An example of this would be, "I saw you slam your book down on the table. Did you do that because you feel mad?" Wait for a response, and then continue guiding him. "I feel mad sometimes too. Let's take a break and come back to this

later." Situations like this one present an opportunity to teach children the names of emotions, learn what causes strong emotions, and find solutions for expressing them appropriately.

Encourage children to develop friendships and play games that promote opportunities to cooperate, negotiate, and develop character. When friends come to visit suggest they play board games, or create their own games outside. By supporting emotional literacy of children, you prepare them to be more resilient to changes in life and equip them with the necessary tools to develop confidence, communication skills, critical thinking, and overall well-being.



## RECIPES White Bean Soup

Beans are a good source of protein, fiber, and iron. Dry beans can be soaked overnight and cooked the next day, or you can purchase canned beans. Make large batches of soup and freeze the leftovers to make easy meals on busy days. The following recipe makes four servings.

### Ingredients

- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 1/2 teaspoons of garlic powder
- 3 tablespoons of fresh sage leaves, chopped
- 2 teaspoons of extra-virgin olive oil
- 30 ounces of great northern white beans
- 15 ounces of water (about 2 cups)
- 1 vegetarian bouillon cube

In a pot, heat the oil and add the onion and garlic. Cook them until they are tender. Stir in the beans with the water and bouillon cube (or 15 ounces of vegetable broth). Stir in the sage and bring the mixture to a boil, stirring it occasionally. Lower the heat and allow the soup to simmer for twenty minutes, or until the beans are soft. Add salt and pepper to taste. Enjoy!

Source: Adapted from <https://about.kaiserpermanente.org/total-health/food-for-health/recipes/easy-white-bean-soup-with-sage> in August 2020.





## Helping with Homework

Children who spend the majority of their day in school may struggle with spending additional time on homework. During the last year, many children have been learning virtually, and parents have had to become more knowledgeable about online learning and how they can best help their children. The encouragement and support of parents is crucial to the academic success of children.

The purpose of homework is for children to practice skills they have learned, or to prepare for skills they will be learning. Parents can review graded work to see what is being learned and identify concerns or areas for improvement. Homework is a way for children, educators, and parents to communicate about the child's individual learning progress. It is not necessary to be an expert in all school subjects to help a child successfully complete homework. Parents can show children how to look for help by searching for answers together, or by asking teachers for resources or tutorial videos. Learning how to find or who to ask for help is an important skill for academic success.

Parents can also guide children in creating an environment for learning. The first step is to sit down and make a daily schedule together. Include time that is needed for chores or any other activities. Try to include ten to fifteen minute breaks during each hour for children to stretch. Large or lengthy projects can be broken down into more manageable steps and worked on each day. Following a consistent routine helps keep children and parents from feeling overwhelmed.

The second step is to choose a quiet workspace. Children who work well independently may benefit from a desk in their

bedroom. Children who need more supervision may work better at a kitchen table where adults are more accessible. Remove distractions like television, text messaging, phone calls, social media, or loud music. Encourage other family members to engage in quiet activities like a puzzle or reading while remote learning or homework is taking place.

The third step is to hold children accountable. Take an interest in what children are learning, and stay in regular contact with their teacher(s) via email or phone calls. Encourage children to share their completed work and celebrate successes. The most important thing is for parents to show children that learning is fun and that they are involved and dedicated to them being successful.

Source: Information was accessed from <https://www.colorincolorado.org/article/how-help-homework-show-you-think-education-and-homework-are-important> in August 2020.





continues tugging on her ear.

James then holds up her favorite stuffed giraffe and asks, "Do you want your giraffe?" Laura smiles and reaches for the giraffe saying, "Buh-buh-buh."

James smiles and holds up the blanket as he asks, "Do you want to rock?" Laura kicks her feet, tugs her ear with her free hand, and finally reaches her arms out to James. He smiles as he picks her up and carries her to the rocking chair. Laura pats James' face, then reaches for the blanket, still holding her giraffe. James begins to rock and softly sing a lullaby.

It is clear that James and his daughter have a routine that has helped them develop a close bond. James has learned that when Laura throws down a toy it means she is probably done playing, and that when she tugs her ear it means she feels tired. Even though she is not talking yet, he asks her questions and waits for her to respond by vocalizing or gesturing. Babies often develop gestures or behaviors to communicate their needs and feelings long before they are able to speak. By being attentive and observant, parents can learn to identify these cues and respond in a way that builds

trust between themselves and their infant. The feeling of trust is what makes infants feel safe enough to explore and learn.

Notice that James also labeled what Laura was feeling, and offered her the items he knew would comfort her and help her relax. By paying attention to her non-verbal cues, James was able to identify how she was feeling, label that feeling for her, and support Laura's ability to control and comfort herself. As she continues to develop, Laura will learn to comfort herself by seeking out her giraffe, and she will strengthen her ability to communicate her emotions and needs to James.

Infants and toddlers need strong and positive relationships in order to develop their social and emotional skills. The interactive conversations that happen in relationships help infants feel valued, respected, and loved. These early experiences set a pattern for how infants and toddlers can continue to feel safe, express themselves, seek comfort, form friendships, develop empathy, and understand our world.

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

## ABOUT CHS

For over 130 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).

© 2021 Children's Home Society of California



Address Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
LOS ANGELES, CA  
PERMIT NO. 32415

www.chs-ca.org  
CHILDREN'S  
HOME  
SOCIETY OF  
CALIFORNIA

