



# Social and emotional learning

Social and emotional learning (SEL) skills involve 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.

## What is SEL?

A sense of self, emotional skills and social skills are at the core of SEL.

### Sense of self

Ideally, this involves feeling good about themselves and what they can do. As children and young people experience success in their efforts to interact with others and explore their world, they develop self-confidence and see themselves as capable. This motivates them to continue engaging in new experiences and feel optimistic about the future.

### Emotional skills

Emotional skills include recognising, expressing, understanding and managing a wide range of feelings. These help children and young people develop the ability to interact successfully with others and the world around them. Children and young people who can understand and manage their feelings are more likely to develop a positive sense of self and be confident and curious learners. Read more about [emotional development](#) children and young people.

### Social skills

These skills are about getting along with others. Through their first relationships, children learn they can trust others to care for them and meet their needs. As they grow, children learn to relate to others by watching, imitating and trying out new behaviours. They begin to understand they can have an impact on others and that other children may have different thoughts and feelings from their own. These skills continue to grow, develop and become refined throughout childhood and adolescence. Read more about social development [[link to 'social development'](#)] in children and young people.

Learn more about the [five areas of social and emotional learning](#).

## Why is SEL important for learning?

**Research shows that children and young people's learning is influenced by a range of social and emotional factors.**

Children and young people with social and emotional learning skills have better academic

outcomes, as well as improved physical health and a better quality of life.

**How well individuals do in their learning community is affected by things such as how:**

- confident they feel about their abilities
- effectively they're able to manage their own behaviour
- well they can concentrate and organise themselves
- effectively they can solve problems
- positively they can get on with educators and their peers
- effectively they consider others' needs
- well they can understand and accept responsibilities.

Therefore, SEL and success within the learning community go hand in hand.

## How is SEL taught?

**Many early learning services and schools already incorporate aspects of SEL.**

Be You's approach is to look at what your learning community is already doing and ask you to evaluate how social and emotional skills are taught. Be You provides a framework for planning, teaching and evaluating, so that, from year to year, children and young people can acquire and consolidate skills that are relevant and appropriate for their age and skill level. Teaching SEL is no different to teaching numeracy or literacy skills – it needs to be continuous, cumulative and tailored to a child's age and stage.

### Be You Professional Learning

Learn more about SEL 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 \(CASEL\)](#)