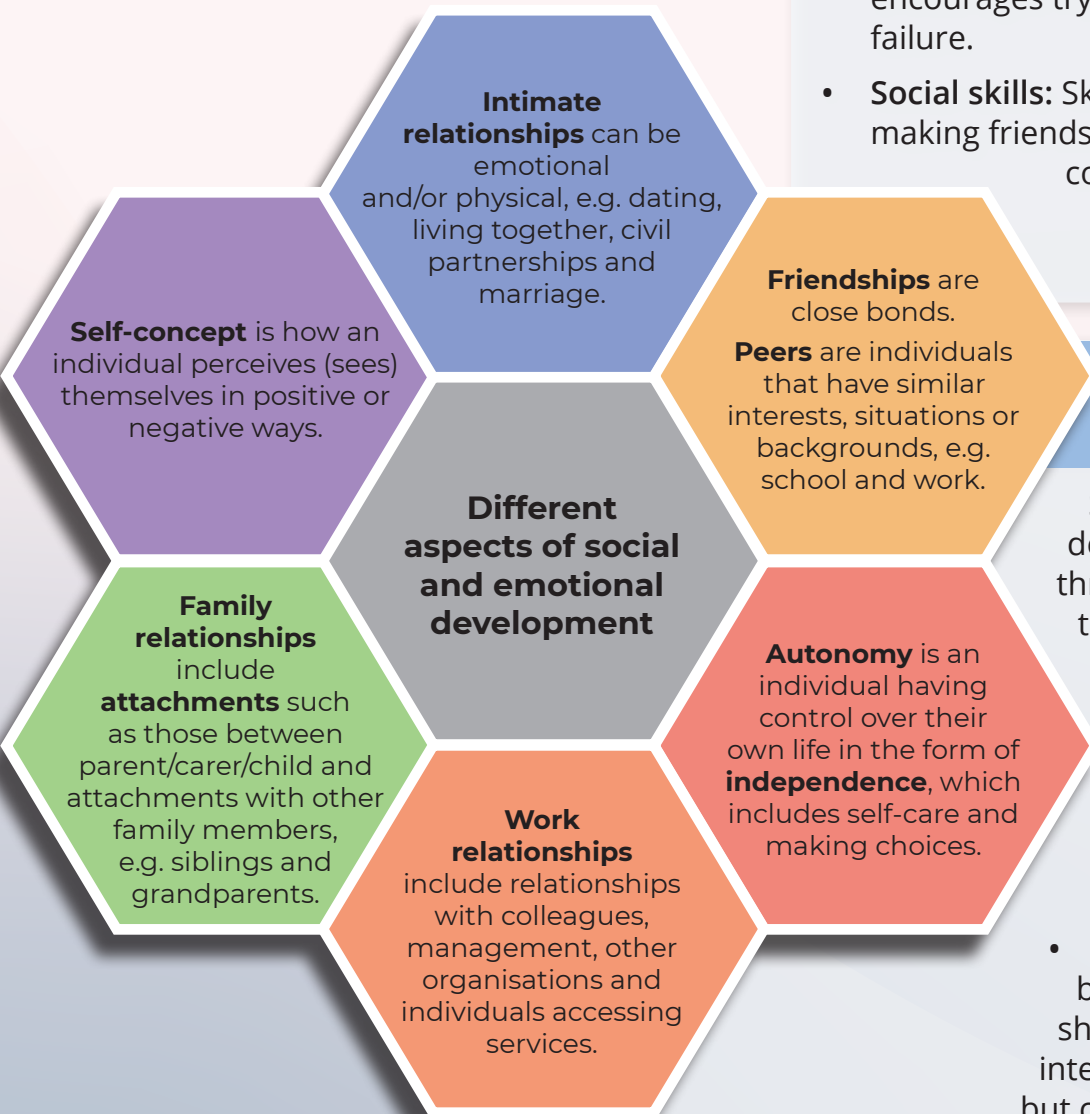




### What is social and emotional development?

Social and emotional development is the way an individual develops interactions with others. It includes their understanding of, and responses to, their own and others' emotions across their lifespan.

### Different aspects of social and emotional development



- **The role of peers:** Peers are people you share a connection with, for example at school or in a club. Peer pressure is the influence they have on your decisions, which can be positive or negative.
- **Autonomy and independence:** Gaining control over decisions and having a social life separate from family. This involves making choices that will shape adulthood.

### Infancy (0–2 years) and childhood (3–10 years)

During infancy and childhood, an individual's sense of self is shaped by the adults and others around them.

#### Key concepts

- **Self-concept:** How an individual sees or evaluates themselves. A positive self-concept helps with social interaction.
- **Self-esteem:** The opinion an individual has of themselves. High self-esteem leads to feeling valued and loved.
- **Self-confidence:** Trust in one's own ability to be themselves and make decisions. It encourages trying new things without fear of failure.
- **Social skills:** Skills such as listening, making friends, controlling emotions, and communicating needs. They are essential for forming positive connections.

#### Socialisation

- **Primary socialisation:** The influence of people close to a child, such as parents/ carers.
- **Secondary socialisation:** The influence of the wider world, like school and social media.

Both types of socialisation teach values and how to behave in different social situations.

#### Stages of play

Social and emotional development take place during six stages of play:

1. **Unoccupied play (0–3 months):** Moving arms and legs without playing with others.
2. **Solitary play (0–2 years):** Playing alone, seemingly unaware of others.
3. **Onlooker play (2 years):** Watching others play without joining in.
4. **Parallel play (2+ years):** Playing alongside another child, but not with them.
5. **Associate play (3–4 years):** Starting to play with others, showing awareness of them.
6. **Co-operative play (4+ years):** Playing together with others, developing social skills.

#### Key theories

- **Bowlby's theory of attachment:** Stresses the human need for love and affection for healthy development.
  - › **Secure attachment:** Formed through consistent love and affection. It promotes positive self-concept, self-esteem and confidence, leading to healthy adult relationships.
  - › **Insecure attachment:** Caused by inconsistent care, abuse or neglect. It can lead to a negative self-concept and unhealthy adult relationships.
- **Ainsworth's 'Strange Situation':** An assessment designed to observe attachment between a child and caregiver.
  - › Ainsworth identified different types of insecure attachment, such as '**avoidant**' (child does not seek comfort from the caregiver) and '**ambivalent**' (child is clingy but also rejecting).
  - › She concluded that these behaviours reflect how a parent or carer responds to a child's needs.

### Adulthood (20–64 years)

Social and emotional development continues in adulthood through relationships and life responsibilities.

- **Intimate relationships:** May involve living together, civil partnership or marriage. Secure relationships provide support and confidence.
- **Parenthood:** Can be rewarding but also challenging due to issues like unemployment or a lack of support. Secure attachments are formed by responding to a child's needs with love and care.
- **Work relationships:** Forming positive relationships with colleagues and clients can bring satisfaction. Conflict or bullying at work can lead to work-related stress.

### Later adulthood (65+ years)

This stage brings both contentment and new challenges.

- **A sense of contentment:** Enjoying time with loved ones, pursuing interests and sharing wisdom. Individuals often have greater social and emotional maturity.
- **Challenges:** Life changes such as retirement, bereavement (losing a partner or friends) and increased dependency on others for care can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation.