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## EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION

# Promoting social development

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Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) is a division within the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). ECI programs provide services to families with children birth to 36 months of age with developmental delays or disabilities. For more information about DARS/ECI, call 1-800-628-5115 or visit [www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis](http://www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis).

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One of the services provided by an early childhood intervention (ECI) program is specialized skills training (SST). This service, as stated by law, is intended to address the “design of learning environments and activities that promote the child’s acquisition of skills in a variety of developmental areas, including cognitive processes and social interaction.” In the winter issue, we reviewed SST as it relates to supporting a child’s cognitive development. In this issue we address SST as it relates to promoting a child’s social interaction. Social, emotional, and cognitive development are closely related.

### **An environment of relationships**

Young children learn within the context of relationships. Infants prefer human stimuli to any other interaction. They innately orient to people’s faces and would rather listen to speech or singing than any other kind of sound.

Scientists have not discovered any special tech-

niques for enhancing the natural wiring phase in children’s brain development. Normal, loving, responsive caregiving seems to provide babies with the ideal environment for encouraging their own exploration, which is always the best route to learning. Positive relationships with primary caregivers are essential (Zero to Three).

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## YOUNG CHILDREN LEARN WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF RELATIONSHIPS.

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“Young children experience their world as an environment of relationships, and these relationships affect virtually all aspects of their development—intellectual, social, emotional, physical, behavioral, and moral. The warmth and support of the caregiver in a child care setting also influence the development of important capabilities in children, including greater social competence, fewer behavior problems, and enhanced thinking and reasoning skills at school age” (Harvard Center on the Developing Child).

### **Two resources**

Here are two resources to help you work in partnership with the ECI SST provider to support social/emotional development.

- Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL): The Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children. The center, located at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, is a national resource center funded by the Office of Head Start and Child Care Bureau.



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The center has developed extensive, user-friendly training materials, videos, and print resources that are available directly from its website to help early care, health, and education providers implement the model. <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/>

- The Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children (TACSEI), funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. This center creates free products and resources on the best practices for improving social-emotional outcomes of young children at risk for delays or disabilities.

Decision makers, caregivers, and service providers can use the resources to obtain a better understanding of effective practices, as determined by research, and apply them to everyday work. Most of the products are available on the center's website for immediate download and use. [www.challengingbehavior.org/](http://www.challengingbehavior.org/)

## References

- Early intervention services, 34 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 303.13 (b)(14). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Harvard University, Center on the Developing Child, [www.developingchild.harvard.edu](http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu).
- Zero to Three, [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org). ■