

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING AT HOME

Managing emotions, showing empathy, having healthy relationships, and making positive choices are all part of social and emotional learning (SEL). SEL is crucial in helping children understand appropriate behavior and work toward being a healthy functioning adult. For young people, school is likely where SEL takes place most often, as there are more opportunities due to being around peers in a structured environment. Over the summer, finding ways to continue and model SEL can help your child develop social and emotional abilities they will use to make good choices at school and at home.

What is Social and Emotional Learning?

To teach and model aspects of SEL to your child, you need to understand the main aspects of SEL and consider ways to work on each aspect. If you have more than one child, it is likely that they will need to work on different areas, though all of these are useful to work on at home. Here is a breakdown of 5 key aspects of social and emotional learning:



1. **Self-Awareness-** Self-awareness is mostly about understanding and being able to talk about emotions. If someone can accurately name their emotion, this is a good sign that they are self-aware. Another aspect of self-awareness is recognizing one's own strengths and abilities and what needs more practice and work.
2. **Self-Management-** Self-management takes things further and involves the ability for someone to manage their thoughts, emotions, and actions. Dealing with stress, controlling impulses, and working toward goals or staying motivated are all part of self-management.
3. **Social Awareness-** This has to do with understanding others of various backgrounds and cultures and showing empathy toward others. Social awareness includes being understanding of others' cultural norms and beliefs, not expecting everyone to match you.
4. **Relationship Skills-** Relationship skills include all parts of forming and maintaining healthy relationships. Communication skills, cooperation, healthy boundaries, and approaching conflicts and differences in a healthy way are all part of this aspect of SEL.
5. **Responsible Decision Making-** Making responsible decisions means considering consequences of a decision and making the healthy, productive choice. Things to consider include safety of self/others, social consequences, following expectations, and respect of others.

The Role of Parents in SEL

While at home, especially over the summer, it may be harder to find ways to encourage social and emotional learning. Day camps or other regular scheduled activities are a great way for younger children to spend time around peers and continue exercising social and emotional learning. For children of any age, SEL is easier in situations where there are expectations and routine. To encourage SEL, consider setting expectations for when your child needs to be awake and go to bed when not in school, when they need to be dressed or go through their morning routine by over the summer, and things like screen time and electronic use. By setting expectations, it allows your child to understand how to make choices based on the consequences for not following expectations. In turn, communication about expectations helps with communication skills, your child's behavior with clear expectations set out are opportunities for responsible decision making, and the consistency allows your child to learn about their own thoughts, emotions, and responses.

The best thing you can do as a parent to encourage SEL in your child is to make sure you are modeling what you want to see. Your child is learning from the way you do everything, so it follows that if you show self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making in how you interact with people, they will take note and learn from it. Since SEL continues through life, there are plenty of opportunities for you as a parent to grow. Here are a few things to consider:

- It's okay to slow down. In the moment, it can be difficult to be self-aware and practice self-management well when there are lots of things happening in the house or in your mind all at once.
- Self-care is a necessary part of maintaining healthy expectations and boundaries for yourself. Self-care is not selfish and can help with aspects of SEL when practiced consistently.
- If you know you could have handled something better or would have done something differently, use it as a teaching moment. By acknowledging and explaining what you would have done, it shows that mistakes are okay and that it's important to learn from the mistakes.
- Clear communication sets the stage. If there is a communication barrier between you and your child, it is far more difficult to set expectations for your child at home and follow through on whatever consequences are in place. Work on communicating clearly and take the time to make sure you and your child are on the same page.

Touchstone's School Based Services

While social and emotional learning can help your child behave more appropriately and be more understanding of others, some children will find changing their behavior more difficult. If your child is showing signs of a mental or behavioral health concern, you may want to consider enrolling them in mental health services. Touchstone's School Based Services offers youth mental health services in partnership with approximately 100 schools in the valley. For more information, visit <https://touchstonehs.org/school-based-services/> or call Member Services at 602.618.9815.

Sources

<https://www.edutopia.org/social-emotional-learning-parent-resources>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2d0da6BZWA&t=30s>

https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/CASELCaregiverGuide_English.pdf

<https://confidentparentsconfidentkids.org/>



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