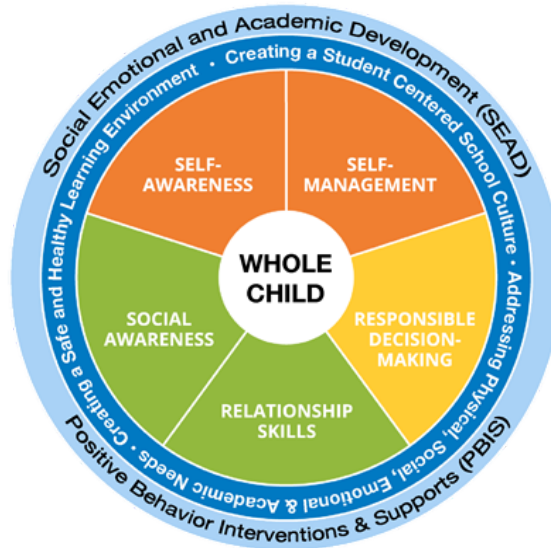


Strategies to Support Social Emotional Competencies



Self Awareness -

The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a "growth mindset."

Includes:

- Identifying emotions
- Accurate self-perception
- Recognizing strengths
- Self-confidence
- Self-efficacy

- *Show Your Child What Feelings Look Like* - Get a poster, or draw one with your child, of faces with different emotions. Ask your child to identify one of the emotions on the poster and ask when your child last felt this way and why. Ask their how they are feeling now and why your child feels that way. This will increase their vocabulary while also helping them more accurately identify their emotions.
- *Help Your Child Identify the Feelings of Others* - Take opportunities everyday to help your child identify the feelings of others. How does their face look when your child feels that way? Pointing out emotions in others is a good way to help your child begin to understand those feelings in herself. Teacher Clare Morrison suggests also asking, "Show me what happy looks like for you," and, "What does sad look like to you?" By making a facial expression, your child is better-able to connect the emotion to their own body language.
- *Point Out Feelings Using Family Pictures* - Many young children like to look at family photos. Take the opportunity to talk about emotions that family members are feeling.
- *Help Your Child Recognize Her Strengths* - When a child shows interest in an activity or topic, it is often because they have a strength related to it. One of the best ways to help your child understand and value

	<p>their strengths is to encourage their ideas and interests. You can begin to do this by asking their what your child likes or noting a topic your child talks a great deal about.</p>
<p>Self Management - The ability to successfully regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals. Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Impulse control ● Stress management ● Self-discipline ● Self-motivation ● Goal setting ● Organizational skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Be an Example of Good Self-Management</i> - Most parents have moments when they are upset. At these times, tell your family you need a small break to calm down. Take this time to think about how to come back to the situation in a positive manner. Your child will see you taking these steps to calm yourself and will be more likely to use this technique himself. One of the best ways you can teach your child about self-management is to model it yourself. ● <i>Identify a Place or Technique to Help Your Child Calm Down</i> - Pay attention to your child’s natural calming strategies. For example, they might naturally look for comfort in a pillow or blanket, or they might try to walk away from upsetting situations. Some children may feel better simply by making silly faces or noises until they calm down. Understanding your child’s natural tendencies for calming can help you encourage those behaviors at other times. ● <i>Limit Screen Time</i> - Try not to give your child a phone, tablet, or other electronic device every time you find yourselves waiting for a doctor’s appointment, picking up a sibling from school, or waiting for food to arrive in a restaurant. There’s value for your child in learning to control themselves in situations where they not entertained.
<p>Social Awareness - The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports. Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Perspective-taking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Discuss Situations That Occur in Everyday Life</i> -Take a conversation you had with a friend, family member, or clerk at the supermarket that your child has witnessed and ask their to point out the language, body language and facial expressions that were exchanged. You can also role play with their stuffed animals or favorite toys to show what your child would have done in that situation. Even though your child was present when you had this exchange, it’s always a good idea to ask what your child thinks happened, how people felt, and how your child could tell this, before you provide your own interpretation of the situation.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Empathy ● Appreciating diversity ● Respect for others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Play a Game of "Feelings Charades"</i> - A good way to teach your child about body language, emotions, and empathy is to have their play a game of "Feelings Charades." You can use flash cards with different faces, or even write emotions or behaviors that hurt others on pieces of paper and let your child pick one out of a hat. Take turns acting out the way a person would be feeling with either the emotion that's on the paper or the face that's on the card. This will help start discussions on topics that a child this age might be reluctant to talk about otherwise. ● <i>Observe the Behavior of Pets</i> - If you have pets, you can also use them to help teach your child about social awareness. A dog or a cat, for example, will behave in specific ways when it is feeling happy, angry, playful or tired. Point out these behaviors to your child as they appear, and explain to their how these emotions are similar to those experienced by the people around them. ● <i>Teach Your Child About Personal Space</i> - Be specific when you are talking about what's appropriate and what's not, and provide them with visual cues. For example, you can have them stretch out their arms and explain that this is their personal space, and that your child should provide other children with that much space when interacting with them. Remind them that when they get too close to another person or touches them, they might react negatively. You can also use stuffed animals or action gures to act out what's appropriate and what is not.
<p>Relationship Skills - The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed. Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Talk to Your Child About Friendships</i> - Ask your child who their friends are, and then ask their about the qualities that your child looks for in a friend and how your child likes their friends to treat them. ● <i>Work With Your Child to Find Solutions to Interpersonal Problems</i> - A helpful approach is to ask good questions about what your child thinks your child should do in any situation, and what the consequences of their particular solution will be. For example, if they are having a hard time with a classmate, you can say, "If your friend doesn't want to play with you, you might want to ask their if you did anything to hurt their feelings. Do you think you should say sorry? If you say sorry, your child might feel better. If your child did something to you, maybe

