

Social & Emotional Learning

- What is Social & Emotional Learning (SEL)?
- How can we support SEL for our youngest population?

Watch Video Now
Certification

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Video

Please review the professional development training video; you will need approximately 60 minutes to complete the training.



Certification

Please take a moment to complete the quiz provided. Upon submission, your certification will be sent to you immediately.

START





What is Social Emotional Learning?

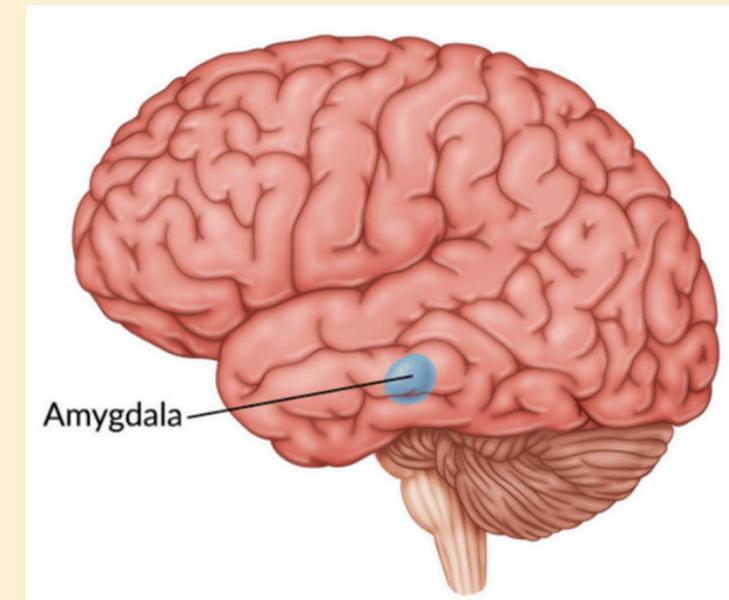
The process through which all children develop the skills necessary to form healthy identities, a sense of security, manage emotions, feel and show empathy for others, and establish and maintain positive relationships.

Why is SEL Important in the Early Years?

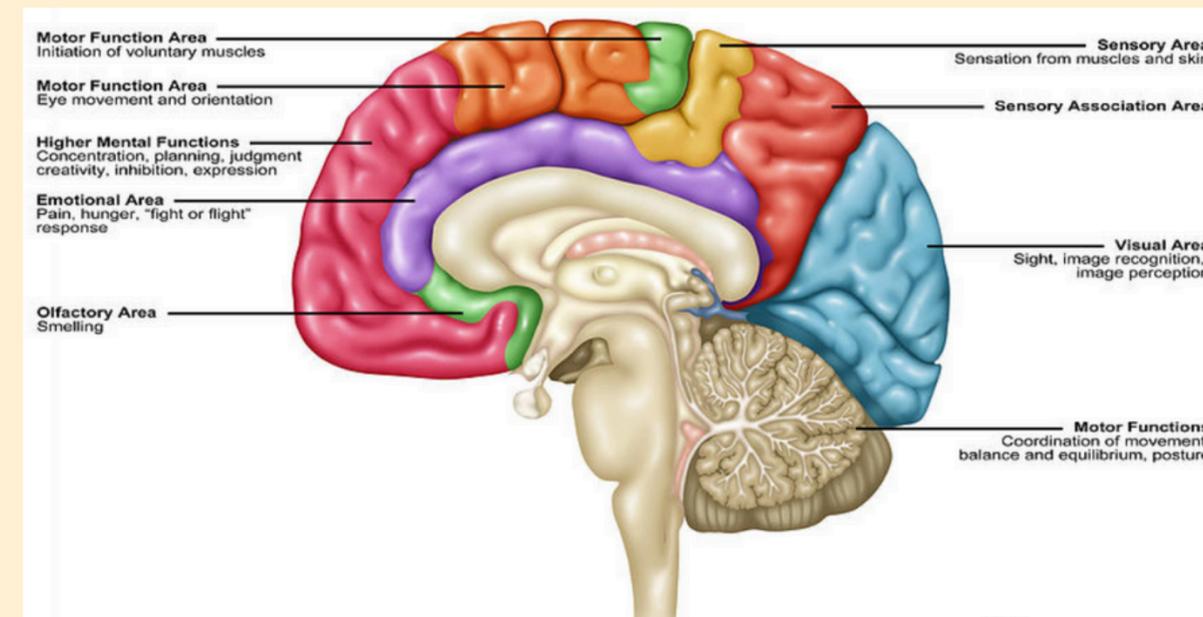
- Ages 0-5 are critical early years, and they set the foundation for life. Our brains are in formation, making connections that will define our functioning throughout life.
- 90% of brain growth happens before age 5
- Secure attachment is established in infancy and early toddlerhood.
- Brain growth is dependent on positive social-emotional experiences.
- Social and emotional skills, such as regulating emotions, sharing with others, forming positive relationships, and following routines, lay the foundation for children to be able to learn and function in educational settings later in life.
- School readiness IS healthy social and emotional development

Quick Peek at Brain Development

The **amygdala** is responsible for emotional analysis, expressing emotion, perceiving emotion, emotional responses. The amygdala is present at birth but continues to develop structurally throughout early childhood.



