



# Five areas of social and emotional learning

Social and emotional learning (SEL) involves developing the ability to understand and manage our emotions, establish positive relationships, develop empathy for others, set and achieve goals and feel good about ourselves.

## Five social and emotional skills areas

Be You's approach to SEL is based on the model developed by the [Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\)](#), an internationally recognised organisation in this area of research.

The model defines five social and emotional learning skill areas essential for the development of good mental health. Each of these skill areas includes a number of specific elements. Intentional teaching of the competencies is also crucial to implementing effective SEL, as are opportunities for children and young people to practise and generalise them.

Teaching SEL works best when the focus is on helping children and young people learn skills from each domain so that they gradually and progressively build their skills and knowledge throughout early learning and school. It's an ongoing process across all year levels.



## Self-awareness

This is the ability to recognise and understand your own feelings, thoughts and values, and understand how they affect your behaviour. It's about understanding and assessing your personal strengths and understanding that abilities and intelligence can be developed and improved. This then leads to an increased awareness of how your actions can impact others. The main skills include:

- identifying emotions
- self-perception
- understanding strengths
- self-confidence
- self-efficacy.

## Self-management

This is the ability to manage and [regulate your emotions](#) and behaviour, including managing stress, controlling impulses and keeping yourself motivated. The main skills include:

- impulse control
- stress management
- self-discipline
- self-motivation
- goal-setting
- organisational skills.

## Social awareness

This is the ability to understand and empathise with people from a range of diverse backgrounds, and to understand social and ethical norms of behaviour. The main skills include:

- perspective-taking
- empathy
- appreciating diversity
- respect for others.

## Relationship skills

These involve the ability to develop and maintain healthy and positive relationships with others. They include the ability to communicate clearly, listen, cooperate, resist peer pressure, and negotiate and resolve conflict. The main skills include:

- communication
- social engagement
- relationship building
- teamwork.

## Responsible decision-making

This is the ability to make informed and responsible decisions about personal behaviour and social interactions with others, based on adherence to ethical standards, safety concerns and social norms. It also includes the ability to consider the wellbeing of others and weigh up the outcomes of different decisions. The main skills include:

- identifying problems
- analysing situations
- solving problems
- self-evaluation
- self-reflection
- ethical responsibility.

## What can I do to support SEL in children and young people?

**Children and young people's SEL skills are developing all the time.**

Skills may develop differently and at varying rates for different individuals. Children and young people benefit from having ongoing learning opportunities. It can be helpful to plan dedicated time each week or fortnight to develop SEL skills.

## There are many ways you can support children and young people in developing SEL skills.

This could include planned activities across the early learning service or school, or activities within specific learning environments, as well as making the most of informal learning opportunities during unplanned activities and conversations. Approaches may include a combination of:

- universal approaches that are planned and target the whole service or school (for example, organised play activities and intentionally teaching particular skills, such as cooperation, turn-taking, listening, implementing an evidence-based SEL program at a whole-service/school level, professional development for educators on SEL topics, or implementing mindfulness practice for educators, children and young people)
- targeted approaches that are unplanned and respond to a specific incident or opportunity (for example, helping a child or young person manage their frustration to persist in an activity, or encouraging perspective-taking and recognition of another person's feelings when discussing an incident that happened).

## Be You Professional Learning

Check out content on SEL and teaching for resilience in the [Learning Resilience](#) domain.

## References

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (2018). Core SEL competencies. Chicago: CASEL. Retrieved from <https://casel.org/core-competencies/>.

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## External links

[Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\)](#)