



Social Emotional Links

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Introduction to Social Emotional Learning

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is the *process* of acquiring the skills to:

- Recognize and manage emotions
- Develop caring and concern for others
- Establish positive relationships
- Make responsible decisions
- Handle challenging situations effectively.

SEL is fundamental to children's social and emotional development – their health, ethical development, citizenship, academic learning, and motivation to succeed. Not only does SEL enhance academic outcomes for students, it also ensures that schools will address a broader mission of educating students to be good problem-solvers and caring, responsible, and engaged citizens.

Effective SEL permeates all aspects of the school culture including school policies and practices, role modeling by all school staff, implementing evidence based programming in classrooms, and providing ample opportunities for practicing skills by students. The ideal learning environment is one that is safe, caring, highly participatory, engaging and has high expectations for students.

Social emotional skill instruction does not come at the expense of core academic skills, but rather enhances academic achievement. Research clearly shows that developing students' social and emotional skills improves their grades, attendance, behavior, and attitudes toward school.

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has led the way in creating a vision for SEL by adopting Goals and Learning Standards for all public schools. These goals identify key *skills and attitudes* that provide a strong foundation for achieving school and life success.

Goal 1: Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success

Goal 2: Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships

Goal 3: Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school and community contexts.

One of the guiding principles of effective social-emotional implementation is the involvement of family and community. In fact, there is strong scientific evidence to suggest that when home and school collaborate, programs tend to have many more positive outcomes that last for longer periods of time.

Schools are at the heart of a community. It is proven that community acceptance and involvement of social emotional learning initiatives are critical if they are to achieve their potential effectiveness. Development of a common language, using consistent standards, and modeling of SEL skills by all adults greatly enhance the child's capacity for internalizing these important life skills.

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- Help your child to identify and express difficult feelings and emotions such as anger, sadness, shame, and fear. Children need strategies to express these emotions appropriately without fear of reprisal.
- Be a role model for empathic behavior, an awareness of others' feelings, which is an essential component to emotional intelligence.
- Model healthy relationships. Make sure your child knows how to care for something of value, apologize, handle conflict and end an unhealthy relationship.
- Admit when you've made a mistake and discuss how you would handle the situation differently in the future.

SEL RESOURCES

Websites:

Illinois State Board of Education:
www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/social-emotional/resources.htm

Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership: www.icmhp.org

Edutopia:
www.edutopia.org/social-emotional-learning

Iroquois-Kankakee Regional Office of Education: Snapshots of Your Child's Social Emotional Well-being: www.i-kan.org

Books:

Building Emotional Intelligence: Techniques to Cultivate Inner Strength in Children (2008). Lantieri, L., and Goleman, D.

Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ. (1995/2005) Goleman, D.



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Social Emotional Links

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Physical, Relational & Cyber Bullying

Bullying is defined by the American Medical Association (AMA) as a pattern of repeated aggression with deliberate intent to harm or disturb a victim despite apparent victim distress and a real or perceived imbalance of power (e.g. due to age, strength, size, social status). The AMA recognizes bullying as a complex and abusive behavior with potentially serious social and mental health consequences for children and adolescents. The prevalence of bullying is staggering and its implications are widespread, in part because it negatively affects not only the victim and perpetrator but all youth involved including the witnesses or "bystanders."

Bullying presents itself in many forms, including verbal and/or physical threats and assaults, teasing and name calling, intentional exclusion from a group, spreading rumors, menacing gestures and faces, and racial or ethnic slurs. A relatively new but potentially more serious arena is cyber-bullying—the use of electronic information and communication devices, text messages, websites, etc. to willfully harass or personally attack an individual or group.

While boys tend to engage in more direct, overt physical or verbal bullying behaviors, girls often use more indirect, discrete means such as building alliances, manipulating relationships, intentionally leaving someone out of a group activity or spreading rumors.

Bullying is often dismissed by adults as typical, unavoidable adolescent behavior. But ignoring bullying is serious because it causes physical, psychological and emotional harm to students and interferes with student's ability to learn and participate

in school activities. Chronic victims report physical and mental health problems, may develop low self-esteem or depression, and may contemplate suicide more often than their non-bullied peers. Youth who exhibit bullying behavior are also prone to academic underachievement, and anti-social or criminal behavior such as skipping school, vandalism, abusing drugs and alcohol, fighting and domestic violence.

Bullying is a complex problem and one that takes the entire school community to resolve. Teachers, staff, administrators, parents and students must work together to address the issue by:

- Clearly defining bullying behavior to ensure that students, staff and parents don't dismiss it as harmless horseplay, teasing or joking around.
- Establishing and enforcing clear school policies on bullying that define the problem, describe the consequences, establish methods of data collection, outline adult intervention, and require staff development and prevention education.
- Teaching and role playing strategies for bullying prevention and providing students the means to safely and discreetly report bullying incidents to school staff.
- Providing parents information on how to prevent bullying behaviors in their children, encourage their children to intervene or speak up when they witness bullying incidents, and support their child when targeted by a perpetrator.

