



**DAVENPORT**  
Community Schools  
*GROWING EXCELLENCE*

# Family Learning Guide

*Social Emotional Learning for  
Third through Fifth Graders*



# What is Social Emotional Learning (SEL)?

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults:

- *Understand and manage emotions*
- *Set and achieve positive goals*
- *Feel and show empathy for others*
- *Establish and maintain positive relationships*
- *Make responsible decisions*

## Why do schools care about SEL?

Children's emotions and relationships affect how and what they learn, and how they use what they learn in school and at home. Emotions can allow us to have an active interest in learning. However, unmanaged stress and poor regulation of impulses interfere with attention and memory and contribute to behaviors disruptive to learning.

Learning is a social and interactive process. It takes place in collaboration with one's teachers, in the company of one's peers, and with the support of one's family. Relationships are the engine of learning.

# What are Iowa's Social Emotional Competencies?

The Iowa Department of Education has organized social emotional learning around five core competencies identified by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

*At the third through fifth grade level, these are:*

Competencies	Learning Targets
<b>Self Awareness</b>	Identifying Emotions Accurate Self Perception Self Confidence
<b>Self Management</b>	Impulse Control Stress Management Self Discipline Self Motivation Goal Setting Organizational Skills
<b>Social Awareness</b>	Perspective Taking and Empathy Appreciating Diversity and Respect for Others Civic Engagement
<b>Relationship Skills</b>	Communication Social Engagement Relationship Building Teamwork
<b>Responsible Decision Making</b>	Identifying Problems Analyzing Solutions and Solving Problems Evaluating and Reflecting Ethical Responsibility

# Self Awareness

## What is Self Awareness?

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

## What Should Third–Fifth Graders be Able to Do?

### Identifying Emotions

- *Recognize differing intensity levels of their emotions.*
- *Identify how thoughts and emotions influence behavior.*
- *Describe a range of emotions and the situations that cause those emotions.*

### Accurate Self Perception

- *Identify personal traits, strengths, and challenges that help or hinder academics, social situations, and/or emotional regulation.*
- *Describe the personal qualities they possess that make them successful members of their school community.*
- *Describe personal skills and interests they want to develop.*

### Self Confidence

- *Identify positive qualities about themselves.*
- *Express positive beliefs in one's ability to achieve.*
- *Actively participate, question, and contribute.*

## What can Families do at Home to Help Children Develop Self Awareness?

**Encourage positive self-talk.** Self-talk is the voice in our heads that encourages and helps us. Sometimes, this voice can be negative. Positive self-talk is important because it helps children accurately face their emotions and difficulties. Something that can be used to encourage positive self-talk is positive affirmations. For example, teach your child to make statements like, "I am smart and successful."

**Promote a growth mindset.** Sometimes your child may feel like they will never improve his/her skills. If you encourage a growth mindset, your child will learn that they can accomplish his/her goals with hard work. For example, instead of allowing your child to say, "I'm not good at reading," teach them to say, "Reading is difficult, but I will study and work hard to accomplish my goals."

**Listen and show interest.** When your child is vocal about what he/she likes and doesn't like, listen and show interest, even if you don't agree with him/her. Say things like, "I hear that you don't like peas. I can understand that. I didn't like them when I was a child either." Your child may still have to eat the peas, but we can still understand his/her feelings.

**Do a daily check in with your child.** Asking your child about his/her feelings will help him/her understand their emotions. It also teaches your child that it is helpful to talk about his/her feelings.

**Encourage questions.** Children who are curious about the world around them do better in school and in life. When children ask questions, try your best to answer them. When you don't know, "Say, I don't know how that works. How do you think we could find out?"

# Self Management

## What is Self Management?

Self-management includes regulation one's emotions, stress management, self-control, self-motivation, and setting and achieving goals.

## What Should Third–Fifth Graders be Able to Do?

### Impulse Control

- *Identify productive self-regulating strategies to process emotions and reframe thoughts and behaviors.*
- *Demonstrate productive self-regulation strategies to manage emotions and reframe thoughts and behaviors.*

### Stress Management

- *Identify stressors that result in physical or emotional responses.*
- *Identify healthy practices that can minimize response to stress and promote physical and mental wellness.*
- *Communicate the need for assistance to manage stress as needed.*
- *Demonstrate constructive ways to handle situations that cause stress.*

### Goal Setting

- *Demonstrate the ability to identify a simple goal.*
- *Implement steps toward a goal including identifying resources needed, monitoring progress, and make changes as needed*
- *Reflect on process and outcome of goal setting.*

### Organizational Skills

- *Demonstrate skills that keep personal items organized.*
- *Demonstrate ability to manage time and tasks.*

### Self–Discipline and Self–Motivation

- *Demonstrate the ability to stay actively engaged and persist in activities.*
- *Demonstrate the ability to delay immediate gratification.*
- *Accept mistakes as part of learning.*
- *Demonstrate the ability to take initiative.*
- *Demonstrate the ability to work independently.*

## What can Families do at Home to Help Children Develop Self–Management?

**Encourage reflection.** Ask your child to think about a time when he/she used self-management. For example, ask him/her to recall when they were able to calm him/herself down when angry, identify a goal, or keep themselves organized.

