



Social & Emotional Learning in the Primary Grades

PRESENTED BY:

Tracy Martinez, School Social Worker

Stacey Esmond, Hemlock School Psychologist

GARDEN CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



VISION

Inspiring and Challenging our Students to Accomplish Their Personal Best

Students will:

Foster a curiosity for learning.

Engage in productive cognitive struggle.

Find their individual passions, creativity, and strengths.

Grow increasingly self-confident.

Develop appreciation for multiple disciplines and the larger world.

Collaborate, communicate, and adapt.

Build respectful relationships.



MISSION STATEMENT

The Garden City School District seeks to create an environment for learning which enables **each student the opportunity to grow** as an individual as well as a group member while striving to achieve the **optimal level of academic, social and personal success.**

Students will thrive in a **learning environment** that is developmentally appropriate, **individualized and challenging.**

Our goal and responsibility is to help **each student develop an enthusiasm for learning, a respect for self and others, and the skills to become a creative independent thinker and problem solver.**



Today's Objectives

- **Define Social Emotional Learning (SEL).**
- **Explain what we do at the primary level.**
- **Identify signs that might warrant greater intervention and explain what that intervention might look like.**
- **Provide suggested strategies that you as parents can use at home.**



What is Social Emotional Learning?

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) can be defined as the capacity to recognize and manage emotions, solve problems effectively, and establish positive relationships with others (Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, CASEL)

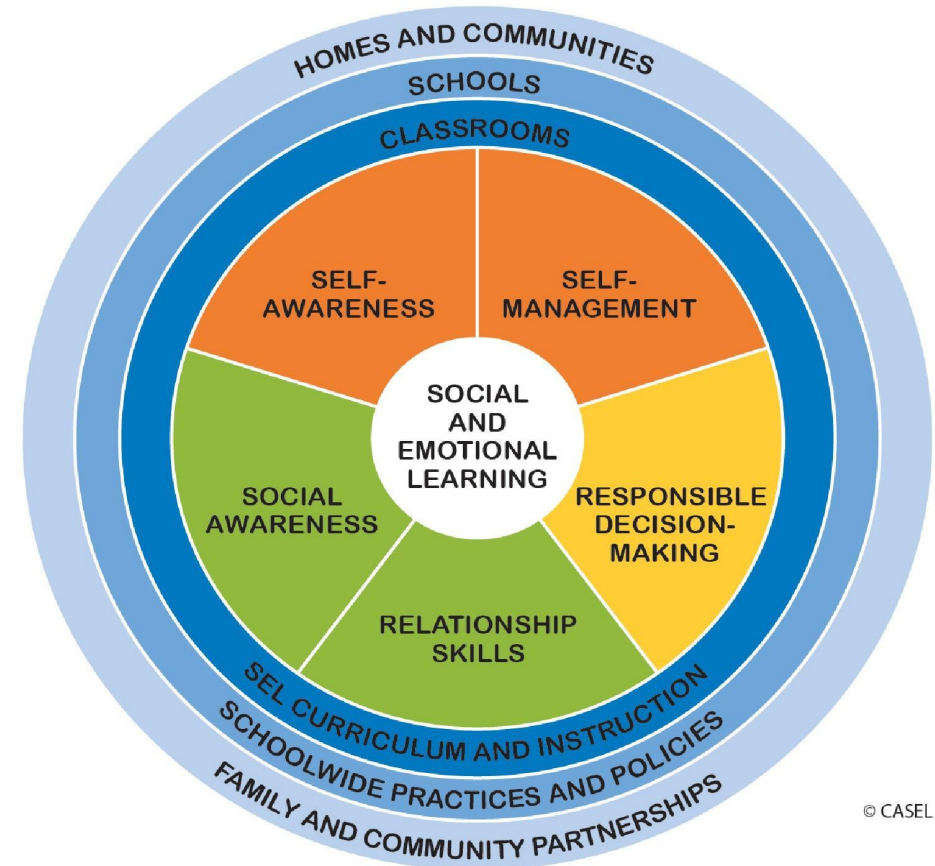
CASEL is the United States' leading organization in advancing the teaching of academic, social and emotional skills.

Social and Emotional Learning is an educational movement gaining ground throughout the world.



