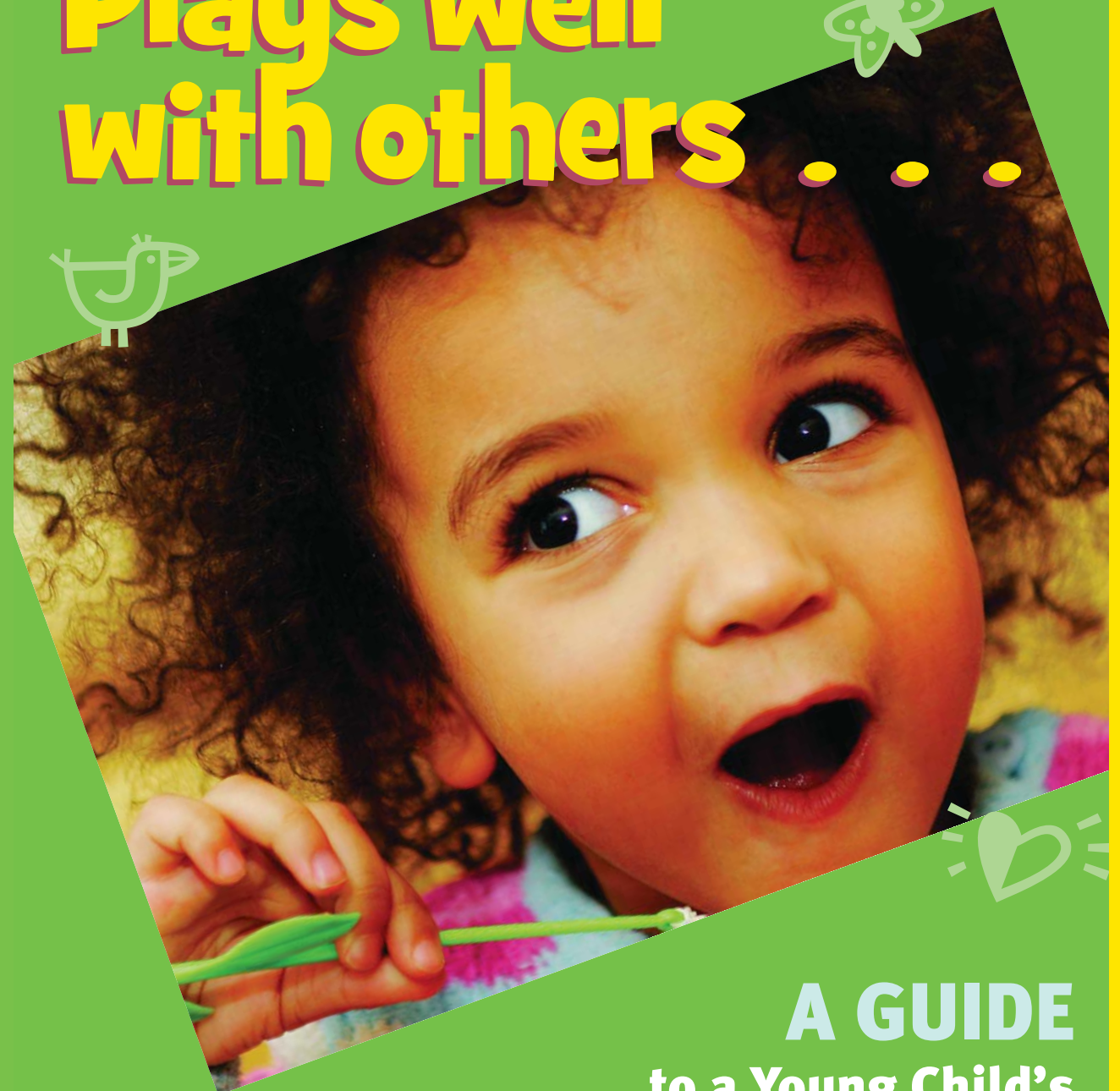




Plays well with others



This brochure has been adapted from a brochure created through the collaborative efforts of the Hennepin County Early Childhood Services unit, the Hennepin County Interagency Early Intervention Committees (IEICs), local early childhood service providers/experts, and two participating graduate students. Funding for the original brochure was provided in part by a federal Early Learning Opportunities Act grant given to the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board (YCB).

