

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

What is SEL?

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is the ongoing process of developing skills to understand and manage emotions, make thoughtful decisions, and sustain meaningful relationships.

Families are their children's first teachers. Social emotional learning begins at home and continues across different environments as children grow. In the home kids develop social emotional skills by observing and interacting with family members. At school, educators can provide opportunities for students to practice social emotional skills and reflect on experiences throughout each day.

SEL Begins at Home

SEL and Academics

Social, emotional, and academic development are interconnected aspects of a child's education that work together to shape their overall well-being. While academic development focuses on subject areas like reading, writing, and math, social and emotional development encompasses skills like communicating effectively which are used across subject areas and outside of school. These skills are not separate from academic learning; they are essential to it. Research shows that when children feel emotionally secure, they are better able to focus, learn, and achieve academically.

SEL is not new...

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is not a new concept; it has always been a fundamental part of education. From modeling cooperation and empathy to teaching conflict resolution and responsible decision-making, educators have long understood that these skills are essential for success in school and in life. Today, SEL is receiving renewed attention as research continues to demonstrate its impact on academic achievement, mental health, and overall well-being. By recognizing SEL as an essential part of education, families can actively support their child's holistic development.

What does SEL look like at home?

Whether you realize it or not, **you are helping your child develop social emotional skills** everyday through your interactions with them. Below are some ways that caregivers help their children develop SEL skills.

Preschool

- Practice labeling emotions and discussing feelings during everyday activities or as you read stories together.
- Demonstrate empathy and kindness in interactions with others, your child will learn from your behavior.
- Engage in imaginative play and role-playing scenarios to help your child practice social skills like sharing, taking turns, and problem-solving.

- Listen attentively to your child's thoughts and feelings and offer support when needed.
- Give your child age-appropriate responsibilities, like chores or caring for pets, to help them develop a sense of responsibility and independence.
- Guide children through problem-solving by asking open-ended questions and encouraging them to consider different perspectives and possible solutions.

Elementary School

Secondary School

- Create opportunities for open and honest discussions about topics like peer pressure, relationships, and managing stress.
- Allow teenagers to make choices and decisions within safe boundaries, providing guidance and support as needed.
- Encourage healthy habits like exercise, adequate sleep, and activities to help teenagers manage stress and prioritize their well-being.
- Encourage teens to consider others' perspectives and practice empathy through volunteering and community service.

Remember, social emotional learning is a lifelong process. We all continue to develop, adjust and apply social and emotional skills in new ways everyday. The best way for adults to teach SEL skills is to practice and model the skills and behavior we want our children to learn.