

Using Universal Strategies to Support Social-Emotional Learning

Brainstorm ways you can use the universal strategies from this lesson to support the children in the following scenarios. Think about how using the strategies supports the five core CASEL competencies. Discuss your responses with a coach, trainer, or administrator.

1. A 4-year-old in your care frequently knocks over open cups during meals.

You can **build competence** and promote **self-awareness** by asking open-ended questions. “What happens when you set the cup too close to the edge of the table....What can you do so it stays on the table?”

Problem solving will help **building competence**. Consider the cognitive development of 4-year-olds and use that knowledge to inform your response. This helps the child become more **self-aware** at meal time as they begin to pay attention to where the cup is placed.

2. An 8-year-old in the school-age program shows off to friends by throwing silverware into the trash can from afar.

Your instinct is to yell, “Don’t do that” or “Stop throwing.” Instead you think about ways to use **positive communication** and model healthy **relationship skills**. You calmly state, “Please place your silverware in the bins; you can throw the basketballs when we go outside.”

3. In an infant-toddler room, there are several infants who are 6 weeks to 6 months of age. You have tummy time with several of the infants who are awake.

To promote foundational skills for **cooperative learning**, you position the infants during tummy time so they are facing one another. They enjoy looking at each other and sometimes share joint attention by looking at the same toys and people. Narrating their actions and interests supports this as a cooperative learning experience and promotes **social awareness**.

4. In the preschool classroom, you generally plan to have a 15-minute whole group circle time each day which ends with reading a book. You have thought about that children this age are most successful when whole group activities are limited to this time frame. The children are especially engaged in the story you have chosen today. As a group they spontaneously ask complex questions, make inferences, and count the words on each page. Normally, story time is when some of the children are restless and become distracted or chat among themselves.

Rather than quickly wrap up, you continue to talk with the children for a few more minutes so all of their questions and comments about the book are addressed. This provides a **balanced opportunity** that respects their attention spans and special interest in the book.