



HEALTHY SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A Snapshot

Foundational to child development and education, social emotional development encompasses several approaches by which children learn skills and knowledge to develop identity, manage personal emotions, build relationships, and make responsible decisions later in life.^[1]

Information provided by the Edmonton
Social Planning Council for Edmonton Family
& Community Services Support Services.

Read the full literature review at:
edmonton.ca/fcss

FCSS
Family & Community
Support Services

Edmonton

S SOCIAL
E EMOTIONAL
L LEARNING

SEL is critical to healthy brain development and allows children to gain essential skills and knowledge to meet their emotional needs throughout their lives. Social skills learned through SEL underpin strong friendships and relationships— affecting employment, group membership, and parenthood. ^[2]

THE FIRST 5 YEARS = LEARNINGS CARRIED THROUGH LIFE

Early years are when children learn to cope, socialize, and develop a sense of self. It's critical that families, schools, and communities collaborate in their efforts to support long-term outcomes. ^[4] Having a network of friends, family, or peers is a proven form of protection (protective factor) against adverse life experiences. ^[3]

CHILD DEVELOPMENT



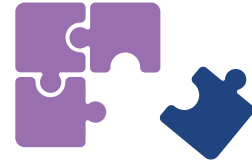
BRAIN ARCHITECTURE

Strong foundations ensure the brain can support and retain learning experiences. Positive environments boost brain growth through healthy social interactions and relationships.^[6] These connections build resiliency against adversity and develop coping mechanisms to respond to stress.^[5]



“SERVE & RETURN”

Interactive activities initiated by children and positively encouraged by the caregiver establish trust and relationship-building skills. Without it, children may experience developmental deficiencies—ultimately affecting overall skills and abilities, behaviour, and health.



EXECUTIVE FUNCTION

More advanced skills help children and youth to plan, monitor, and manage different information simultaneously. These skills can be vital for school success, employment, relationships, parenting, and overall well-being. Successful programming should challenge children, engage them in meaningful and exciting ways, and offer a sense of inclusion and belonging.^[7]

All 3 create a foundation that develops:

1. Advancement of identity
2. Stable emotions
3. Strong relationships

+ Positive Interactions

help children learn to manage emotions and react to stress.

– Negative Interactions

lead to increased anxiety and poor behaviours, which can endure into adulthood.^[11]

COLLABORATION IS KEY

When families, schools, and communities work together, they can create opportunities for learning that are meaningful, reliable, and sustainable. That way, children can develop fully and feel a sense of inclusion.

MULTICULTURAL CONTEXTS

- Multicultural families in Alberta have increased since 2002.
- Newcomer families may require additional resources, programs, or supports to ensure their children can progress alongside their peers.

SEL IS FLEXIBLE

Programming must be flexible and adaptable to ensure positive outcomes for all children. Healthy development and success may look different from one community to the next—which is why different cultures may require different approaches to SEL.

E.g. The social emotional well-being of Indigenous children is improved with strong cultural identity—best provided through culturally appropriate programming.^[9]

It's projected
Alberta will see

54%

of population growth
from international
migration by 2046.^[8]

COVID-19

- Under lockdowns, many children were isolated from friends, teachers, and community leaders.
- Extracurricular activities were abruptly suspended, leading to lower levels of physical and social activity that affected children's mental health.^[3]
- Children may have lost an entire year or more in developmental progress.^[10]

The pandemic caused

EXTREME DISRUPTION

in children's learning progress.

CLOSING THE GAP

Suggestions to address the gap include play that encourages learning and intent (guided or purposeful play), coupled with strategic dialogue to help develop language and knowledge.^[10] Investing in SEL will establish foundational skills in young children who were impacted by limited social and learning opportunities during public health restrictions.

SOURCES

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