

Social-Emotional Development: **Exploring Interactions Through Block Building and Pretend Play**

Strands:	<i>Self</i>	<i>Social Interaction</i>	<i>Relationships</i>
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GETTING READY

Instructional Component(s): In-Class Activity; Assessment

Strands: This activity can be used to develop familiarity with and deepen understanding of all strands or the individual strand Social Interaction.

Focus: Students explore where, in some typical preschool curriculum activities, opportunities emerge to observe aspects of social-emotional development substrands in action.

AFTER PARTICIPATING IN THIS ACTIVITY

Students will demonstrate **knowledge** and **skills** that are consistent with an increased understanding and application of the concepts addressed in this activity.

Students will demonstrate an understanding of:

- The foundations for social-emotional development, including strands, substrands, foundations, and examples of foundations (introductory understanding) (*Standards 1 & 5*)*
- Where and how children engage in experiences and activities related to the Social Interaction (and other) strand(s) in their early childhood education programs (*Standards 4 & 5*)*
- How aspects of social-emotional development can be related to developing skills and behaviors in other domains of development (*Standard 1*)*
- Social-emotional competencies at different ages, “at around 48 months of age” as compared with “at around 60 months of age,” as described in the foundations (*Standards 1 & 5*)*

Students will be able to:

- Describe and discuss the foundations for social-emotional development, including strands, substrands, foundations, and examples of foundations (*Standard 1 & 5*)*
- Identify examples of the foundations in social-emotional development (*Standards 1 & 5*)*
- Connect specific foundations and related strands to experiences with typical activities in an early childhood education setting (*Standards 1, 4, & 5*)*
- Identify characteristics of social-emotional competences consistent with different ages, “at around 48 months of age” as compared with “at around 60 months of age” (*Standards 1 & 5*)*

*See Appendix A

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Before you start

This activity will work best if students have already developed some familiarity with the substrands and foundations in the social-emotional development domain. This activity is also enriched by the presence of students with experience in preschool programs. There is a worksheet following this activity that can be used to organize students' responses and reflections. It is recommended that it be used as students are reflecting on their experience, not as they are doing it.

Getting it started

Divide students into pairs. Give each pair some building blocks and ask each pair to build a tower. After about five minutes, reorganize students into groups of three and again ask them to build a tower with their blocks.

Putting it together



Slides 2-3

After five to ten minutes in groups of three, ask students to reflect on their experience with the following questions:

- What was different between groups of two and groups of three?
- When and where did you collaborate and how did that happen?
- What was different about how you collaborated?
- What was different about decision making?

Then, focus on the foundations and ask these questions:

- Which of the social-emotional development substrands were evident as you worked in these groups?
- Were differences in the ages, “at around 48 months of age” as compared with “at around 60 months of age,” evident for the foundations themselves?
- What are the implications of this for working with preschool children?

For some students, it might work best to do the activity and then have them respond to these questions while still in their small groups. These responses could be recorded and then reported out.

**Another
way**

Slides 2-3

Gather some props for pretend play or ask students to bring them to class. Go through the activity as above, but start with a group of three and then redo it in a group of four. Have each group discuss what they will play, assign roles, decide what will happen, and then act it out.

Again, ask these questions:

- What was different between groups of two and groups of three?
- When and where did you collaborate and how did that happen?
- What was different about how you collaborated?
- What was different about decision making?

Then focus on the foundations and ask these questions:

- Which of the social-emotional development substrands were evident as you worked in these groups?
- Were differences in the ages, “at around 48 months of age” as compared with “at around 60 months of age,” evident for the foundations themselves?
- What are the implications of this for working with preschool children?

or

There are many variations to this activity. This activity could begin with a group of three, with one person acting as recorder. Groups could then add a fourth, have three do the building, and again have the recorder note the activity. What ideas were brought forth from the observer and how did the dynamics change?

This also could be done with a small group demonstrating the activity for the rest of the class. Others in the class could record the activity as an anecdotal record, and then the entire class could address the questions.

or

Have a small group engage in pretend play as a two- or three-minute skit while the rest of the class observes. Ask the group to dramatize examples from the social-emotional development substrands in their skits. This will require some planning and preparation time, which will vary depending on how familiar they are with the social-emotional foundations.

Ask the observing students to take a piece of paper and fold it in half. Ask them to write the substrands down one side of their paper. Then have them record examples of the substrands they can identify in the skit.

When the skit is complete, ask students to share which foundations they observed and what part of the skit brought these foundations to light.

Assessment Pass out index cards and ask students to write down at least one thing they learned or now understand. Fill in the blank, “Something I now know is” “Something I now understand is”

Social-Emotional Development Substrands	Examples	
	Children at around 48 months of age	Children at around 60 months of age
<i>Self-Awareness</i>		
<i>Self-Regulation</i>		
<i>Social and Emotional Understanding</i>		
<i>Empathy and Caring</i>		
<i>Initiative in Learning</i>		
<i>Interactions with Familiar Adults</i>		
<i>Interactions with Peers</i>		
<i>Group Participation</i>		
<i>Cooperation and Responsibility</i>		
<i>Attachments to Parents</i>		
<i>Close Relationships with Teachers and Caregivers</i>		
<i>Friendships</i>		