

Years of research and development reveal:

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING IS KEY TO STUDENT SUCCESS IN SCHOOL, WORK AND LIFE.

Children who have experienced social and emotional learning (SEL) demonstrate:

- As much as an 11 percent improvement in their achievement test scores
- More positive connections with school and a greater enthusiasm for learning
- Increased self-esteem and responsibility toward others
- Fewer conduct problems and less emotional distress
- Good character and citizenship

Raising Caring, Confident, Capable Children

Preparing children for life success takes love, hard work and endless patience. It also requires a broad, balanced education that combines academic growth with social and emotional growth. The research is clear. Children perform better academically when they learn to



manage their emotions, establish positive relationships, develop caring and concern for others, make responsible decisions and constructively handle challenging situations. This brochure will introduce you to some of the benefits of social and emotional learning (SEL) and what you can do, both at home and with your school, to promote your student's healthy social and emotional development and academic achievement.

FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Establishing and sustaining successful SEL initiatives is not just a school responsibility. Parents and caregivers share that responsibility. The best results for students are achieved when families and schools form a partnership to coordinate their efforts. These partnerships often begin with a school leader, such as a principal regularly sharing their school's SEL information with families. Then families and schools are better able to work together to recognize and promote SEL at home, in school and throughout the community.

What you can do to promote SEL in your school

Parents and caregivers can promote their child's social and emotional development by learning more about their school's SEL initiative. Ask your school leader or child's teacher what you can do to help. Here are a few suggestions:



- Attend family SEL informational meetings at school
- Ask your child's teacher about how SEL is used at school
- Participate in SEL parent/caregiver trainings
- Assist in your child's classroom
- Participate with your child in SEL-related homework assignments
- Promote SEL successes throughout your community
- Support fund raising efforts to sustain SEL initiatives

For more information about social and emotional learning and the Illinois SEL standards, please view the following websites:

- The Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership (www.icmhp.org)
- The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) (www.casel.org)
- University of Illinois Extension (<http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/sel>)
- The Illinois State Board of Education (www.isbe.net) (for the Illinois SEL standards)



Supported by the following organizations:



Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning



Illinois State Board of Education

RAISING CARING, CONFIDENT, CAPABLE CHILDREN

WHAT PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) AND WHY IT DESERVES YOUR SUPPORT IN SCHOOL AND AT HOME.



SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN SCHOOL AND AT HOME

There's a new direction for education in Illinois. It involves a statewide effort to promote the implementation of developmentally appropriate social and emotional learning (SEL) to all students. Years of research shows that teaching SEL skills along side core academic subjects raises achievement test scores and produces higher graduation rates. It also helps build self-esteem. Students feel valued and respected. They become more engaged in learning.

Success for Illinois' SEL initiative not only involves your child's school and teachers, it also requires your support and follow-up at home. Make a commitment to learn about your school's SEL efforts, coordinate your child's SEL school projects with activities at home, and work with teachers and school leaders to promote SEL throughout your community. When you do, you'll significantly increase your student's opportunities for achieving success in school, work and life.

Five Basic SEL Skills Everyone Should Acquire

SEL identifies five core competencies fundamental to life success:

Self-Awareness: Identify one's thoughts, feelings, and strengths, and recognize how they influence one's choices and actions.

Self-Management: Establish and work toward short- and long-term goals, and handle emotions so that they facilitate rather than interfere with the task at hand.

Social Awareness: Identify and understand the thoughts and feelings of others, respect their rights, and appreciate diversity.

Relationship Skills: Establish and maintain healthy and rewarding connections with individuals and groups through communication, listening, and negotiation skills.

Responsible Decision Making: Generate, implement, and evaluate positive and informed solutions to problems, and assume responsibility for personal decisions and behaviors.

THE PARENTING CONTRACT FOR RAISING CARING, CONFIDENT, CAPABLE CHILDREN

Ten things I will try to do at home to teach my children social and emotional skills and give them greater strength, wisdom and resilience in dealing with life's pressures.

I promise to: **1. Focus on strengths.** When my children bring home a test, I will first praise what they did well and then I will talk about what can be improved. I will not just criticize things that were wrong.

2. Follow up with fair consequences for misbehavior. Sometimes parents/caregivers demand unfair consequences in anger. "Because of what you did, no television for a month." (*It's not a surprise that the TV is turned back on in one or two days.*) I will set fair consequences and consistently carry them out.

3. Ask my children how they feel. When I do, I'm sending the message that their feelings matter and that I care.

4. Find ways to stay calm when angry. I know it's normal to get angry or irritated, but I shouldn't lose control. Instead, I will take a few deep breaths, or just stop talking, or leave the room. I will encourage family discussion about what we all can do to stay calm.

5. Avoid humiliating or mocking my child. Unfair criticism and sarcasm can make children feel bad about themselves. They can lose confidence, which can cause problems with schoolwork, illness and getting along with friends. It also weakens our mutual bond of trust. I will try to give my children room to make mistakes when they're learning new skills.

6. Be willing to apologize. If I miscommunicate, I will apologize and calmly explain what I really meant. Being a good role model means teaching that it's possible to work through problems with consideration and respect for others.

7. Give my children choices and respect their wishes. When my children have a chance to make choices, they learn how to solve problems. Letting my children make decisions teaches them that their ideas and feelings matter.

8. Ask questions that help my children solve problems on their own. When my children have a problem, I will NOT step in and take over. Instead I will try to ask good questions and encourage them to find their own appropriate solutions.

9. Read books and stories together. Reading aloud is a way to share something enjoyable and learn how other people deal with common issues like making or losing friends or handling conflicts.

10. Encourage sharing and helping. There are many ways my family can do this, such as preparing food in a homeless shelter or going on a fund-raising walk/run, or helping elderly neighbors or needy families. My children will learn that they can make a difference in the lives of others.

Place your children's school photos here



Parent or Caregiver Signature

Date

Parent or Caregiver Signature

Date:

We encourage you to read and sign this contract and then post it on your refrigerator or kitchen bulletin board as a reminder of your commitment to raising caring, confident, capable children.