

# Social and Emotional Learning

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## What is Social and Emotional Learning?

Social and Emotional Learning is about helping children develop a range of skills they need for school and life. It is the “process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.” Children are unable to do well academically unless they feel cared for, safe, and included. Social and emotional learning enhances academic learning. It is not possible to achieve true academic and personal success without addressing social emotional skills. According to Dr. Sheldon Berman, having the core social skills gives children the experience and knowledge to work effectively with others.

SOURCES: Boss, Miller

## Core Social and Emotional Competencies

*“Social and emotional learning enhances students’ capacity to integrate skills, attitudes, and behaviors to deal effectively and ethically with daily tasks and challenges.”*

### Self-awareness:

The ability to accurately recognize one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior.

- ◆ identifying emotions
- ◆ accurate self-perception
- ◆ recognizing strengths
- ◆ self-confidence
- ◆ self-efficacy

### Self-management:

The ability to successfully regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations—effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself.

- ◆ impulse control
- ◆ stress management
- ◆ self-discipline
- ◆ self-motivation
- ◆ goal-setting
- ◆ organizational skills

### Social Awareness:

The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

- ◆ perspective-taking
- ◆ empathy
- ◆ appreciating diversity
- ◆ respect for others

### Relationship Skills:

The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups.

- ◆ communication
- ◆ social engagement
- ◆ relationship building
- ◆ teamwork

### Responsible Decision Making:

The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns and social norms.

- ◆ identifying problems
- ◆ analyzing situations
- ◆ solving problems
- ◆ evaluating
- ◆ reflecting
- ◆ ethical responsibility

SOURCE: CASEL



## The Importance of Play

Play is an important piece of healthy brain development. Through play, children learn a variety of skills. Appropriate play can enhance physical development as children utilize their gross motor and fine motor skills during play. Children learn social skills by sharing, taking turns, negotiating, compromising and leading. Language skills are also enhanced through play as children learn how to use words by practicing language when interacting with others and using conversational skills. Play allows children to master life situations and to prepare for adult life and roles. It

allows children to think for themselves and to become more independent by making decisions. Child driven play encourages children to move at their own pace while discovering their own areas of interest. It has been proven to help children adjust to the school setting and to increase learning readiness and problem solving skills. Play has a vital role in building social and emotional abilities for children of all ages.

"Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning."

—Mr. Rogers



### How Parents Can Help

Children need to be taught social and emotional skills, much in the same way they are taught reading and mathematics. Parents are key players in teaching such skills. Everyday experiences are opportunities to teach positive or negative social and emotional behaviors.

Parents can help by:

- Giving children opportunities to make their own choices and following through with their decisions
- Helping your child to solve problems on their own by asking questions instead of giving advice
- Taking the time to discuss feelings with your child
- Being a good listener
- Modeling the behaviors you seek
- Nurturing your child's self-esteem
- Respecting differences
- Using positive discipline strategies
- Playing with your child

Source: Social Emotional Learning Fact Sheet

### Key Emotional Skills Children Need As They Enter School:

- Confidence
- Capacity to develop good relationships with peers and adults
- Concentration and persistence on challenging tasks
- Ability to effectively communicate emotions
- Ability to listen to instructions and be attentive
- Ability to solve social problems

When children do not have these skills, they may demonstrate challenging behaviors.

SOURCE: Joseph

"When you asked me what I did in school today and I say, 'I just played.' Please don't misunderstand me. For you see, I'm learning as I play. I am learning to enjoy and be successful in my work. Today I am a child and my work is play."

— Anita Wadley, 1974

## Social Emotional Development Checklist: Birth to Five

<u>1 to 12 Months</u>	<u>12-24 Months</u>	<u>3-4 Years</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes eye contact (0-1 mos.)</li> <li>• Begins to develop a social smile (1-3 mos.)</li> <li>• Enjoys playing with other people and may cry when playing stops (2-3 mos.)</li> <li>• Enjoys social play (4-7 mos.)</li> <li>• Interested in mirror images (5-7 mos.)</li> <li>• Can calm down within 1/2 hour when upset (6 mos.)</li> <li>• Responds to other people's expression of emotion (4-7 mos.)</li> <li>• Shy or anxious with strangers (8-12 mos.)</li> <li>• Cries when mother or father leaves (8-12 mos.)</li> <li>• Enjoys imitating people in his/her play (10-12 mos.)</li> <li>• Shows preferences for specific people or toys (8-12 mos.)</li> <li>• Prefers mother and/or regular care provider over all others (8-12 mos.)</li> <li>• Repeats sounds or gestures for attention (10-12 mos.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imitates behaviors of others, especially adults and older children (18-24 mos.)</li> <li>• Increasingly enthusiastic about company or other children (20-24 mos.)</li> <li>• Demonstrates increasing independence (18-24 mos.)</li> <li>• Begins to show defiant behavior (18-24 mos.)</li> <li>• Episodes of separation anxiety increase toward midyear, then fade</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>24-36 Months</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses the word "mine" often (24-36 mos.)</li> <li>• Says "no", but will still do what is asked (24-36 mos.)</li> <li>• Expresses a wide range of emotions (24-36 mos.)</li> <li>• Objects to major changes in routine, but is becoming more compliant (24-36 mos.)</li> <li>• Begins to follow simple rules (30-36 mos.)</li> <li>• Begins to separate more easily from parents (by 36 mos.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interested in new experiences</li> <li>• Cooperates/plays with other children</li> <li>• Plays "mom" and "dad"</li> <li>• More inventive in fantasy play</li> <li>• Can stay on topic during conversations</li> <li>• More independent</li> <li>• Plays simple games with simple rules</li> <li>• Begins to share toys with other children</li> <li>• Often cannot distinguish between fantasy and reality</li> <li>• May have imaginary friends or see monsters</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>4-5 Years</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wants to please</li> <li>• Prefers to be with friends</li> <li>• More likely to agree to rules</li> <li>• Likes to sing, dance, and act</li> <li>• Shows more independence</li> </ul>



**Books to Read About Social and Emotional Learning:**

*The Invisible Boy* by Trudy Ludwig  
*The Orange Shoes* by Trinka Hakes Noble  
*Mouse Was Mad* by Linda Urban  
*Hooray for Hat* by Brian Won  
*The Way I Feel* by Janan Cain  
*Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse* by Kevin Henkes  
*The Boy With Pink Hair* by Perez Hilton



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Over **35 Years**  
Caring for All Children

**Workshops of Interest**

The ECDC can provide information and workshops on a variety of topics tailored to the interests and needs of parents and early childhood professionals. Resources are available on such topics as general child development, developmental issues for children with special needs, coping strategies, and specific disabilities.

**Workshops include:**

- Including All Kids
- Parent Partnerships
- Developmentally Appropriate Practices
- Early Childhood Development: The Meaning of Red Flags
- Supporting Social Emotional Development
- Challenging Behaviors
- Moving On: Transitioning Families (EI-CPSE) & (CPSE-CSE)
- What Are Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education?
- What is an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?
- Writing IEP Goals
- Getting Ready for Kindergarten

**Who We Are**

The Early Childhood Direction Center (ECDC) is a regional technical assistance center for the State Education Department providing information, referral and support to families, professionals, and community agencies concerned with young children birth to five. We are located at Syracuse University's Center on Human Policy.

***ECDC services to families are free and confidential.***

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