

## Child Safety: Child Development (Video 4)

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Judy Romano: Hello. I'm Doctor Judy Romano. I'll be your host for this episode of "Keeping Them Safe." This episode's topic will be child development and your role in supporting healthy development. Regulations or requirements may vary greatly by state or locality, so it is important to follow your local or state regulations. Early care and education settings and staff provide the perfect opportunity for observing and promoting early childhood development. Today, we're going to look at a plan of early identification that will help you, as a care provider or teacher, to ensure healthy development for the children in your care. You can monitor children's development and share observations with parents and guardians and encourage them to share these observations with their primary care providers. The trusted relationship you have with families can help when you communicate concerns and make referrals. You will also be able to assist the child and family in obtaining intervention and follow-up treatment as needed. Increasing numbers of children are spending longer hours in early care and education settings. Often, these longer hours lead to more challenging behaviors, which could even lead to suspension and expulsion of young children. "Caring for Our Children" is a collection of best practice standards for early care and education programs. This resource recommends that programs should not expel, suspend, or limit services based on a child's challenging behaviors. Information on exceptions to this recommendation can be found in "Caring for Our Children." There is an increasing need to build your capacity so that you can serve the overall well-being of the children in your care, including their social and emotional and behavioral health. The social and emotional well-being of young children is an important part of school readiness. This includes children being able to regulate their emotions and behaviors, having proactive social skills, like taking turns and waiting, and the skills to verbally express emotions such as frustration, anger, anxiety, and sadness that can lead to challenging behaviors.

Let's dive a little deeper into developing a plan that supports a child's healthy development, including social and emotional health. First, we'll address screenings, monitoring, and referrals. Screening is more effective when you have a clear plan in place in your program that tracks and monitors developmental screenings and describes procedures for making and following-up on referrals. All the teaching staff should learn how to participate in these important activities. Next, we'll talk about intervention, treatment, and services. If needed, your program should assist the family in obtaining an evaluation by Early Intervention or Special Education Services. For a young child age birth to three, they will be referred to the early intervention system known as Part C. For older children aged three to five, they will be referred to the special education system known as Part B. Other appropriate community-based services can be used, such as parenting support, a home visiting program, and mental health consultation to support you and families in this process. Programs should also encourage families to communicate with the child's primary care provider so that they can assess the child for any related concerns and help facilitate appropriate referrals. Now, let's look more closely at challenging behaviors and three ways that your program can respond. First, you could be aware that the physical health of

the child may be the underlying issue that is affecting behavior. You may need to adjust your teaching style or activities in order to meet this child's developmental needs. Second, it is important to work closely with parents, guardians, and families. Collaborate around your concerns and what can be done about the child's behavior, including what is worked at home and in the classroom. Third, work with an early childhood mental health consultant to develop a plan to address the concerning behavior and to help the child develop prosocial skills that are appropriate for their development. If you want to find materials on this topic, be sure to check out the resources for staff and families on the video page.

Our time's almost over, and I'd like to pose a couple of reflective questions for you to consider. The first is, what procedures and policies do you have in place to help track and monitor children's development, and the second is, what procedures and policies do you have in place to address challenging behaviors and prevention of suspension and expulsion. Thank you for spending this time with me. Please join us on another episode of "Keeping Them Safe." Remember, the more you learn the safer they are.