

3-5

TOP 10 TEACHING STRATEGIES

Consider implementing the following teaching strategies to foster student engagement and learning in SEL:

- ♥ Be prepared
- ♥ Create a safe learning environment
- ♥ Co-create class guidelines
- ♥ Create routines
- ♥ Invite students to teach with you
- ♥ Use language mindfully
- ♥ Invite multi-sensory engagement
- ♥ Take brain breaks
- ♥ Offer home practice
- ♥ Be creative

#1: Be prepared. Preparation for SEL class includes the following considerations:

- **Review.** Briefly review and prepare for the lesson. Have awareness about the physical space of the classroom, paying attention to students having a space where they can take a few moments to reset or recharge, as well as lighting, air quality, organization, etc. of the classroom.,
- **Be prompt.** Plan to start and end SEL class on time. If you are teaching SEL as a push-in class for SEL, allow enough transition time.
- **Take a moment.** As you begin to teach students SEL skills, take a moment to practice a skill yourself. This may include a brief breath or movement exercise.

#2: Create a safe learning environment. Create your classroom to be a safe space for learning for all children, both those with and without a history of trauma.

A safe learning environment is one where:

- Clear rules and expectations are established
- All are welcome
- Curiosity is cultivated
- Choices are provided
- Classroom experiments are offered
- Everyone has something to teach others and everyone has something to learn from others
- Practice makes progress (not perfect)
- Structure and flexibility are balanced

In a safe learning environment students are encouraged to:

- Embrace mistakes
- Be respectful
- Welcome all feelings
- Demonstrate kindness
- Learn personal responsibility

#3: Co-create class guidelines. Along with your students, co-create classroom guidelines to clarify behavior expectations and to set yourself up for success. Additionally, explain how your classroom will run and discuss how you define a workable classroom. Share information about the steps you will take to change things in the classroom if/when the classroom environment is not workable.

Class guidelines (are):

- Clear
- Grounded in respect
- Encourage self-care
- Help create and foster a positive working environment
- Outline how students and the teacher will interact with each other

#4: Create routines. Class routines help create a sense of community and connection in the classroom. Consider starting or ending class with a specific ritual or integrate a daily practice into your agenda.

Classroom rituals:

- Create predictability in class
- Help with transitions
- Build classroom culture

#5: Invite students to teach with you. Consider collaborating with students and inviting them to co-lead a part of a lesson or exercise with you. Create opportunities for students to volunteer to give instructions for an activity or to lead a breath or movement exercise.

#6: Encourage multisensory engagement. Integrate visual & auditory aids, kinesthetic and tactile modalities, quiet signals and/or sensory supplies and tools to your classroom to encourage multisensory engagement in your classroom.

#7: Use language mindfully. Mindful communication with your students includes:

- Offer new vocabulary & terms and use language that is developmentally and age appropriate.
- **Say what you can do**, instead of what you can't do. For example, "Please walk.", "Please keep your hands on your own body.", etc.
- **Respond**, instead of react. For example, "Stop moving!" vs. "Would you like to stand up and stretch?"
- **Yes and.** Use "yes, and", instead of "but" to support your students to feel heard and validated.
- **Non verbal communication.** Pay attention to your body language.

#8: Take brain breaks. Movement & sensory breaks will help students stay engaged in learning activities. Make sure to take brief moments to move, stretch, wiggle, dance, or walk.

#9: Be creative. Use creative teaching supplies, such as white boards & dry erase markers, fidgets, stress balls, squeeze toys, puppets, etc. to enhance learning.

#10: Offer Home practice. Encourage students to practice exercises at home. Encourage them to think about what time of day, where, which exercise and with whom they may want to practice.