The Governor's Office of Early Childhood believes that parents are a child's first and most important teacher. There is no more important and amazing responsibility than to help your child grow emotionally and socially. These so called "soft skills" are critical to their future development and success; and research shows that



emotional and social development provides the foundation for how we feel about ourselves and how we experience others. Please share this with your friends and neighbors with small children. Our goal is to have every child in Kentucky; Ready to Grow, Ready to Learn and ready to Succeed.

The Social/Emotional Standard is for a child to demonstrate trust and engage in social relationships; and sense of self.

Your child's feelings about themselves, as well as developing relationships with others will be very helpful in all other areas of his/her development

## 10 "soft" Skills of a Child who is Kindergarten Ready

Social and Emotional Development/ Approaches to Learning

- 1) Is curious and initiates learning experiences; Persists in activities and tasks
- 2) Is learning to explore and try new things; Asks questions and knows rules
- 3) Is learning to work well alone and is learning to cooperate with others children
- 4) Can follow simple instructions and uses self control; can help with simple chores
- 5) Participates and shows interest in creative activities; Uses a variety of materials
- 6) Expresses positive outlook; expresses needs and wants verbally
- 7) Cooperates and shows concern for others; gives help to others
- 8) Engages in symbolic / imaginative play with self or peers (plays house, fireman)
- 9) Expresses curiosity and eagerness for learning (tries new activities, asks questions)
- 10) Listens to adults and follows simple directions; Shows independence in self-help skills.

The skills listed above are helpful for children to know before entering Kindergarten. The indicators included represent the hopes and aspirations for incoming students, not the expectations. Kentucky recognizes that children develop and learn at different rates and times. Not every child will master all of the skills and behaviors listed above prior to Kindergarten. These skills and behaviors are not used to determine school eligibility. In Kentucky, all children who meet the legal age requirement are entitled to enter public school.

## What families Can Do to Help Their Child

Read stories to children that involve feelings Facilitate children working together

Give children routines and tasks at home Model
expressing
sympathy
and empathy

Draw art, sing songs, encourage creativity

Play games that involve give and take

Encourage curiosity and answer questions

Teach them
basic and
important
information

## Professor James Heckman on Early Childhood Investment and Socio Emotional "soft" Skills



"Such early efforts promote schooling, reduce crime, foster workforce productivity and reduce teenage pregnancy. They have rates of return to investment that are higher than the return to investments in the stock market even in normal times."

"If a child is not motivated and engaged to learn early on in life, the more likely it is that when the child becomes an adult, he or she will fail in social and economic life."

"In promoting successful lives, we need to recognize the multiplicity of human abilities. Currently, public policy in most countries around the world—and the U.S. is no exception—focuses on promoting and measuring cognitive ability as measured by achievement tests. There is no question that cognitive abilities are important determinants of socioeconomic success. However, there is also decisive evidence that socio emotional skills—physical and mental health, perseverance, attention, motivation, and self-confidence—are as important in predicting success in life. In many tasks in life, they are more important. There is hard evidence on the power of "soft" skills. They contribute greatly to performance in society at large and in workforce productivity."

"Invest in prevention, not remediation."