



# Social Emotional Links

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## Introduction to Social Emotional Learning

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is the *process* of acquiring the skills to:

- Recognize and manage emotions
- Develop caring and concern for others
- Establish positive relationships
- Make responsible decisions
- Handle challenging situations effectively.

SEL is fundamental to children's social and emotional development – their health, ethical development, citizenship, academic learning, and motivation to succeed. Not only does SEL enhance academic outcomes for students, it also ensures that schools will address a broader mission of educating students to be good problem-solvers and caring, responsible, and engaged citizens.

Effective SEL permeates all aspects of the school culture including school policies and practices, role modeling by all school staff, implementing evidence based programming in classrooms, and providing ample opportunities for practicing skills by students. The ideal learning environment is one that is safe, caring, highly participatory, engaging and has high expectations for students.

Social emotional skill instruction does not come at the expense of core academic skills, but rather enhances academic achievement. Research clearly shows that developing students' social and emotional skills improves their grades, attendance, behavior, and attitudes toward school.

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has led the way in creating a vision for SEL by adopting Goals and Learning Standards for all public schools. These goals identify key *skills* and *attitudes* that provide a strong foundation for achieving school and life success.

*Goal 1: Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success*

*Goal 2: Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships*

*Goal 3: Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school and community contexts.*

One of the guiding principles of effective social-emotional implementation is the involvement of family and community. In fact, there is strong scientific evidence to suggest that when home and school collaborate, programs tend to have many more positive outcomes that last for longer periods of time.

Schools are at the heart of a community. It is proven that community acceptance and involvement of social emotional learning initiatives are critical if they are to achieve their potential effectiveness. Development of a common language, using consistent standards, and modeling of SEL skills by all adults greatly enhance the child's capacity for internalizing these important life skills.

## WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- Help your child to identify and express difficult feelings and emotions such as anger, sadness, shame, and fear. Children need strategies to express these emotions appropriately without fear of reprisal.
- Be a role model for empathic behavior, an awareness of others' feelings, which is an essential component to emotional intelligence.
- Model healthy relationships. Make sure your child knows how to care for something of value, apologize, handle conflict and end an unhealthy relationship.
- Admit when you've made a mistake and discuss how you would handle the situation differently in the future.

## SEL RESOURCES

### Websites:

Illinois State Board of Education:  
[www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/social\\_emotional/resources.htm](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/social_emotional/resources.htm)

Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership: [www.icmhp.org](http://www.icmhp.org)

Edutopia:  
[www.edutopia.org/social-emotional-learning](http://www.edutopia.org/social-emotional-learning)

Iroquois-Kankakee Regional Office of Education: Snapshots of Your Child's Social Emotional Well-being: [www.i-kan.org](http://www.i-kan.org)

### Books:

*Building Emotional Intelligence: Techniques to Cultivate Inner Strength in Children* (2008). Lantieri, L., and Goleman, D.

*Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ.* (1995/2005) Goleman, D.



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