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social engagement • Relationship building • Teamwork 	<p>you can ask their why your child did that." You may not be around to solve any difficulties that occur, and it is better to start helping your child build this essential skill when they are young and problems are less serious.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice actively listening with your child.
<p><i>Goal Directed Behavior -</i> A child's initiation of, and persistence in completing, tasks of varying difficulty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start with small goals that are relevant to your child's current development and interests. Ask your child specifically what they would like to accomplish in the next week, or simply tomorrow. For example, "What do you want to do, or practice, this weekend?" It could be related to their schoolwork, a hobby, or a sport. You can help them identify an age-appropriate specific goal, like reading a book from beginning to end on their own. Help them work toward this goal by putting the goal on paper, along with the steps to achieving it. For example, before bed each night, they could try to read one page on their own. Have them check off each night that they read. At the end of the week, see if they has reached their goal. • It isn't always about the accomplishment — goals that kids set might not be accomplished in the time they wanted — and that's O.K. The process of working toward the goal can be just as important as the accomplishment. • You can also help your child identify people in their life who can help if they are struggling to accomplish a goal. If they wants to perform better on spelling tests, ask about friends in class they could talk to, or point out that a family member is a good speller and can help study if they want. Let your child know it's O.K. to ask for help when they need it. Also try to highlight times you've had to ask for help and how you reached your goal. Giving your child examples will help them understand that struggling is natural.
<p><i>Personal Responsibility -</i> A child's tendency to be careful and reliable in her/his actions and in contributing to group efforts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigning tasks at home is a great way to teach your child about responsibility. At this age, they can help fold laundry, take out the garbage, set and clear the table, and even help out with some food preparation like washing produce and preparing a salad. Let them know specifically what is expected and give them honest feedback about how well they has done afterward. Be sure they realizes that these actions are

