

- Optimism
- Empathy
- Prosocial Behaviour
- Self-Esteem
- Happiness
- Absence of Sadness
- Absence of Worries
- Self-Regulation
- Responsible Decision-Making*
- Self-Awareness*
- Perseverance*
- Assertiveness*
- Citizenship & Social Responsibility*

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Social and emotional development refers to the development of important personal and social competencies. The personal competencies measured on the MDI include: self-esteem, self-regulation, self-awareness*, optimism, happiness, perseverance*, and psychological well-being (absence of sadness and worries). The social competencies measured by the MDI include: empathy, prosocial behaviour, assertiveness*, citizenship and social responsibility*, and responsible decision-making*. These social and emotional competencies promote healthy development and resilience and protect against common risk factors (Thomson et al., 2018). They were chosen for the MDI because they are malleable and actionable; that is, with the right supports, these competencies can be nurtured and promoted in children. Social and emotional development is linked to mental health, social behaviour, and academic performance in children. Social and emotional competencies in childhood are also associated with important outcomes later in life (Schonert-Reichl, 2019). The promotion of students' social and emotional competencies are included in the BC Ministry of Education's new curriculum (<https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca>).

* These measures are included in the Grades 6, 7, and 8 MDI only.

research

GENERAL RESEARCH ON SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Without intervention, social-emotional well-being tends to decline as children age (Eccles, 2004). A study conducted in British Columbia found that grade 6 and 7 students had significantly lower social and emotional well-being than students in grade 4 and 5 (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2011).
- Social and emotional learning (SEL) programs can improve children's social and emotional competencies and well-being, as well as their academic success (Greenberg et al., 2017).
- Improvements in social and emotional competencies from participating in SEL programs coincides with better academic performance, more positive social behaviours, and less aggression, emotional distress, and drug use (Schonert-Reichl, 2019).
- Young children with better social and emotional competencies are more likely to graduate from high school, earn a college degree, and find stable employment. These children are also less likely to engage in risky behaviour and criminal activity later in life (Jones et al., 2015).
- Children with higher social-emotional competencies are more likely to graduate from high school and be ready for post-secondary school, have greater success in their careers, more positive relationships at work and home, and better mental health throughout their lives (Domitrovich et al., 2017).
- Promoting social and emotional competencies can prevent bullying behaviours and victimization (Divecha & Brackett, 2019).
- Children require time for reflection and introspection to develop social and emotional competencies alongside explicit teaching and practice of social and emotional skills (Immordino-Yang et al., 2019).



SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

AT HOME

- Ask your children how they are feeling and show that you value all emotions. Talk about your own emotions. Doing so may help support children’s ability to recognize, express, and regulate their emotions (Castro et al., 2015; Sosa-Hernandez et al., 2020).
- When children are upset or distressed, respond with caring support and attention to help them self-regulate (Sosa-Hernandez et al., 2020). When you help children find calm through connection, you build social bonds and can work together to find solutions to problems (Barthel et al., 2018).
- Take time to share what you are thankful for with your family. Practicing gratitude promotes social and emotional well-being (Jans-Beken et al., 2019). It is also linked to prosocial behaviour (Ma et al., 2017).
- Model empathy, kindness, and compassion in your actions and encourage these positive behaviours in your child. Children are more likely to engage in positive social behaviours if they witness these behaviours in their parents and guardians (Döring et al., 2017).

IN COMMUNITY

- Ask children what types of activities make them feel happy and connected to others. Involve children in choosing programs to meet these needs.
- Provide training for after-school staff in positive leadership skills and ways to model social and emotional skills (Hurd & Deutsch, 2017).
- Offer opportunities for young people to make meaningful contributions to the community. Helping others is a fundamental psychological need that becomes increasingly important as children age. Making contributions to one’s community supports young people’s social and emotional development and well-being (Fuligni, 2019).
- Engage youth in participatory action research to empower them to get involved in addressing community issues that affect them while promoting social and emotional competencies (Jagers et al., 2019).

AT SCHOOL

- Ask children what schools can do to promote their well-being and sense of belonging. Actively listen to what they have to say and involve children in creating a plan of action based on their suggestions (Sauve & Schonert-Reichl, 2019)
- Support adult SEL through professional development. Adult SEL should facilitate caring school climates, intercultural competence, social awareness of discrimination, and self-awareness to recognize and transform one’s own biases (Divecha & Brackett, 2019; Jagers et al., 2019; Schonert-Reichl, 2017).
- Supportive child-adult relationships are the foundation of social-emotional development. Build relationships by enthusiastically greeting children when they arrive, getting to know children’s interests, and employing supportive problem-solving and restorative practices rather than shame or punishment to address challenges (Sauve & Schonert-Reichl, 2019).
- Offer evidence-based SEL programs to explicitly teach social-emotional skills and to offer opportunities to practice these skills throughout the school day. School-wide and systemic approaches to SEL are especially effective (Mahoney et al., 2020; Schonert-Reichl, 2019).

For more resources and ideas on how to use MDI data to catalyze action, visit discovermdi.ca.

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