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- Learn about bullying prevention. Set clear expectations for behavior. Parents play a critical role in this issue.
- Be alert to the warning signs of bullying which include social withdrawal, poor academic performance, depression, excessive anger, and lack of interest in school.
- Teach and role model empathy, peaceful conflict resolution, good communication skills, and problem solving strategies.
- Take bullying seriously. Don't be afraid to admit your child may be exhibiting bullying behavior or be a victim. Work cooperatively with your school.
- Discuss your school's bullying policy with your child.

BULLYING RESOURCES

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:
<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/15plus/aboutbullying.asp>

The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander, by Barbara Coloroso (2003)

WHAT IS SEL?

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

is the process of acquiring the skills to recognize and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging situations effectively. SEL is fundamental to teen's social and emotional development – their health, ethical development, citizenship, academic learning, and motivation to succeed. Not only does SEL enhance academic outcomes for students, it also ensures that schools will address a broader mission of educating students to be good problem-solvers and caring, responsible, and engaged citizens.



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Social Emotional

Links

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Self-Awareness & Self-Management

Do you know yourself? Your interests, talents and values may come to mind, but do you know yourself emotionally? You may even wonder what it means to know yourself emotionally. Self-awareness and self-management are two of five social-emotional competencies necessary for success in school and life according to Daniel Goleman, author of *Emotional Intelligence* (2005).

- Self-awareness involves identifying your emotions and what triggers them, how to manage them, and ways to express them constructively.
- Self-management involves understanding your ability to assess your talents and interests, ways to build on strengths, and making effective use of family, school and community resources for emotional support. Both competencies are critical for realistically setting and monitoring progress toward achieving academic/work and personal goals.

The capacity to be self-aware emotionally contributes to a person's ability to handle stress, control impulses, and motivate oneself to persevere in overcoming obstacles. These qualities are necessary throughout life. Children who are taught strategies to recognize and appreciate the range of their emotions are better equipped to be hopeful and happy.

Some behavior concerns in children may be related to a lack of ability to accurately label emotions. Children may confuse angry and sad, frustrated and annoyed, proud and happy and many others. Knowing how to discern emotions assists children to predict their reaction and manage their feelings in a pro-social way. As children mature, their emotions affect their ability to make responsible decisions that affect their success in school and in relationships with others.

There are ways that parents can support the development of these important skills. Talking with children about their emotions and helping them to verbally name their feelings is a beginning. It takes patience and lots of modeling for the full range of emotions to be understood. Doing so impacts perceptions and influences the relationships we want for ourselves, our children, and society. Understanding your emotions and responses can change the dynamics of your family interaction and lead to the kind of modeling that makes a positive difference for your children. Taking the time to know yourself emotionally is essential for guiding your children toward healthy social/emotional well-being.



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WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- Use children's literature as a model for identifying and labeling emotions exhibited by the characters.
- Be honest with yourself and others about your own feelings and share that with your children.
- Talk to your children about how their emotional displays affect others – both positively and negatively.
- Model goal-setting and planning so that your children understand the process and challenges you face.
- Encourage your child to accurately label his/her feelings and what triggered the emotion.

SEL RESOURCES

Websites:

Emotional development:
www.illinoisearlylearning.org/tipsheets/social

Impulsivity in children and teens:
www.psychologytoday.com/child/wavstocontrol

Articles:

How children develop empathy:
www.drkuter.com/parenting

Books:

Emotionally Intelligent PARENTING: How to Raise a Self-Disciplined, Responsible, Socially skilled Child. (1999) Elias, Tobias, Friedlander.

Don't Give Me That Attitude! 24 Things Kids Do and How to Stop Them. (2004) Borba, Michele, Ed.D.



Social Emotional Links

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Social Awareness

One of the core skills of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is social awareness. According to Daniel Goleman in *Emotional Intelligence* (2005), developing social competence allows one to shape encounters, persuade, influence and inspire others, and thrive in intimate relationships. Empathy, or the ability to feel what others are feeling, is the foundation of social awareness.

We all want our children to grow up to be caring, capable, and responsible adults. Empathy is a skill that is used from childhood through adulthood in education, personal and social situations, business, volunteerism, and every other aspect of our lives. Empathy involves identifying and understanding another's situation, emotions, and motives. It is the ability to see the world through another person's eyes. Empathy allows us to treat others with kindness and respect. Empathy reduces violence and cruelty to others.