	<p>genuine contributions to the household, allowing others to do other necessary things. Charts hung on the refrigerator or wall can help remind children what is expected of them. Include your child in making these charts and in deciding which task will be their responsibility. This will make them feel more involved in the process and more invested. Talk about the consequences for completing and not completing one's tasks. Praise or rewards for completing chores can be more effective at this age than punishments for incomplete tasks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pet is a great way to teach responsibility. While not all families can keep some animals at home because of allergies or other reasons, having your child take care of his own goldfish can be a fantastic lesson in responsibility. Ensure that he takes responsibility to clean the bowl and feed the fish daily.
<p>Decision Making - The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the wellbeing of oneself and others.</p> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying problems • Analyzing situations • Solving problems • Evaluating • Reflecting • Ethical responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Show Your Kids That You'll Always Love and Support Them-</i> Adults and children make bad choices at times, and supporting your child through hard decisions and poor choices shows you love them unconditionally. Of course you want to point out that some choices are not acceptable, but if your child makes the same mistake again, make sure to reinforce you still love him or her. You can also help them make up for those mistakes. Did your child hurt a friend? Have them write an apology note and ask for forgiveness. • <i>Give Your Child Room to Make Decisions Alone -</i> Some decisions like which book to read at bedtime or whether your child wants carrots or sweet potatoes with dinner are not big choices for you, but allowing them the choice will make them feel more involved and give them more autonomy. Also, give them room to make decisions even if they don't make a choice you agree with, as long as the consequences don't affect their health or safety. Letting children learn from their own mistakes is a great teaching opportunity that they will likely remember longer than if you had simply said "no" from the beginning. • <i>Talk to Your Child About Consequences -</i> This can help give your child tools they can use to make their own decisions in the future. Ask them questions like, "What do you think will happen if we don't wear our coats outside today?" or, "If you don't go to sleep on

	<p>time, what do you think you'll be like at school tomorrow?" or, "How do you think your sister will feel if you play with your favorite toy without asking?"</p> <p>Taking another person's perspective enhances the quality of your child's decision-making because in order for your child to make the best decision, they must be able to understand how it will affect others. Learning that there are consequences for actions that affect your child and others is a good way to promote empathy and responsible decision-making.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Use Bedtime Stories to Talk About Responsible Decisions</i> - Books that center on characters that have to make decisions, like the Berenstain Bears series, are a great option. Pause when the characters get to the problem. Ask your child what he or they thinks the bears should do, and what your child thinks will happen. Talk about the problem as you're reading, using terms like, "How would you solve this problem?" or, "What is the problem again?" and "What should Sister Bear do now?" This is a great opportunity to ask your child about problems they have faced recently and how they were able to solve them. • <i>Explain to Your Child That Different Rules Apply in Different Settings</i> - For example, inside or quiet voices need to be used in places like libraries and movie theaters, but cheering or loud yelling can be appropriate when watching sports or playing them. This allows your child to understand the differences in situations that can impact their decision-making.
<p>Optimistic Thinking - A child's attitude of confidence, hopefulness, and positive thinking regarding herself/himself and her/his life situations in the past, present, and future.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Respond with empathy</i> - Start by acknowledging your child's feelings. For instance, you could say, "You're feeling frustrated because you're having a hard time learning this" or "You're feeling discouraged because you haven't been able to do it yet" or "You're feeling disappointed because you didn't get the one you wanted." Empathizing shows your child you understand. • <i>Take a break</i> - Taking a short break could help your child step out of the negative thinking trap. A hug, a drink of water, a funny joke or just a few minutes doing something fun might be the emotional reset that your child needs. Stepping away from a problem temporarily can also help your child realize that not everything is terrible. Also, things will seem more manageable when your child is not tired or hungry.

	<p>Challenge all-or-nothing thinking. Breaking down tasks or events can help your child see beyond the pessimistic view that they can't do anything and nothing ever goes her way. For example, you could say, "You're holding your balance on your bike for short bits, and you're remembering to look forward. You just need a little bit more speed" or "You wish you could have stayed longer, but you got to ride the merry-go-round and eat popcorn and pet the theyep at the petting zoo."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>Address the complaining habit</i> - Some kids complain out of habit. Even when good things happen, they're quick to point out how the events were less than perfect. You may want to make a family rule that everyone who complains has to follow up by making two positive statements about something they like.● <i>Remember happy endings</i> - Pessimistic children get stuck believing, "It's bad now, so it will always stay bad." As a parent, you can help your child remember times when things improved or turned out better than they expected. You could say something like, "I remember when you didn't know the sounds of any letters, but now you can read!" or "Last weekend you were so disappointed that your friend couldn't come over, but then you had a great time working in the garden!" Remembering past happy endings can help your child muster hope.● Hearing and seeing specific, positive comments about one's self fosters the habit of Optimistic Thinking.
--	--

Resources adapted from: <https://casel.org/resources-support/>; <https://www.parenttoolkit.com/>



**Kids do well
if they can**

• DR. STUART ABLON, THINK-KIDS •