

Promoting Social and Emotional Competence

The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) has developed an Inventory of Practices for Promoting Infant and Toddlers' Social Emotional Competence. Notice many of these ideas work well in family child-care settings. Talking about what children with limited verbal skill may be feeling or thinking can help preschoolers and older children develop stronger empathy. Read the following items from the CSEFEL Inventory of Practices Tool III and reflect on what you can do to promote development in your program. For the full set of practices, visit: http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/training_infant.html

Practices that Promote Social and Emotional Competence in Infants and Toddlers *Adapted Indicators from the CSEFEL Inventory of Practices Tool III*

Encourage interaction between infants, toddlers, and older children (position infants near each other, organize activities that encourage toddlers to work together, comment on children's interest in other children).

Remain nearby during social interactions to provide security, comfort, encouragement, guidance, or facilitation.

Suggest play ideas where more than one child can play ("Can you two move that heavy box over here?").

Use natural opportunities to promote awareness of others (when a child is sad, encourage children to notice; talk about how to help the child feel better). Talk about what you think children are feeling; ask for confirmation.

Play games and use turn-taking or give-and-take games (roll a ball back and forth, etc.).

Firmly share concerns about hurting, but do not ridicule or punish.

Use photographs, pictures, or posters that show people in various emotional states.

Ask children about their feelings and talk about how feelings can change.

Use real-life situations to practice problem-solving.

Label children's emotions and your own,

Choose books, songs, and finger plays with a rich vocabulary of feeling words.

Work with families to share and explore techniques to try both at home and in the program.

Respond to behavior in a way that is matched to the cause, purpose, or meaning of the behavior rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

In addition to the practices above and the ones provided in the other “Practice Implementation Checklist: Social Emotional Teaching Strategies”, these are some helpful practices to remember for school-age children, ages 5-12:

Promoting Emotional Literacy

Encourage and recognize when children share about their emotions (“Thank you for talking with me about that.”).

Help children notice and respond to other’s emotions (“How do you think Sonja feels about that?”).

Help children find and use appropriate ways to express “uncomfortable” emotions like anger and frustration.

Promoting Problem-Solving

Notice problems as they occur and see them as an opportunity to teach.

Engage children in brainstorming solutions to problems.

Help children reflect on their own problem-solving skills (“What might you try differently next time?”)

Use conflict resolution and mediation strategies.

Promoting Friendships

Provide many opportunities for children to choose activities that interest them and to choose who they interact with.

Develop clear expectations for how people treat one another in the program.

Talk about bullying/teasing and what to do about it with children.

Develop systems for introducing new children to the program and their peers.

Limit competitive sports and games. Provide opportunities for cooperative games that de-emphasize “winners” and “losers.”

Model friendship skills and respect in interactions with adults and children.