

Ponder the research

Social and emotional skills are critical to being a good student, citizen, and worker. (CASEL)

Social and emotional development forms a foundation for success in school and in life. (Children's Mental Health Act, 2006, Bill A06931)

Many risky behaviors (e.g., drug use, violence, bullying, and dropping out) can be prevented or reduced when multi-year, integrated efforts are used to develop students' social and emotional skills. (CASEL)

Social and emotional skills being taught in our schools lead to reduced violence and aggression among children, higher academic achievement, and an improved ability to function in schools and in the workplace. (Edutopia)

Up to one in five students in an average classroom may experience mental health problems in the course of a school year. SEL provides an approach for delivering preventative classroom-based mental health services that will reach all students (Merrell & Gueldner)

Cognitive growth does not happen on its own. It comes through curiosity and interaction. The ability to interact with others including teachers and peers is a direct result of early relationships. Positive social-emotional growth builds the communication skills necessary for learning throughout a child's life. (M. Waltz)

Three primary areas of research-based positive outcomes of SEL include school attitudes, school behaviour, and school performance. (Merrell & Gueldner)

The first step in helping students succeed in school is to help them feel safe. This includes not only physical safety but also social emotional safety, as well as the sense of academic safety needed in order to take risks to advance one's learning in the classroom. (Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative; Helping Traumatized Children Learn)

What is FASD?

FASD describes a spectrum of disorders caused by prenatal exposure to alcohol. Children living with FASD have a brain-based disability.

Three or more domains of the central nervous system are impacted when you are living with FASD. The C.N.S. domains are:

- Cognition
- Academic achievement
- Memory
- Language
- Executive function
- Adaptive behaviour
- Affect regulation
- Attention
- Motor skills
- Neuroanatomy/neurophysiology

Trauma is an emotional wound resulting from a shocking event or multiple and repeated life threatening and/or extremely frightening experiences that may cause lasting negative effects on a person, disrupting the path of healthy physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual development.

Children and Trauma in America: A Report of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2004)

Toxic or overwhelming experiences can result in difficulties with one or more of these areas:

- Language
- Executive functioning
- Attention
- Emotional and behavioral regulation
- Memory
- Relationships

It is important to remember that each student is an individual with varied strengths and stretches. It is through building a relationship with our learners and getting to know their strengths and stretches that we can discover which strategies will allow us to create calm, safe, and productive learning environments for all children. Knowing our learners will also allow us to choose social emotional programs that will best support our learners in the classroom and school environment and give them skills for life.



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SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)



**For Learners with FASD,
Trauma and other
Complex Learning Needs**

POPFASD

Social-Emotional Learning is the process through which children 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. (CASEL, 2016)

Top Tips!!

1. Build positive safe relationships
2. Structure the environment for emotional regulation
3. Focus on emotions
4. Have a cool down spot
5. Have a chill box/calm down box
6. Schedule exercise breaks into the daily plan
7. Incorporate relaxation/mindful activities into daily plan
8. Low and slow
9. Select evidence based SEL programs and strategies
10. Integrate the 8 Keys into daily planning

Need help building a relationship?

- 2X10 Strategy is simple: spend 2 minutes per day for 10 days in a row talking with an at-risk student about anything she or he wants to talk about.
- Find, Remind, and Bind. FIND a student you want a stronger connection with, REMIND them why you are grateful for them and this will BIND you.

Adapt to the social-emotional needs of our students

There are 8 Keys + a Master Key that positively impact learners. Are they in place in your environment, your communication, and your resources?

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Structure | <input type="checkbox"/> Specific |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Simplicity | <input type="checkbox"/> Supervised |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete | <input type="checkbox"/> Consistency |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Routine | <input type="checkbox"/> Repetition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP | |
- (adapted from Deb Evensen)

Do you . . .

- build repeated exposure to experiences that build capacity?
- teach and practice activities that help children maintain a comfortable state of arousal (e.g., physical activity, deep breathing, visualization)?
- provide additional support for activities and times of day that are particularly difficult?

- provide children with a visual template for tasks or sequence directions?
- help children identify their “window of tolerance” for classroom activities?
- practice Low and Slow?
 - lower the volume and pitch of your voice?
 - lower your heart rate?
 - slow down your speech?
 - slow down your body movements?
 - slow down your agenda (take your time)?
- have exercise breaks scheduled into the daily plan?
- have mindful activities incorporated into your daily plan?
- use T-charts to specify what expected behaviours look and sound like?
- review T-charts at the beginning of activities?
- use rehearsal strategies to practice behaviours for new situations?
- use the ‘Social Detective’ to help children observe what other people do in various situations? (*You are a Social Detective*, M. Garcia-Winner)
- recognize early warning signs of dysregulation and communicate these to the student?
- create a climate of emotional safety?
- provide a safe place to cool down before discussing the out of control behaviour?
- have a ‘chill’ box with self-regulating tools (i.e. glitter bottle, squeeze toy, playdough, books, coloring book, bubbles)?
- have a daily schedule?
 - is it visual?
 - do you stick to it?
- have clear transition rituals?
- prepare children in advance for unavoidable changes?
- provide children with a variety of modalities that they can use to express themselves?
- provide safe opportunities to explore the full range of human emotions through role plays, drama, art, and literature?
- provide opportunities to observe how they feel by using a rating scale or emotion thermometer (e.g. tired, sad, happy)?
- read stories that explore and illustrate the whole range of human emotions?
- talk to your students about how you are feeling and things you do to help yourself feel happy and in control?
- remain in control of your own emotions?
- use journaling and writing activities to help children find the words to describe feeling states?
- teach children to notice how they feel – self-monitoring?
- have a consensus among adults about behavioural expectations for the learner?

SEL programs

Whether you choose an evidence-based SEL program or pull together a variety of materials from multiple sources, ensure that the material matches the needs of your learners. Always consider your particular school environment or classroom setting.

The advantages to selecting a published, evidence-based SEL program are:

- field tested for effectiveness
- strategically developed to target a specific area
- based on theoretical constructs known to be effective with children in the school setting
- sequential with a logical flow of content
- minimizing preparation time
- already tested ideas regarding implementation

Below are evidence-based SEL programs that work for complex learners:

- You are a Social Detective (socialthinking.com)
- Superflex: A Superhero Social Thinking Curriculum (socialthinking.com)
- Zones of Regulation (zonesofregulation.com)
- Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum (cfchildren.org)
- Alert Program for Self-Regulation (alertprogram.com)
- Kelso Choices: Conflict Management Skills Program (kelsoschoice.com)
- MindUp Curriculum (thehawnfoundation.org)