Extending the Social Skills

Social and Emotional Development
Children begin to develop social and emotional skills from birth. Playing Target Ball and other games will help your child develop the following social emotional skills:
- Bonding—making a strong connection between infant and adult
- Self-identity—learning that you are a separate person and have value
- Cooperation/toleration—this is just beginning before 36 months; be patient!
- Sense of trust—you will be there to help; you will be consistent
- Confidence
- Independence
- Motivation
- Curiosity
- Persistence
- Self-control,
- Empathy

Executive Function
Executive Function components have to do with internal control over behavior; they play out differently in each individual in the strength of each component. The development of executive function begins in infancy, when babies begin to understand they can cause something to happen (move a toy by kicking) and then choose that behavior over and over to see the result. Playing Target Ball and other games will help your child develop the following executive function skills:
- Organizing, prioritizing, planning, taking initiative
- Focusing, sustaining, controlling a shifting of attention to tasks
- Regulating alertness, pacing, managing time
- Using working memory, using feedback
- Monitoring and self-regulating actions, inhibiting impulses
- Listening to others
- Following verbal directions
- Taking turns
- Winning and losing with grace

Promoting Executive Function while playing Target Ball:
- Working together to establish the rules for the game (more for preschoolers)
- Problem solving with the different game materials
- Give choices, but only when you can "live" with the choice made by the child
- Plan ahead for the activity (for example, have the child choose what target he/she will want to use tomorrow) and encourage waiting for something
- Encourage children to solve their own problems rather than adults solving the problem for them
- Opportunities to predict what will happen next (What will happen when the ball hits the bottles?)