



A SOLID SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL FOUNDATION

By Deborah Peel

Just ask the parents...

"I need to be present as a parent so that my children can safely and positively try things, feel things, and experience life on a broad spectrum."

Ian, Parent of 2, Chico, CA

"Reading a book together opens up these awesome, intimate conversations that make our relationships even richer – and it fosters imagination!"

Ashley, Parent of 2, Chico, CA

Today, James Gilmore, age 6, achieved "super student" status in first grade. Little brother Max, age 3, got to share at preschool; he brought a baseball. Proud parents Ian and Ashley applaud their sons' achievements as the boys experience life outside their home. James and Max are using the social-emotional skills they've been developing since infancy to manage themselves "out there." Right now, "out there" is the classroom, the soccer field, and the bicycle pump track.

Social-emotional skills help children regulate their behavior, express their feelings appropriately, and form positive relationships with other people. Who helps them learn things like self-control, "using their words," cooperating, sharing, and noticing (and caring) how others are feeling? It's the people with whom children have their first close relationships. Parents, caregivers, and even siblings influence the social and emotional skills children build. Yes, mom and dad, they do take after you!

How do you make these "soft skills" strong? For the Gilmore family, a predictable routine and the parents modeling and expecting courteous behavior, good manners, and the kind treatment of people – including each other – is helping to build social-emotional skills.

"Our evening routine is dinner together, bath time, teeth brushing, and choosing a book (sometimes three books) for our bedtime story," says Ashley. "We've read to our sons since infancy."

Ian is quick to jump in on this subject. "It's not just about literacy. Reading books broadens your child's understanding of what's going on in the world. Later, they'll be reading to help them solve problems."

As our visit winds down, I ask James how he achieved "super student" status. After a moment of thought his face beams as he replies, "Good listening!"

Indeed, good listening and other social-emotional skills help children focus on learning, and that helps them succeed in school. Patiently nurture your child's social-emotional foundation to prepare your child for the day when "out there" will mean college, career training, the workplace, and a great big world.

GOOD STUFF

Positive Parenting Program (Triple P)

www.triplephasta.com

Butte Parent Café

www.butteparentcafe.com

First 5 Siskiyou Resources

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First 5 Glenn County

www.first5glenncounty.com/YOUR-Community/Resources



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