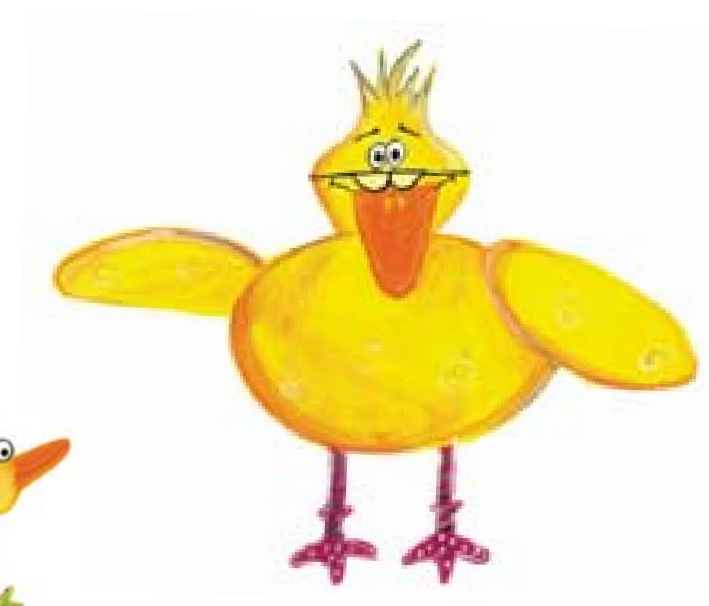
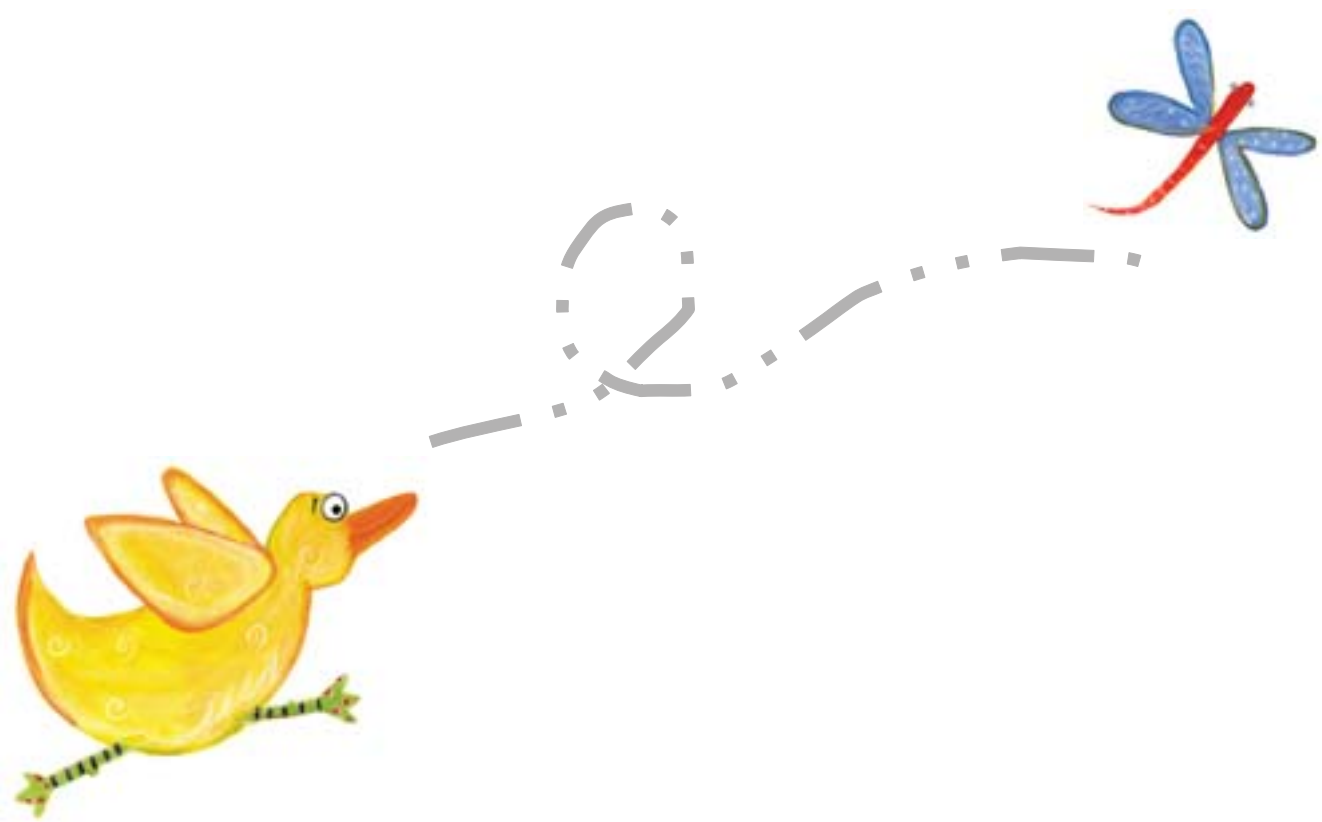
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A GUIDE **to a Young Child's** **Social and Emotional** **Development**





Follow Along to track your child's development

Carver County Public Health nurses are trained to utilize various infant/child development tracking tools to assess the growth and development of infants and children on an individual basis. To serve the general population living in Carver County, the agency's Family Health Department uses the Follow Along Program, a state-wide early childhood tracking program.

The Follow Along Program is designed for parents of children birth to age 3 to help them learn about their child's healthy growth and development. Through the Follow Along Program, parents can learn if their child is playing, talking, growing, moving and acting like other children the same age.