**Let your child know he/she can talk to you and listen.** Encourage your child to talk to you about his/her day. Communicating with you will allow him/her to come to you in times where he/she is upset or stressed. Listen to your child and engage in the conversation with him/her.

**Teach self-management techniques** like belly breathing, yoga positions, counting to ten, or other relaxation exercises. This helps your child learn to manage his/her stress and anxiety.

**Encourage organization.** Organization will make it easier for your child to manage his/her work and belongings. To encourage this, help your child plan out his/her tasks for each day with a calendar or list. Another strategy is to give your child a special area in your home where he/she can keep their belongings.

**Teach delaying gratification.** Don't allow your child to participate in a desired activity (watching TV) until he/she has completed the less desirable activity (chores or homework).

# Social Awareness

## What is Social Awareness?

Social awareness connotes perspective-taking; empathy; respecting diversity; understanding social and ethical norms of behavior; and recognizing family, school, and community.

## What Should Third–Fifth Graders be Able to Do?

### Perspective–Taking and Empathy

- *Recognize differing points of view and perspectives.*
- *Identify and interpret social cues (verbal and nonverbal) to determine how others feel.*
- *Recognize when one's feelings are affected by/match the way someone else is feeling (experiences empathy).*

### Appreciating Diversity and Respect for Others

- *Identify ways that people are alike and different from self.*
- *Identify contributions of various social and cultural groups.*
- *Demonstrate consideration for the feelings, wishes, rights, and traditions of others.*
- *Work/interact effectively with those who are similar and different from oneself.*

### Civic Engagement

- *Identify and perform roles that contribute to one's family, school and community.*
- *Recognize each individual is part of numerous communities. Identify strategies for improving those communities.*

## What can Families do at Home to Help Children Develop Social Awareness?

**Discuss empathy** with your child, whether it is through real-life situations or examples from literature. By practicing empathy, your child will learn to consider how others feel, which helps him/her respond in socially acceptable ways. Ask him/her, "How would you feel if you were in their situation?"

**Model acceptance.** Children learn a lot by listening to the adults around them. Think about how you would want your child to treat others, and use that to guide your actions. Demonstrate that you care for people who are both similar and different from you, and how to interact effectively with them.

**Respect differences.** Every person has different strengths and abilities, and it is important to recognize that everyone has a role in society. Encourage your child to examine what makes him/her different from others, and why that is positive.

**Actively engage** in activities, events and celebrations that honor the diversity in our community. Talk with your children about the roles that various groups of people have played in establishing and building our society. Emphasize the importance of all people.

**Call out injustice when you see it.** Children have a keen sense of what is "fair" and what isn't. Children are confused when something is clearly unjust and adults don't address it. Be sure to pay attention when others are being treated differently based on their age, race, gender, religion, ability, etc. Address what you see by asking children what they see, and pointing out when something is unfair and what we can do to make the world a more fair place.

# Relationship Skills

## What are Relationship Skills?

Relationship skills connote building relationships with diverse individuals and groups, communicating clearly, working cooperatively, resolving conflicts, and seeking help.

## What Should Third–Fifth Graders be Able to Do?

### Communication

- *Recognize facial expressions, body language, gestures, and tone of voice to understand others' thoughts and feelings.*
- *Use facial expressions, body language, gestures, words, and tone to interact effectively with others in a variety of ways (e.g., writing, speaking, visuals, and technology).*
- *Attentively listen and respond to the needs, wants, and ideas of others.*
- *Deliver and receive compliments, feedback, and respond appropriately.*

### Social Engagement

- *Initiate and engage in social interactions with peers and adults.*
- *Demonstrate social behaviors that are appropriate to the situation and environment.*
- *Recognize that the same norms and behaviors for face-to-face interactions apply to interactions through social media.*

### Relationship Building

- *Identify and demonstrate personal qualities and decisions that contribute to a healthy relationship.*
- *Identify and apply strategies for handling relationships that are not safe, healthy, or positive.*
- *Express interest and appreciation for others.*

### Teamwork

- *Demonstrate cooperative behaviors with others (listen, encourage, acknowledge opinions, compromise, reach consensus).*
- *Recognize and support others with different abilities in group activities.*

## What can families do at home to help children develop relationship skills?

***Practice communication with your child and others.*** Regular, positive communication with your child will provide a model for him/her to follow. Practice engaging with adults, family members, or children by openly expressing feelings, wants, needs, and ideas. Use the tone of voice, body language, and listening skills you want your child to demonstrate.

