

Social and Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is the process of developing those social and emotional skills that are essential for success in school, work, and life! This is a lifelong journey that begins in early childhood. These skills are divided into five categories:

Self-Awareness – understanding and identifying your own emotions and recognizing your strengths and challenges

Self-Management – managing your feelings and how you react to situations, setting goals for yourself and learning coping skills to deal with life

Social Awareness – understanding the emotions of others (empathy) and appreciating our unique differences

Relationship Skills – learning how to work well with others and communicate effectively

Responsible Decision-Making – learning how to make good choices by understanding consequences and taking time to reflect and learn from them.

What are the benefits?

Research and experience show that social-emotional learning leads to:

- Improved academic performance
- More positive attitude towards self and others
- Understanding emotions (self and others) and expressing them productively
- Improved school environment for kids and adults
- And many more!

Is it a program?

Social-emotional learning is not a specific program but a process that can be improved upon, strengthened, and practiced over a lifetime. Yes, it is a lifelong process. Some schools do choose to follow a specific curriculum in order to teach the skills but even simple moments with kids can help improve these skills.



How can you support SEL practices at home?

Did you know that you are your child's first and most important teacher? You can influence your child's social and emotional skills every day when you:

- Talk and listen to your child as frequently as you can.
- Model kindness and generosity to others, fostering empathy.
- Share your feelings freely, and acknowledge your child's feelings.
- Maintain predictable but flexible daily routines.
- Provide opportunities for your child to play with other children, expanding his experience outside the family.
- Encourage your child's independence, recognizing his efforts to figure out things on his own.

Other Ideas

Play games with your children – learning how to take turns, lose gracefully, work as a team and problem solve are all social emotional skills that kids learn through game-playing, especially when done with a caring adult.

Make a mind jar together – mix together hot water, glitter and glitter glue into a plastic water bottle. Make sure to glue that cap on tight. When your child gets upset, have them shake up that glitter and watch it settle, allowing their feelings to settle, too! This teaches them a coping strategy.

Ask your school or teacher about their SEL programs - ask about how SEL is used at school in order to adopt and model the same practices at home

Go to your local library - encourage reading books that support social and emotional learning.

There are many websites and videos that can give you examples of books and movies that may help you teach some of these skills. Try the sites below to find more information, ideas, and videos.

Edutopia <https://www.edutopia.org/SEL-parents-resources>

Healthi Kids <https://www.healthikids.org/resources>

Parent Toolkit <https://www.parenttoolkit.com/topics/social-and-emotional>

Confident Parents, Confident Kids <https://confidentparentsconfidentkids.org/parent-resources/>

Zero to Three <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/series/developing-social-emotional-skills>



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