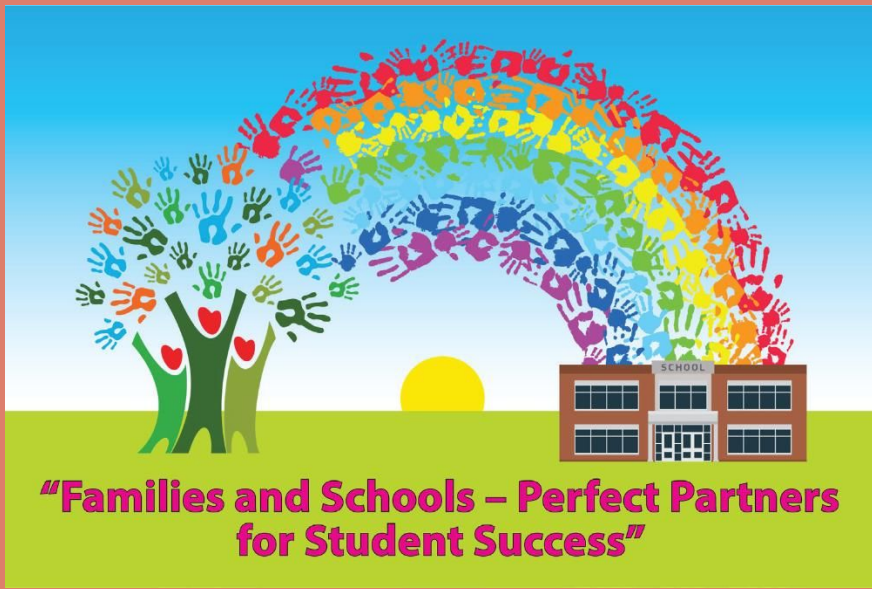




HOW TO INTEGRATE SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (S.E.L.) INTO OUR DAILY LIVES

**By: Gina Infante, K-4
Krista Deckhut, 5-8**



When schools and families work together, they can build essential connections that reinforce social-emotional skill development.

An essential factor in the development of social and emotional learning throughout a child’s life comes from the **FAMILY.**





SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) is an integral part of education and human development.

S.E.L. is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions” (Casel, 2020).



Self-awareness: The ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior.

Self-management: The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations.

Social awareness: The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others

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

Responsible decision making: The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions

WHY IS S.E.L. Important?

- ❖ Sets the foundation at young age and provides long term benefits well into adulthood
- ❖ Improves students' social and emotional skills, attitudes, relationships, academic performance, and perceptions of classroom and school climate
- ❖ Lessens students' anxiety, behavior problems, and substance use
- ❖ Long-term improvements in students' skills, prosocial behavior, and academic performance

(Casel, 2020)



It's important that we, as caregivers, work to help students continue to build and practice social and emotional skills in meaningful ways, especially when distractions and anxieties from current events and in their personal communities are at an all-time high.

Social emotional learning (SEL) strengthens us as individuals and as communities, especially during uncertain times.

We are better equipped to navigate stressors, anxieties, and challenges. We can solve problems and work together to function at a higher level—in the classroom, at work and at home.

Things we model for our kids, whether we realize it or not...

OOPS



how we handle mistakes

how we deal with frustration



how we solve problems



how we take care of ourselves



how we apologize & repair



how we ask for help



how we "speak up" for self & others



how we navigate conflict



how we approach differences



how we care for animals



how we care for our environment



how we listen



S.E.L. Activities in the Home



S.E.L. IN THE HOME means that families can use moments that happen organically to grow students' skills...



Create avenues for learning. Use family experiences as springboards for conversations.

Use [books](#). Talk about the characters and what is happening in the story to give your child access to the words and language used to describe different feelings and traits.

Anticipate and preview experiences. Talk aloud about what a particular experience might be like to build your child's ability to recognize their own feelings and develop their own methods to prepare for a situation.

Reflect. As things happen in the world around you—whether it be a relatively insignificant moment at a sports game or something that makes national headlines—engage your child in conversations that help them identify problems and design solutions.



Self-talk. When you're feeling frustrated, take a deep breath to keep your cool, invite your child into your world by using self-talk. This quick exchange teaches your child words to associate with their feelings as well as strategies like taking deep breaths.

Personalize your conversations. Your family's background and experiences will inform how you talk with your child about their world. The more you personalize conversations about social-emotional learning, the more relevant that learning becomes.

Listen. When your child has a tough moment, create a space to listen. Listening is a simple and easy way to validate the feelings that kids experience, regardless of the size of the problem.

