# **Social And Emotional Development In the Home:**

Source- urbanchildinstitute.org (This is a website of The Urban Child Institute. The Urban Child Institute was created in 1995. It is dedicated to promoting the education, health, and well-being of young children in Shelby County.)

**Article:**

A child’s home influences his or her development. The home is a safe place for play and nurturing, which is key for social and emotional development. The home is also where important interactions happen with parents, caregivers, friends, siblings, and others in the community.

**Parent-child Interactions Affect Social and Emotional Development-**

A child’s relationship with a consistent, caring adult in the early years is associated with healthier behaviors, more positive peer interactions, increased ability to cope with stress, and better school performance later in life. Babies who receive affection and nurturing from their parents have the best chance of healthy development.

**Question: What effect does warm, sensitive, and responsive parenting have on young children?**

**Answer:** It promotes feelings of safety and security, which provide children with the confidence to explore and engage with their surrounding environment. Children learn to trust that their parents will be there for them when they need something, when they are hurt, or when they have encountered something upsetting.

**Did you know?**

Parental warmth—touching, holding, comforting, rocking, singing, and talking calmly—can help children manage their emotional experience. This can contribute to the reduction of behavior problems down the road.

**How you can help:**

* Encourage parents to provide warm, responsive, and sensitive support to their children and emphasize the importance of comforting, reading to, and talking and playing with children.
* Consider supporting, developing, or expanding programs that will foster the development of positive parent-child interactions.
* Model positive social and sharing behavior in your everyday interactions with children and parents.

**Parental Stress may Hinder the Social and Emotional Development of Children**

The developing brains of infants and toddlers are wired to expect responsive, warm, and sensitive interactions with parents and caregivers. But if that doesn’t happen, children can suffer. Children in families experiencing hardship or poverty often witness stress, in the form of sadness and anger, from their parents and don’t get the nurturing they need. This can affect children’s abilities to understand and read people’s emotions. Children as young as two can also experience sleep disturbances, become withdrawn, or display aggressive behaviors. These and other negative behaviors can follow them into later childhood and adulthood.

**Data facts:**

* In a national study of high-risk children in Early Head Start, approximately 28% of parents with children 12 months old report having high levels of parental stress.
* Using the same measure, approximately 15% of parents with children 12 months old in Shelby County report having high levels of parental stress.
* Mothers who are younger, single, have lower education levels, or are nonwhite are more likely to report having high levels of parental stress.

**Maternal or Paternal Depression may Harm Parent-child Interactions**

Parental depression also poses a serious risk for healthy child development.

If a parent has depression, he or she is less likely to provide rich, positive experiences that promote healthy social and emotional development. It can also compromise the quality of the parent–child relationship during critical years of development.

**Data facts:**

* In the first year following childbirth, 7 percent to 13 percent of women experience depression.
* In a national study of high-risk children in Early Head Start, 17.6 percent of mothers of 12-month-olds experienced moderate to severe depression.
* In Shelby County, 5 percent of mothers of 12-month-olds reported symptoms indicative of depression, and nearly 10 percent of these mothers had possible depression (i.e., just under the threshold for depression). Mothers who were younger, single, had less education, or were nonwhite were more likely to be depressed.

**How you can help**

* If someone you know seems sad or withdrawn for a long period of time, and it is affecting his or her work or home life, encourage him or her to seek help from a professional.
* Provide training or resources to parents and community members about how to combat stress and address mental health concerns.
* Educate parents about the link between their emotional and mental health and their child’s development and well-being.

**Social Support can Help Both Parents and Children**

It is important to have people you can count on for support, particularly when dealing with stress. Social support can reduce the emotional distress of the parent, and help improve the quality of parent-child relationships.

When support and encouragement is given to those caring for a child, adults are better able to be responsive and nurturing parents. Social support— both from trusted medical professionals and from less formal networks, such as friends, family, and a faith community—help reduce the stress that comes with raising a child.

Through providing parents with increased opportunities to complete school or job-training, or connecting them with local resources to address their own health, providers can utilize a more holistic approach to strengthen the family’s well-being by addressing parents’ needs, thus enhancing parent-child interaction, and in turn, children’s development.

**Social support can be provided in many forms. It can include money, resources, companionship, or providing assistance with tasks such as child care or running errands.**

**How you can help**

* Provide or support opportunities to grow and strengthen the social networks of mothers/parents and young families.
* Help parents access high-quality child care, which may provide respite and lower maternal stress while expanding the parents support network.

**Conclusion**

The development of social and emotional skills depends heavily on the experiences that children have in their home. Children can thrive with regular, positive, parent-child interactions. While parental stress and mental health concerns can jeopardize these interactions, mental health treatment and general social support of parents can alleviate some of the stress and strain of raising a child. This, in turn, will enable parents to focus more on their child and provide a warm, nurturing environment in their home.