Social Emotional Learning Competencies

- ▶ Self-Awareness
- ▶ Self-Management
- ▶ Social Awareness
- ▶ Relationship Skills
- ▶ Responsible decision making



What We Do at the Primary Level

In the Primary grades, we take every opportunity to directly teach and reinforce positive social-emotional behaviors through:

- Accredited SEL curriculum (Harmony SEL, Second Step)
- Ongoing, planned practices (within reading, writing, social studies and character education curricula)
- Classroom push-ins with mental health staff
- Everyday teachable moments
- Individual, class-wide, and school-wide positive reinforcement systems.
- Supports such as Social Stories, visual reminders, sensory/movement breaks
- Newsletters to parents and staff

Social Emotional Learning through Literature

- Provides a medium of learning which is familiar to children
- Helps to make abstract concepts about feelings and conflict meaningful
- Allows for problem solving through a discussion about characters
- Normalizes social experiences for young children and helps to build self-confidence
- Promotes respect and empathy for others
- The options are boundless. A book can be found for all areas of social and emotional learning

Children's Books that Promote Social Emotional Learning

Be Kind, Pat Zietlow Miller

The Color Monster, Anna Llenas

The Way I Feel, Janan Cain

Visiting Feelings, Lauren Rubenstein

What Would Danny Do, Ganit and Adir Levy

Various children's books by the following authors:

Diane Alber ***(A Little Spot of Anger; A Little Spot of Anxiety; A Little Peaceful Spot)***

Julia Cook ***(I Just Don't Like the Sound of No; Wilma Jean Worry Machine; A Bad Case of Tattle Tongue)***

Gabi Garcia ***(Listening to My Body; Listening to My Heart)***

Heather Krantz ***(Mind Bubbles; Heart Bubbles)***

Cheri Meiners ***(Learning to Get Along series)***

Kathryn Otoshi ***(Zero; One; Two)***

Peter Reynolds ***(Dot; Ish; I Am Peace; I Am Human; I Am Love)***

Jo Witek ***(In My Heart; All My Treasures; Brave as Can Be)***

Laurie Wright ***(I Can Handle It; I Can Do It; I Believe in Myself)***

Questions to Ask When Sharing Social Emotional Literature

- I wonder what (character's name) is feeling?
- I wonder what happy, sad, nervous, or frustrated feels like in their face, hands, feet, toes, and stomach?
- I would feel (name emotion) if I were (character's name). How would you feel?
- I wonder what we can do to make (character's name) feel better?
- It must have been difficult for (character's name) to be unkind to (character's name). How can we remind him/her to be a better friend?

Mental Health Staff Interventions

- Consultation with teachers
- Ongoing communication with parents, teachers, and administration
- Whole class lessons on mindfulness, kindness, empathy and inclusion.
- Non-mandated counseling for individual and small groups of students
- Mandated counseling support for classified students

Examples of Warning Signs Which May Require Greater Attention (NIMH)

- ▶ Often feels anxious or worried
- ▶ Has very frequent tantrums or is intensely irritable much of the time
- ▶ Has frequent stomach aches or headaches with no physical explanation
- ▶ Is in constant motion, can't sit quietly for any length of time
- ▶ Has trouble sleeping, including frequent nightmares
- ▶ Loses interest in things he or she used to enjoy
- ▶ Avoids spending time with friends
- ▶ Has trouble doing well in school or grades decline
- ▶ Has low or no energy

Strategies Parents Can Use at Home

- Remind your child that it is normal to feel lots of feelings and it is ok to talk about them.
- Be more aware of your own emotions and expressions around your child. Model emotional identification and emotional regulation.
- Practice breathing exercises (and other coping strategies) together.
- Read books or watch shows together with social emotional content and ask questions.
- Monitor adjust as necessary nutrition, hydration, sleep and exercise.
- Prepare your child for transitions and changes in routine. It may help them to know what to expect of the situation, what is expected of them, and what they can do to cope.
- Encourage dot to dot activities, puzzles, and coloring. These activities help to increase focus.
- Create a coping skills kit or calm down corner at home.
- Engage in mindfulness activities together (or yoga or meditation.)

Helpful Resources

Websites:

www.pbs.org/parents

www.childmind.org

www.biglifejournal.com

You Tube channels:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/CosmicKidsYoga>

<https://www.youtube.com/c/GoNoodle>

<https://www.youtube.com/c/calm>

Questions and Thank you!

Tracy Martinez, School Social Worker

Catalanotti-MartinezT@gcufsd.net

(516) 478-3347

Stacey Esmond, School Psychologist

EsmondS@gcufsd.net

(516) 478-1661