Build up your child. Social-emotional learning is about helping your child learn and apply the skills and understanding needed to manage their feelings. When your child is struggling with something new, remind them of a time they worked hard to overcome obstacles. By shining a light on your child's past successes, their path forward is a bit clearer. [- gettingsmart.org](https://www.gettingsmart.org)

Ways to Foster S.E.L. in Middle School Students at Home



- **Participate in activities together as a family indoors/outdoor:** Take a walk, ride a bike, or watch a movie and engage in conversations about the relationships among the different characters.
- **Schedule a time when ALL family members take a break from technology**
- **Talk to your adolescent about what they see on social media:** Try to encourage them not to compare themselves to their peers. Emphasize that the images they see on the screen are images that others want the world to see and are not necessarily what they seem to be.

Ways to Foster SEL in Middle School Students at Home

- Encourage your adolescent to **read**, especially books involving characters of various cultures, ethnicities, and gender identities.
- Arrange some activities focused on **helping others** and providing **community service**.
 - **Share family stories and experiences** through discussion, looking through photo albums (hardcover or digital), and watching family videos.
 - **Encourage and provide positive feedback about your adolescent's efforts** rather than focusing on his/her abilities.
 - **Assist your adolescent in learning how to solve problems.** Demonstrate that the problems can be broken down into smaller parts and can be solved one step at a time.
 - **Promote your adolescent's ability to make decisions.** Provide opportunities for him/her to practice making decisions.



Connect with others. There is no right or wrong way to partner with your child as they develop social and emotional skills.

Add to your parenting toolkit with resources such as:



- [Parachute](#): a user-friendly, research-backed parenting app that provides easy access to solutions for common parenting challenges
- [We Are Teachers](#): How to Help Teens Build Life Skills for Success
- [Mind Yeti](#): a mindfulness app with guided sessions that help kids destress, focus, get along with others, and relax
- [Confident Parents, Confident Kids](#): a site with parent and child resources that support social-emotional development
- [Parent Toolkit](#): a site with information and articles about all aspects of child development



Tips & Techniques to Manage **BIG** Emotions



Breathing techniques help to regulate the mind and body, and can provide a brief break for students who can become overwhelmed with emotion.

Reminders to take a breath before reacting can help with emotion regulation.

Box breathing

Hold for 4 counts

Inhale for 4 counts

Exhale for 4 counts

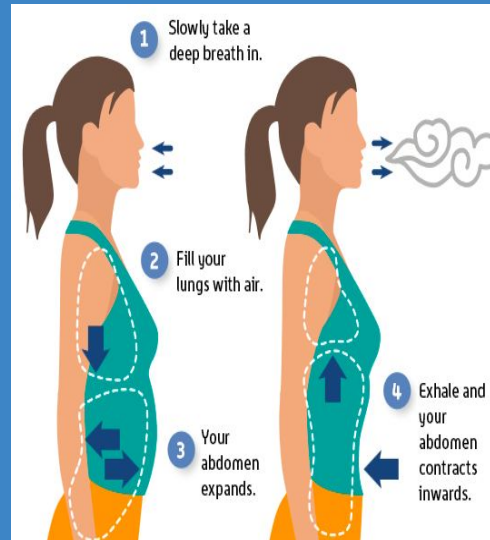
Hold for 4 counts

Benefits of box breathing:

1. Brings balance to your mind and body
2. Regulates your natural rhythm
3. Effective in dealing with stress, anxiety and anger



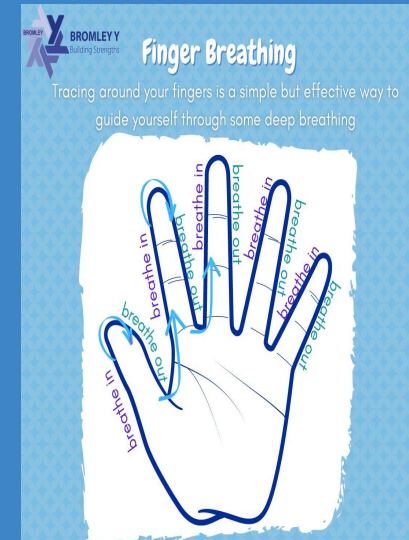
- 1 Slowly take a deep breath in.
- 2 Fill your lungs with air.
- 3 Your abdomen expands.
- 4 Exhale and your abdomen contracts inwards.



