

Missouri Children's Division Policy Statement on Social and Emotional Behavioral Health for Child Care Subsidy Providers

The Missouri Children's Division recognizes the importance of children's social-emotional and behavioral health. We believe high quality child care and positive experiences nurture social-emotional and behavioral health. Positive social-emotional and behavioral health is a key component for a child's health and healthy development.

Child care providers, who establish positive relationships with children from birth through the early years, and value diversity, cultures and languages, will enable children to feel safe and secure in their environment. This lays a foundation for healthy social and emotional development. Children's experiences from infancy to early childhood affects how children will relate to the world around them, express themselves, manage their emotions, and establish positive relationships with others.

Social and emotional development involves several interrelated areas of development, including *social interaction*, *emotional awareness*, and *self-regulation*. Research has shown that a strong social and emotional foundation in a child's early years will impact throughout their lives in developing relationships, academics and overall development.

The Children's Division Early Childhood and Prevention Services Section will support providers and parents by raising awareness on the:

- Importance of establishing a child care environment that meets children's basic social awareness and skills;
- Importance of care being provided by trusting adults with knowledge of social and emotional development of a child;
- Importance of engaging infants, toddlers and pre-school age children in positive learning and social interactions;
- Need to Integrate classroom management with social and emotional learning; and
- Impact of expulsion, suspension, and other exclusionary disciplinary practices in child care settings.

The Children's Division Early Childhood and Prevention Services Section will further support providers by:

- Reviewing and updating policies regarding program quality that are specifically targeted to social and emotional behavioral health.
- Supporting professional development by requiring training of CCDF subsidy providers in social and emotional development; and
- Researching supports for child care providers to reduce expulsion, suspension and other exclusionary disciplinary practices.

Early childhood settings offer the opportunity for caregivers to promote a child's social and emotional development. By raising awareness of the importance, through policies, training and supports to reduce exclusionary discipline practices, more children will have the positive effects from being cared for by individuals with knowledge of the importance of social and emotional behavioral health interventions.