***Model the behavior you seek.*** Because children learn a lot from watching the adults around them, it is important to display the relationship skills that you would like to see in your child. Initiate and engage in interactions, express interest when interacting with people, and show support for others.

***Ask questions.*** It is common for young children to struggle with friendships. This is partly because it is hard to learn to take another person's perspective. When your child is struggling in a relationship, ask him/her what he/she thinks the other person might be thinking. Help them brainstorm.

***Teach the importance of teamwork.*** Teamwork and cooperation can be difficult skills to learn because our culture tends to focus on individual achievements. However, teamwork is required in most school and extracurricular settings. Help your child participate in activities that require teamwork and praise him/her for his/her effort.

***Teach your child how to respectfully disagree with others.*** It is normal to disagree with people, but it is important to respond to them in a respectful manner. Model active listening and thoughtful responses to other people when you disagree with them. Teach them phrases like, "I understand your point of view, but I see the situation like this..."

# Responsible Decision–Making

## What is Responsible Decision–Making?

Responsible decision-making refers to considering the well-being of self and others; recognizing one's responsibility to behave ethically; basing decisions on safety, social, and ethical considerations; evaluating realistic consequences of various actions and making constructive, safe choices for self, relationships, and school.

## What Should Third–Fifth Graders be Able to Do?

### Identify Problems

- *Recognize when a situation is a problem and what makes it a problem (ex. safe/unsafe, health/unhealthy, legal/illegal, etc.)*
- *Identify choices that may result in a problem.*

### Analyzing Situations and Solving Problems

- *Identify the possible positive and negative effects a decision could have on themselves and others.*
- *Identify situations that require assistance from an adult.*
- *Identify situations when peer pressure influences decisions.*
- *Apply choice and accept responsibility for the outcome.*

### Evaluating and Reflecting

- *Reflect on the effect of choices on self and others.*
- *Identify new thinking as a result of the problem-solving process.*

### Ethical Responsibility

- *Demonstrate awareness of equity, fairness and respect that positively impacts the greater good.*
- *Accept ownership for actions.*

## What can Families do at Home to Help Children Develop Responsible Decision–Making?

**Help your child when he/she asks.** Wait for your child to ask you for your assistance with a situation. When he/she identifies he/she needs your help, respond by actively helping him/her and communicating how you are going to solve the situation.

**Highlight positive SEL skills throughout the day.** When your child makes a good decision, discuss it with him/her. This will help him/her reflect on the consequences of his/her decisions. For example, if your child was frustrated with a family member and used self-control techniques to calm down, praise him/her for it. This will encourage them to use self-control when they are frustrated in the future.

**Practice problem solving skills.** If your child has a problem, give them time to solve it on his/her own. This will encourage him/her to think critically and expand his/her knowledge of decision making. After he/she has given it some thought, discuss the solution with him/her.

**Give your child responsibilities.** Responsibility helps your child learn that he/she is a part of a larger community and his/her participation matters. Give your child a task whether it is doing the dishes, helping make dinner, or organizing a family activity.



## Communicating with School

Your child's teacher and school counselor are great sources of information about the social emotional development of your child. Ask them how they think your child is doing with being on track with the skills discussed in this guide. Be sure to ask what they see in school, and how you can support your child's development at home.

### **Ask questions such as:**

- *How do you feel my child is doing in getting along with peers? What strengths and challenges do you see?*
- *What are your observations about my child's ability to understand and manage emotions?*
- *Tell me about how my child is doing with both following directions and solving problems effectively in the classroom.*
- *In general, how do you think my child is doing in his/her social-emotional development in terms of what you would expect from this age?*
- *Are there any specific things you would like us to work on at home to help with social emotional challenges in the classroom?*

## Concerns about Development

All children have areas of strength and areas of challenge as they grow and learn. For some children, an area of challenge is around social and emotional development.

If you are concerned about your child's development, ***talk to your child's school counselor*** about your concerns. Ask what he/she sees and if there are recommendations that may help your child. Ask your school counselor about extra groups or programs that might help your child learn these skills.

***Talk with your child's pediatrician*** or family doctor about your concerns. Sometimes children have a medical condition or developmental challenge that can interfere with their ability to be as successful as we would like.

***Ask your child's pediatrician for a referral*** to a community-based provider that specializes in helping children learn additional social and emotional skills. Community-based counselors use strategies to help children learn and practice skills that they can use to improve their social and emotional skills in everyday life.





For more information about social emotional learning, visit the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning at: <https://casel.org/>



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