BROMLEY
Building Resilience

Finger Breathing

Tracing around your fingers is a simple but effective way to guide yourself through some deep breathing





Mindfulness can be used as a grounding exercise when kids need help managing big emotions.

Mindful 5-4-3-2-1 can work well if a child is already upset and needs help regulating their emotions.



Journal Writing

Setting a timer and having your student write for 5-10 minutes can help them express feelings and thoughts.

Encourage your student to discuss their thoughts afterwards if they would like to share.



You can also provide open-ended prompts:

- What are some things that make you feel mad? Sad? Happy?
- Describe a time and situation you needed help.
- What is something you are good at? Something you want to get better at?
- What are some goals you have in school or at home?
- Write about a time you disagreed with a friend. How did you handle it?

Identifying Emotions and Problem Solving

Children struggle with identifying and verbalizing emotions. Having an easy to use emotion chart can help them identify their feelings while associating the feeling with a facial expression. This provides them with building social skills by being able to recognize the emotions of others.



I-Messages:

Ask your student to identify how they feel and then prompt them to answer why they may feel that way and how they want to solve the problem.

Growth Mindset and the Power of “YET”

A simple change of language can inspire children to think differently about their capabilities

If your student becomes frustrated or discouraged, try reassuring and encouraging them by adding in the word “yet”.

INSTEAD OF.....	TRY THINKING....
I'm not good at this	What am I missing?
I give up	I'll use a different strategy
It's good enough	Is this really my best work?
I can't make this any better	I can always improve
This is too hard	This may take some time
I made a mistake	Mistakes help me to learn
I just can't do this	I am going to train my brain
I'll never be that smart	I will learn how to do this
Plan A didn't work	There's always Plan B
My friend can do it	I will learn from them



What To Do If Your Child Is Struggling Emotionally



The Most Important Thing To Do Is...

Listen!!

This is one of the most important things you can do for your adolescent. They need to know that someone is listening. Setting aside time to really listen without judging or interrupting can be very powerful and comforting.

If an adolescent says, “I feel sad”, and a parent responds with, “You have no reason to be sad...you have a great family and life”, although this parental response is made with the intention of providing comfort and reassurance, it can have the opposite effect. The statement invalidates the adolescent’s feelings. Listening without interrupting or judging sends the message that you care.



Some Signs that Your Child Might Be Struggling Emotionally



- He/she frequently appears sad or irritable (more so than usual).
- He/she appears more withdrawn than usual.
- He/she exhibits less enjoyment in activities or interests that he/she previously enjoyed.
- His/her sleeping patterns have changed (i.e., sleeps more or less than usual).
- He/she is more tired than usual and or displays a loss of energy.
- He/she makes negative comments about himself/herself.



More Signs that Your Child Might Be Struggling Emotionally

- He/she displays difficulty concentrating.
- His/her grades decrease.
- He/she makes frequent visits to the School Health Office.
- He/she manifests physical symptoms that have been checked/addressed by a physician and have no known cause (i.e., headache, stomachache).
- He/she demonstrates excessive worry or anxiety.
- He/she appears preoccupied with death and dying.

What to Do if Your Child is Struggling Emotionally

- **Ensure his or her safety.**
- **If your child is in danger of self-harm, take them to a local emergency room or contact *Psychiatric Emergency Screening Services (PESS) (Bridgeway Rehabilitation Services)* at 908-526-4100.** This service is open 24 hours, 7 days per week, including on holidays and weekends. The facility has a mobile unit, and a licensed mental health professional will visit your home to assess your teenager. Private counseling services may be recommended.
- **If your adolescent is not in danger of self-harm yet is demonstrating emotional difficulties, reach out to a licensed mental health professional as well as his/her school counselor.** During the school year, the school counselor can assist in providing a list of private counseling resources as well as school-based counseling services if warranted.



Helpful S.E.L. Resources for Families

- ❑ [**SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES AND EDUCATORS**](#)
- ❑ [**Edutopia: A Parent's Resource Guide to Social and Emotional Learning**](#)
- ❑ [**Growth Mindset: A Kit For Parents**](#)
- ❑ [**CASEL Caregiver Guide_English.pdf**](#)
- ❑ [**Schools & Families: SEL Ideas and Tools**](#)

Mental Health Resources

[National Suicide Prevention Lifeline \(800-273-8255\)](#)

[National Youth Crisis Hotline \(800-448-4663\)](#)

[PerformCare \(877-652-7624\)](#)

[2NDFLOOR Youth Helpline \(888-222-2228\)](#)

[Society for Adolescent Health & Medicine](#)

[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#)