Parents receive Follow Along Program questionnaires related to the child's growth and development when their child reaches 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 30 and 36 months of age. Public Health sends age-appropriate activities sheets and information on the developmental stages to participating families after the questionnaires are returned. The educational materials focus on child development, health, safety, reading and parenting.

A public health nurse follows up with any concerns parents may have about their child's development. Parents receive information on community resources and support to access needed services.

The Follow Along Program is open to all county residents. There are no eligibility requirements to participate in the Follow Along Program and no fees for participating in the program.

Call Carver County Public Health at 952-361-1329 for more information on Follow Along.

What is social and emotional development?

Young children (ages 6 months to 5 years) are learning and growing at a rapid rate. One part of this growth is their social and emotional development – broadly defined as how well they manage their emotions and interact with others. Social and emotional development is important because it affects many parts of your child's life, including his or her behavior at home and with others, the ability to make friends, the willingness to try new things and handle frustrations, and future success in school.

Helping your child develop good social and emotional skills will make him/her more:

- happy and confident
- able to make and keep friends
- successful at school
- able to follow directions and learn new ideas
- ready to cope with stress
- willing to express his needs

Read this brochure to learn more about:

- Typical behavior at different ages (6 months to 5 years)
- Behavior concerns
- Tips on how you can help

Remember: All children benefit from positive adult interaction!

The information in this brochure is simply a guide to what is typical development, and what behaviors might be worth asking about. If a behavior seems unusual, happens over and over or goes on for a long time, this may mean your child needs extra help. Catching problems at an early age usually makes them a lot easier to solve. Help is available!

If you are concerned about something you see your child doing, call one of these helpful numbers:

- 952-361-1329: Carver County Public Health offers the Follow Along Program, an early childhood tracking program used to periodically monitor and screen infants and toddlers for health and developmental problems to ensure early identification and necessary intervention.
- 952-368-0160: First Step provides assistance to parents in accessing and planning for services such as screening and assessment of a child's needs, special education, physical therapy, occupational therapy, respite care, family education, social services, nursing and child behavior specialist services.
- 651-201-3650: Minnesota Children With Special Health Needs works to improve the access and quality of all systems impacting children and youth with special health care needs and their families.

These parenting tips help with children of any age

- ✓ Parenting can be hard – it’s okay to wonder whether you are being a good parent
- ✓ It’s okay to take a break and ask for help
- ✓ Model what you expect by sharing, taking turns and saying, “please,” “thank you,” “I’m sorry” and “I forgive you”
- ✓ Keep the rules clear and try not to make exceptions
- ✓ Make sure the adults in your child’s life are working together
- ✓ Be firm with your child, but also respectful and patient
- ✓ Listen to your child – allow her to share her thoughts and feelings
- ✓ Reward good behavior with encouraging praise instead of food
- ✓ Limit your child’s TV and video games – encourage playing with others instead
- ✓ When your child acts out, remember that he or she is not bad, the behavior is bad
- ✓ Stick to a daily routine as much as possible, like meal times and bedtimes
- ✓ You and your child may have different personalities – try to make them work together
- ✓ Make sure your child gets plenty of exercise
- ✓ Get to know people your child spends time with, like teachers, daycare providers or their friend’s caregivers
- ✓ Learn to deal with your own anger – try taking deep breaths or calling a friend
- ✓ All children benefit from positive adult interaction!

In general, as children get older they will become more able to:

- calm themselves down
- follow rules
- communicate their feelings
- do things themselves
- have sympathy for others
- interact in a positive way with other people



By 6 months . . .

A child typically:

- ☺ Smiles
- ☺ Cries
- ☺ Makes eye contact
- ☺ Recognizes your face/voice
- ☺ Responds to other people’s facial expressions
- ☺ Enjoys cuddling and hugging
- ☺ Can feel excited, happy, relaxed or upset
- ☺ Responds to sounds, like her name and the word “no”
- ☺ Enjoys both quiet and play times
- ☺ Begins to make sounds or babble

What kind of behavior should I be concerned about?

- Does not smile or make other facial expressions on her own
- Does not cry
- Does not respond to sounds
- Refuses to cuddle
- Is fussy and cries most of the time
- Does not babble or make eye contact

Things to help your SIX-MONTH-OLD with his or her social and emotional development:

- ✓ Have fun with your baby by talking, reading, looking at books, singing, laughing, dancing and playing games
- ✓ Learn and be attentive to your baby’s cries – this makes him feel safe, it will not spoil him
- ✓ Hold and tenderly touch your baby as much as possible, especially when feeding
- ✓ Introduce your baby to interesting places, objects and sounds, while making sure he or she is safe
- ✓ Remember that babies are interested in exploring the world and want to feel safe – this is a challenge for them
- ✓ Stay close to your baby around new people
- ✓ Baby-proof your house, making it a safe place to move and explore
- ✓ Begin to stick with a daily routine – this helps her feel secure
- ✓ Talk in a soft and soothing voice, telling your baby you love her and how strong she is

