

Social and Emotional Learning

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the way that children develop the ability to experience, regulate and express emotions, form close and secure relationships, explore their environment and to learn. When social and emotional skills are taught and mastered, they help children to be more successful in school and in other areas of their life. Studies have found that children who possess these social and emotional skills are in fact happier, more confident and more capable as students, family members and friends. At the same time, they are far *less* likely to experience harmful behaviors such as substance abuse, depression or violence.

Social & emotional learning is a powerful way to help children become healthy, caring & competent in these domains:



Building Social Emotional Skills

Focus on strengths - When your child brings home a test, talk about what he/she did well, and then ways to improve. Praise specific strengths.

Ask children how they feel - Asking about feelings sends the message that you care and teaches them to use words to express emotions.

Find ways to stay calm when angry - It's normal to become irritated or angry with our children from time to time. Find ways to calm down and be a role model for children on managing emotions.

Be willing to apologize - Role model how to apologize if you have said or done something hurtful. This teaches children that it's possible to work through problems with respect for the other person.

Avoid humiliating or mocking your child. Unfair criticism and sarcasm hurts the bond of trust between children and parents, and can lead to a lack of self-confidence. Instead, give them the room to make mistakes as they learn new skills.

Encourage sharing and helping. There are many ways to do this. Together you and your child can prepare food in a homeless shelter or help a neighbor. This teaches children that what they do can make a difference in the lives of others.

Ask questions that help children solve problems on their own. When parents hear their child has a problem, it's tempting to step in and take over. This can harm a child's ability to find solutions on his or her own. A helpful approach is to ask good questions. Examples include, "What do you think you can do in this situation?" and "If you choose a particular solution, what will be the consequences of that choice?"

For more information on Social and Emotional Skills go to the source of this article:
http://education.praguesummerschools.org/files/education/patrikakou_3.pdf

For more information or for available programs and services in your area contact:

Mental Health Help Line 1-877-303-2642
Addiction Help Line 1-866-332-2322
Health Link 811