



## Parenting the Preschooler

### Social Competence & Emotional Well-Being Fact Sheets

# What does your child do to join in with others?

#### Ages & Stages

**PRECHOOLER** A child who is 3 to 5 years of age.

**YOUNG CHILD** A child who is 0 to 8 years of age.

#### Minding Our Language

**Families come in all shapes, sizes, and styles. A “family” may include people who are related by blood, by marriage, and by choice. “Parents” may be biological, step-, foster, adoptive, legally appointed, or something else. When we use the words “family” and “parent” in these materials, we do so inclusively and with great respect for all adults who care for and work with young people.**

It can be hard for preschoolers to know how to peaceably join other children who are already playing together. Many preschoolers push their way in and upset the children who had been playing happily. Others just stand back and watch, even if they really want to play. Preschoolers are just learning how to get along with others their age and might not know the best way to join other children playing together. Help your child feel more comfortable joining a group by trying some of these ideas:

- Let them play next to the group. After a while the children may get together by themselves. Children are often very inviting!
- Take your child’s hand and walk them over to the other children. Let them watch what the others are doing before they try to join in.
- Ask them to think of ways they can play with the kids. (*“I see the children are making a house with blocks. How could you help them do that?”*)
- Teach your child to say, “Can I play with you?” before breaking into a group at play so the other children are expecting them.
- Help your child find another activity if the other children say no. Explain that the children are not ready for others to join them yet.
- Let your child be who they are. If your child is shy or withdrawn, give them space and time to adjust. Just watching might be good enough for now!

#### Find Out More

MSU Extension provides the following resources for parents and caregivers of preschoolers and young children at no or low cost. Be sure to check out these and other MSU Extension resources available at [www.extension.msu.edu](http://www.extension.msu.edu).

**Extension Extras** (<https://bit.ly/2LC2vdX>) – These compilations of news articles, activities, parenting tips and advice are published online Monday through Friday. The resources are designed for parents and caregivers of young children who are home all day during the novel coronavirus pandemic. Each day has a theme: Mindful Mondays, Tips on Tuesday, Working Wednesdays, Thinking Thursday, and Fun Fridays.

**Extension Extras Enrichment Kits** (<https://bit.ly/35QAplQ>) – These kits feature five or six early childhood activities with learning goals focused in areas such as social and emotional health, literacy, and STEM; a supply list; suggested children’s books; introduction letters explaining how to use the materials; and an evaluation. The kits are available as free downloads.

**Early Childhood Videos** (<https://bit.ly/3ioyEkS>) – These short videos offer parents and caregivers of young children information on parenting topics. Titles include “Perspective Taking,” “Family Movies,” “Goals of Misbehavior,” “Using Thinking and Feeling Words,” “The Waiting Game,” and “When Siblings Fight.”

**Building Early Emotional Skills (BEES) in Young Children** (<https://bit.ly/38XW4KI>) – This page provides links to a variety of free online parenting courses, workshops, and events offered by MSU Extension for parents and caregivers of young children aged 0 to 3.

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