

Hello, Parent!

Welcome to parenthood—a journey like no other, and one that reminds us of our own childhoods.

How were you parented as a child? Do you want to parent the same way, or differently? What kind of experience do you want your child to have? Whatever your answers to these questions, one thing is certain: None of us is born knowing how to take care of babies and young children!

It's important to let go of any embarrassment you might feel and ask questions about parenting. Ask for help when you need it, and let someone know when you feel frustrated, exhausted, or overwhelmed. Talk to family members or friends you trust. Talk to your child's doctor, your child care provider, or other supportive people in your life.

We know that

- Your child's brain develops fastest in the first 5 years of life
- How you interact with your child affects the way their brain develops
- Positive, loving interactions between you and your child support healthy social-emotional development
- Healthy social-emotional development is the most important foundation your child needs to be ready for school

Social-emotional development is your child's ability to

- Experience, manage, and express positive and negative emotions. Your child is able to
 - Experience a range of emotions, such as anger, fear, sadness, joy, and pride
 - Talk about their feelings
 - Learn how to calm down *with your help* (baby or toddler)
 - Learn how to calm down *on their own*, even when all worked up (preschooler)
- Develop close, enjoyable relationships with other children and adults. Your child is able to
 - Attach to you or other primary caregivers (baby or toddler)
 - Develop close relationships with other family members and friends as they get older
- Actively explore the environment with curiosity and confidence. Your child is able to show interest in
 - You and other family members
 - Who they are as a person, their body, and their likes and dislikes
 - Objects and the environment around them
 - Trying new things, learning new skills, and experiencing everything!

Learning More. Use the handouts from *ASQ®:SE-2 Learning Activities & More* to explore social-emotional information about your child and find tips about

- What your child may experience during each stage of development
- Ways you can support your child's social-emotional development
- Parent-child activities that promote social-emotional development
- What you might be experiencing or feeling during each stage of development
- How to take care of yourself

Your Home, Your Family. These handouts offer suggestions and ideas for being with your child in ways that support their healthy social-emotional development. You may feel that some of these ideas are not appropriate for you or your child. Over time, as you and your child get to know each other and grow together, you will learn what works for you both. You may remember games or songs from your own childhood, or family traditions and routines that were part of your life when you were younger. Passing these on to your child is a gift. Your child will learn about your family through the traditions and routines you pass on and those you develop together.

Most important, take joy in this amazing journey!
