

## Activities to Promote Social and Emotional Health of Toddlers

**Activity Title:** A Kiss I Can Keep

**Age Range:** Toddlers

**Purpose of Activity:** You can help children feel loved and cared for by sharing special times together as in this outlined activity. This special bond not only smooths transitions and moments of separation, it helps children to develop skills necessary to bond with significant others in their lives. Setting up a good-bye ritual with your child will help you feel close and make the separation easier for each of you.

**Materials:**

The children's book, *The Kissing Hand*, by Audrey Penn.

The song, "I Keep a Kiss in My Pocket" by David Kisor.

Or, just a good conversation about a ritual to use when leaving each other.

**Steps:**

- 1.) Whether you are reading the story with your child or just talking together, the following are some ideas to spark discussion about how you and your child feel and cope when you need to be apart from each other.
- 2.) Talk with your child about how it feels to be apart from each other.
- 3.) Ask your toddler - "When we have to be away from each other, how do you feel?" Even if he doesn't answer, he will start to hear the word "feel" often, and know it is important.
- 4.) Tell your child, "This is how I feel when we have to be apart from each other..."
- 5.) Calmly talk together... "What are some ways we can feel close to each other, even when we are not together?"
- 6.) Offer ideas for your toddler about how to feel close when you are apart.
- 7.) End this activity by placing a special kiss in the palm of your child's hand.
- 8.) Explain that even though they can't see the kiss, and even when they wash their hands, the kiss will stay right there. Explain that even when you cannot be together, you can still feel each other's caring and love.
- 9.) Use this ritual (or your own ritual – a hug, a kiss on the forehead, a special handshake just for you two, etc.) each time you say good bye.