To teach children to be empathic they first need to be taught the value and meaning of their own feelings. It is important to teach our children how to identify different emotions such as anger, frustration, guilt, fear and joy. Once they are able to identify their own emotions, we can teach them how to identify others' feelings through facial cues, tone of voice and body language. It is also important to

teach good listening skills. Children who are empathic tend to have more positive relationships and do better in school. Conversely, children who are unable to interpret social cues, often are shunned or neglected by classmates.

Parents are the best teachers of empathy. Children who grow up in a caring, empathic family will be more likely to develop those skills. As with any skill or behavior, modeling is one of the best tools parents can use to teach empathy.

The whole family can benefit from talking about empathy. Parents can encourage siblings to talk about how their and others' actions make them feel. Empathy can help siblings negotiate compromises to problems and build cooperation with each other.

Empathy is one of the foundational skills parents can teach children to help them to a lifetime of success.

People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

- Bonnie Jean Wasmund



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WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- Help your child identify his/her feelings. Use many different emotion words like: anxious, disappointed, cheerful, confident, frustrated, excited, nervous, etc.
- Affirm your child's feelings with empathy and acceptance.
- Teach your child to read the feeling cues of others like: body language, eye contact, and facial cues.
- When reading a story or watching TV, ask your child about the feelings of the characters.
- Role play with your child. How would you feel?

SEL RESOURCES

Websites:

Collaborative for Academic Social Emotional Learning:
www.casel.org

Dr. Robert Brooks:
www.drrobertbrooks.com

Books:

Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships. (2006) Goleman, Daniel.

Teaching Empathy: A Blueprint for Caring, Compassion and Community. (2009) Levine, David A.

Building Moral Intelligence: The Seven Essential Virtues That Teach Kids to Do the Right Thing. (2002) Borba, Michele, Ed.D.



Social Emotional Links

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Responsible Decision Making

In a perfect world, every decision that a student makes would have a favorable outcome, no negative consequences, and make sense. That rarely happens. Making decisions is complex, often emotionally charged, and frequently involves tough and ethical choices. If decision making is difficult for adults, think for a moment just how challenging it is for students to navigate in today's world.

When it comes to making decisions, students need to be able to identify the problem, manage their emotions so they can handle their situation effectively, look at possible options and alternatives, analyze available resources, consider the consequences of their decision, and reflect on the outcome.

Good decision making is an important and learnable life skill that can be taught and reinforced both at home and at school. To make sound decisions, children, like adults, need good information. Sometimes, making poor decisions and experiencing the consequences help shape better decisions in the future. Consider this: since decision making is a skill, students can become very good at making *poor* decisions. Therefore, they should be encouraged to understand the importance of making ethical decisions, know available options, and consider the consequences of their actions and decisions.

If a student makes a questionable or bad choice, adults will often ask, "Why did you do that?" The typical response is "I don't know,"

or "Because," or "It's no big deal." Perhaps the question is met with silence. Little is accomplished and even less is learned. In his book *Raising Emotionally Intelligent Teenagers* (Three Rivers Press), Maurice Elias advises parents and adults to avoid "Why" questions because they are often perceived as accusatory which sets the stage for a defensive response. Keeping the door open for communication is essential in the process of learning about and making good decisions.

Instead of "why" questions, ask "what" questions. What are you feeling? What would you say the problem is? What did you want to accomplish in this situation? What have you tried in similar situations? Also, asking open ended questions works better than closed questions. "Please tell me what happened" is a better approach than "Why did you do that?"

Social emotional learning (SEL) is sometimes called "the missing piece," because it represents a part of education that links academic knowledge to a specific set of skills important to success in schools, families, communities, workplaces, and life in general. It is essential that parents and schools work together in sending strong and coordinated messages that reinforce good decision making skills. Students can learn to successfully solve complex problems in the classroom and in real-life situations with practice, guidance, and positive modeling by adults.

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- Start youth off with select options so they are not overwhelmed. Expand choices as they grow and mature.
- Teach children a decision-making formula similar to this example (although there are many from which to choose):
 - ⇒ Define the problem
 - ⇒ Manage emotions; remain calm
 - ⇒ Explore the options
 - ⇒ Consider the consequences
 - ⇒ Reflect/learn from decisions made.
- Teach by example. Students of every age watch and learn from the adults around them. A thoughtful, analytical, and positive role model serves as the best teacher.
- Help youth solve their own problems. Be there to guide and assist but they need to know how to solve problems and learn from the decisions they make.

SEL RESOURCES

Books:

Decision Making Is A Life Science (2009). Finkel, E.

www.edutopia.org

The Connection Between Academic and Social-Emotional Learning. (2006) Elias, M.

www.casel.org/downloads

Improving Students' Decision Making Skills. Gregory, Robin S. and Clemen, Robert T. Decision Research, Eugene, Oregon

Raising Emotionally Intelligent Teenagers (2000). Elias, Tobias, and Friedlander. Three Rivers Press.

Websites:

Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning.

www.casel.org



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