



SEL Competencies and Practices

The National Center for School Mental Health created this guide to help educators identify common practices for use with each of CASEL’s social-emotional learning competencies. Each SEL competency is listed in the first column, followed by broad classroom practices and more specific sub-practices.

Competency	Common Practice	Sub-Practice
Self-Awareness	Identifying one's own feelings	Understand the definition of feeling words using self as an example.
		Identify feelings based on face and body cues, and context.
		Monitor intensity of feelings.
		Identify situations that you anticipate may trigger certain feelings in the future.
		Understand that you can have multiple feelings at once.
	Understanding the interplay of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors	Differentiate between thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.
		Identify that feelings can be signals that help us figure out what to do.
		Explain how thoughts, feelings, and behaviors can lead to each other.
		Understand that all feelings are OK, but some behaviors are not OK.
		Recognize that whether we make hostile attributions about others’ behaviors affects our feelings and/or actions.
Self-Management	Behavioral coping skills/relaxation	Belly breathing
		Visual imagery
		Muscle relaxation
		Counting
		Distraction-based behavioral coping skills
	Cognitive coping skills/positive self-talk	Stop signal
		Cognitive restructuring
		Positive self-talk
		"Think a happy thought"

Competency	Common Practice	Sub-Practice
Self-Management	Setting goals and planning to reach a goal	Identify one's own goals
		Identify steps to reach the goal/planning
		Use positive self-talk to provide encouragement when working toward a goal
		Distinguish between positive and negative goals
	Focus one's attention mindfully	Listen mindfully
		Visually observe an object mindfully
		Focus attention on touch
		Focus attention on taste
		Focus attention on internal physical sensations
		Focus attention on smell
Social Awareness	Identifying other people's feelings	Understand the definition of feeling words using others as examples
		Identify other's feelings based on face and body cues, behaviors, and context
		Understand that other people can have multiple feelings at once
	Perspective taking/empathy	Recognize that people can have different feelings in response to the same situation
		Describe somebody's point of view (i.e., thoughts) in a situation and/or consider a situation from different points of view
		Predict somebody else's feelings or behaviors based on their point of view
		Recognize that people's feelings can change
	Recognize the importance of diversity and value differences	Recognize the importance of diversity and value differences

Competency	Practice	Sub-Practice
Responsible Decision-Making	Problem solving	Problem solving steps
		Identify problems that are within or outside of our control
		Identify body cues that there is a problem
		Stop and use coping skills before trying to solve a problem
		Identify people who can help solve a problem
Relationship Skills	Assertiveness	Make verbal statements that respectfully express a feeling, want, or a need
		Respectful/assertive body language (posture, eye contact, tone of voice)
		Distinguish between the concepts of passive, assertive, and aggressive
	Social skills/how to be a good friend	Initiating interactions with peers
		Sharing
		Turn taking
		Asking
		Helping
		Giving compliments
		Listening when somebody is speaking to you
		Saying kind words to provide encouragement or console somebody
		Asking for permission
		Agreeing
		Compromising
		Suggesting an idea
		Showing interest (verbal or nonverbal)
		Apologizing
		Using polite manners

Lawson, G. M., McKenzie, M. E., Becker, K. D., Selby, L., & Hoover, S. A. (2019). The core components of evidence-based social emotional learning programs. *Prevention Science, 20*(4), 457-467.

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