

Home Connection

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Skill: Understanding Social-Emotional Competencies #1

Social and Emotional Learning is defined as helping students develop the skills to think, learn, and communicate in ways that allow them to discover the power they have within themselves to develop their potential and make choices that enhance the quality of their lives, relationships, and experiences. We know now that students' desires to belong and feel emotionally safe are critical to their ability to learn. We also know that isolation from peers and teachers during the pandemic brought intense feelings of loneliness and a lack of confidence. Overall, many students' social skill development suffered.

This Home Connection provides tips on how to identify each SEL Competency and how families can help their children with each competency. Over the course of the next few weeks, we will break down each core competency. The five competencies are; Self Awareness, Self Management, Social Awareness, Responsible Decision Making, and Relationship Skills.

Competency 1: Self Awareness

This is an area in which CAS has worked hard to help students develop over the last few years. Our Zones of Regulation Program is meant to explicitly teach students how to recognize one's feelings.

1. This is a building block for the other competencies. Without this skill, the other competencies are difficult to attain.
2. For example, Brackett and colleagues have noted that throughout the day, students must continually acknowledge and navigate their emotional responses to stay focused on the task of learning (Brackett et al., 2012). The school provides a rich environment full of stimuli and social interactions, and for students, self-awareness can help them successfully navigate these experiences.
3. Students need to have the vocabulary to identify their emotions. Books, role-playing, and providing context are all ways to build your child's emotional vocabulary.

4. Perception is reality. Often you will hear, “I will not take the word of a 5-year-old.” This is because students’ perception is skewed and that is because students are unable to see how others see them or how they see themselves.
5. Recognizing strengths that lead to self-confidence. If students can accurately identify their strengths and it is not skewed they also recognize their weaknesses and grow as an individual. Admitting weaknesses is not bad and often leads to self-confidence. “I am not strong at this yet, but I do this well, and will soon get better at this...”
6. Learning how to overcome adversity by developing resilience is essential. Understanding the situation and how to ask for help or overcome adversity is key. Often students will cry or whine, which is not productive. A growth mindset and the ability to problem solve can help one become more self-aware.
7. Try new things. Being a role model is important. If we are going to ask children to try new things, we need to do the same.
8. Teach a growth mindset using the “Power of Yet”. Recognize the weakness and realize through hard work you can learn new things or hard things.
9. Model identifying emotions. Telling your child you were sad or upset is okay. It is not a weakness and will help students identify emotions as well. As we say at CAS, “All the Zones are Ok!”
10. Practice Positive self-talk. Use positive talk while talking to the people in your house, when talking about your day, and when talking about challenges in your day. Fostering positive self-talk will help your child believe that they can do hard things and grow their self-confidence and self-efficacy. Instead of saying, “I failed at that; I always make mistakes”, reframe the thought into “I will learn from my mistakes and do even better next time.”

Resources:

<https://www.nj.gov/education/safety/wellness/selearning/>

<https://jodidurgin.com/teaching-self-awareness-in-the-classroom/>

<https://www.thesocialemotionalteacher.com/self-awareness-in-the-classroom/>