**[Mary Holwell]:** I'm going to move onto another question, Andi. You said that the early social and emotional skills that babies learn that some of which they might be experts at, but by the time they are only one year old, are the foundations of all other development, and impact on that child's later life success. I think our participants would be really interested to hear you speak about this. Perhaps you could share some examples with us of some of these social and emotional skills that you touched on just a moment ago?

**[Dr Andi Salamon]:** Yes, for sure. And Steph, if you could please put up slide four. I think you can kind of see some of them. And so just first of all, that's a big claim I seem to have made about that's the foundation of all other development. So [laughing, inaudible], I need to kind of find it, bring that one back in and temper it a little. But I think.

**[Mary Holwell]:** You could say of some development then?

**[Dr Andi Salamon]:** Yes, I will be giving examples of those things, I can’t make that big claim yet, give me, I want to say five, but let's say 10 years. In terms of social and emotional skills, I think the skill of close observation of others. You know, babies and children, they notice things. I remember once I brought my eight-month-old in my arms into a room of adults and we were talking to a family friend and she had really high hair that we learned was called an up-style.

And so I'm holding him and we're all just chatting and chatting. And I noticed his face and he would just, like to keep his eyes just went all the way to the top of her hair, and then all the way back. This attention, they come to see things in the world and they come to learn what attention is and act with intention, which feeds into their emotional development as well. And so, I think this idea of social and emotional, what might start as social impacts on the emotional development. Because early on, they start to associate, we know about cause and effect, and that's a part of their cognitive development and what they start to do is associate their actions with the reactions of the world. If their world is safe, secure, and respectful, it's often interested caregivers who respond in certain ways. And again, my poor child, I do have ethics clearance for using his stories.

At the age of seven months old, he’d try and touch something and I'd say ‘no’. And then he’d put this face on and go and pretend to cry and I'd say ‘no’, and he'd do it again. And then he'd always give it one last go and I'd say ‘no’. And then he would just switch it off and crawl away. He then would do it to my mum or my partner, he'd want something, and he'd do the face and they'd go “Ooh what's wrong [inaudible]”. And they would pick him up. And there was a very different reaction from the different people, but he was using what he knew. He thought would get what he wanted. And so when you think about how that develops in life, I continue to use these stories because at five, the great negotiator, always around screen time was trying to negotiate getting screen time in the middle of the week at five years old, when he knew he normally didn't have it.

And he literally, so [inaudible] I was thinking, “You know how”. And then he just stopped mid-sentence. He goes, "Oh, don't worry." And I said, "What?" And he says, "You'll just say no anyway." And he walked away. So it was the same response, which then at nine years old turned into doing these things because he wanted something. And I said, why when I said ‘no’ now, would it change two hours later? And at nine years old, he said to me, "Because you’re meant to feel for me." So that started when he was seven months old. And I remember when I was seeing it, I thought, "Well, what does that turn into?". And I think I called it being a pork chop, but I think a flipped around version of that in terms of it being a successful strategy and I use this word without any negative connotation, but they start to learn to manipulate the world in ways to get what they want.

And I attended AJEC the other day. And Lesley Rameka from New Zealand spoke about this Maori, and I've also found it in some Islander friends I have, this idea that, that turns into resourcefulness and testing limits and questioning. And but for those cultures, they see that as a positive where sometimes for us in a Western culture, it's not necessarily seen in that way. But I was that child. And I think it helped me as an adult in ways, knowing the rules, the lay of the land and finding ways within that to get what you want. So, I think knowing that they're clever, that early, we have a responsibility to help them develop their self-regulation because they don't always get what they want. And then how do you deal with that? That's a helpful thing to learn. And if they're doing it early on, then why wouldn't we help them learn how to manage early on, help them understand?

And this is some of what you were saying in the mind matters, help them understand what they're feeling, what they might want, give them words. And so there's lots of good stuff out there that Sheila Degotardi has written about where you can actually use this mind mindedness talk, where you start to name the feelings. First of all, you have to understand, you have to know that babies do have minds and that they matter, and then purposely choose to help them learn how to do that. And so I think another skill that they're not given credit for and it's so short and it's I guess, emotional, because it's a positive, it happens in both positive and negative ways. I’ve turned this idea as emotional capital. So it's an idea where they've got some power in their evocative, emotional responses.

And then what they ended up doing is pretending, right? He was pretending to cry at seven months old. Now babies are not given credit developmentally for that. Children are meant to start dramatic play at three years old. So again, if we stuck with our taken, the knowledge that that has carried over for decades, we would not look for that, but they're doing it. Right? So they pretend to cry and laugh and cough. And we'll see that in that video that's coming and they glee in it. And again, that's the point of connection and helps develop these stimulating relationships, but it's also connected, dramatic play is connected with cognitive capacity. So again, knowing that pretend play is linked with cognitive capacity and imagining that part of what we're doing in our pedagogy is to build on and extend children's development and their developmental capacities, holistically. I'm not just saying cognitive is important, it's a part of what we're there for.

I think we can start to purposely incorporate some of this pretend play into our pedagogical work. And then I think probably the last point, I don't know where my timings at, but with my 20 years of practice and past research work has shown me that babies are social beings. And again, the developmental literature shows us to what degree that they're really tuned in. I think helping them be social in calm and focused ways can lay foundations for their future social skill development. I've seen so many educators scream. I don't know if other people have seen it, but a baby goes to touch a baby and they go, "Stop!" Right? Like again, what kind of association comes from that?

Because I'm just curious and interested in another baby. I get that I might be about to poke that baby in the eye, which is where the educators, that's where their job is to be close by and to observe closely and see is that baby that's touching the other one being gentle? Are you saying gentle hands? Because being on standby and helping them learn that at seven months old, eight months old, nine months old, what toddlers do those turn into? You think about developmental trajectories and I think that's actually quite powerful. The other part of that is about is the baby who's been touched okay about being touched? So again, this is where I think that's what pedagogy is, it's sophisticated and it's artful. Yeah.

**[Mary Holwell]:** Yeah. I think that's a great explanation, Andi, that idea of it being very artful and being very sophisticated really should help educators think very broadly about what it is they're doing. And if we think about some of those things, you mentioned there, where you talked about that idea that that babies who are resourceful and questioning can then be further supported to help develop their self-regulation. It might be viewed positively by some cultural groups. It may be viewed less positively by other cultural groups, but either way through that resourcefulness and questioning that babies show that inquiry, that curiosity, there are opportunities there all the time to support the baby, to develop the self-regulation that's necessary.

And that's where that active educator idea who's monitoring and responding and affirming the right kinds of things and gently guiding and redirecting the others and giving that child the time and the space to adjust and to modify their behavior is really setting up a good kind of neural mechanism, I suppose, for that child to develop strong self-regulation skills that will be useful for them. Not only in that moment but which can be built on time and time again to create a young child or young citizen whose self-regulation skills are really very highly developed and can contribute then in, or will have more meaningful opportunities to contribute into community and into other social interactions. So thank you for that very comprehensive answer.

[Copyright Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Footer/Pages/Copyright.aspx) 2021