The **cerebral cortex**, the largest portion of our brain and outer layer of the brain, is underdeveloped at birth and does not fully develop until the mid-20's. This portion of the brain is responsible for concentration, planning, decision making, creativity, and logic.



Infancy (0-12 months)

Sense of Self and Self Regulation

- Uses adult support to calm self
- Responds to changes in an adult's tone of voice and expression
- Begins to seek to do things for self (feeding oneself)
- Interested in seeing their reflection in the mirror
- Might attach to a particular object/toy
- Will self-soothe (e.g., sucks thumb, twirls hair, etc.)
- Explores oneself physically

Examples:

- Cries to show discomfort, hunger, or tiredness
- Opens mouth when food is offered
- Raises knees to chest when on back for diaper changing
- Pulls off own socks
- Raises arms while being lifted out of crib or stroller

Positive Relationships

- Uses trusted adult as a secure base from which to explore the world (forms secure attachments)
- Reacts to others' emotional expressions
- Begins to play near other children; use similar materials or actions
- Smiles and makes eye contact with caregivers; Begins to laugh while entertained by caregivers
- Interested in seeing their reflection in the mirror
- Prefers to be held by primary caregiver
- May become upset when separated from parent
- Focus on other's faces

- Appears uneasy when held by a stranger but smiles broadly when mom enters room
- Calms when a familiar adult offers appropriate comfort
- Responds to teacher during caregiving routines



Establishing a Secure Attachment

Secure attachment is when an infant feels safe and secure with you enough to ensure optimal development of their nervous system. A secure attachment provides your baby with the best foundation for life. It sets the tone for how we approach relationships later in life. Attachment comes first, before we are able to make further connection in a social world.

- Pay attention to your infant's needs; be mindful of their cues. Secure attachment is the product of our ability to effectively soothe our infant (not just love, alone). Sometimes a baby's cues can be confusing so 100% accuracy is not necessary nor is it possible. You are not perfect. Repair is just as important if we aren't able to soothe immediately. Our attempt is there and we keep trying.
- Responding to our baby's needs does not spoil them.
- Babies create a secure attachment bond with ONE main caregiver first, but, with that bond, are capable of forming positive bonds with others as well.
- Secure attachment is created by a two-way path of communication. You read and respond to your baby's cues (eating, sleeping, diapering needs, responding to their cries), but you should also be initiating communication and bond with them. **Talk, laugh, play with them.**
- Secure attachment is dependent on your ability to regulate emotions – be sure you are prepared with strategies to calm down in stressful times



Toddlerhood (12-24 months)

Sense of Self and Self Regulation

- Comforts self by seeking out special object or person
- Accepts redirection from adult
- Begins to demonstrate confidence in meeting own needs
- Identifies self in mirror and/or picture
- May begin to show defiance or “temper tantrums.”
- May become frustrated if they can't do something independently (e.g., take off their jacket)
- Biting, hitting all developmentally appropriate (CHILDREN HAVE LIMITED REGULATION AND LIMITED LANGUAGE TO EXPRESS NEEDS)

Group Participation

- Responds appropriately to others' expressions of wants
- Responds to other's feelings (will show concern for a sad friend)
- Begins to seek adult help to resolve social problems
- Interested in children but prefers to play alone

Positive Relationships

- Begins to manage separations without distress and engages with trusted adults
- Begins to demonstrate concern about the feelings of others
- Plays near other children; uses similar materials or actions
- Seeks a preferred playmate; shows pleasure when seeing a friend
- Includes others in play by handing them a toy
- Shows affection by giving hugs and/or kisses

Examples:

- Moves away from a trusted adult to play with a new toy but returns before venturing into a new area
- Looks to a trusted adult for encouragement when exploring a new material or physical space
- Brings a crying child's blanket to him
- Offers a ball to another child when asked
- Sits next to child playing an instrument
- Imitates other children building with blocks
- Looks at other child's painting and chooses the same color





**Work through
frustration with
your child.**

How to support frustration in a toddler – it is important for toddlers to experience some level of frustration, but they are still in need of our emotional support and scaffolding. Depending on the scenario, assist with instruction or work with your child to complete their task. **Stay calm yourself**, and normalize their frustration. Don't tell them to not be frustrated.

How to handle biting/hitting: You may say something such as: "We don't bite; teeth are for food eating." Calm and soothe the child that was bit. Quickly move on. Do your best to prevent it by notice triggers (space, sharing of toys, overstimulation). Teach the necessary **language or communication tools:** Useful language, emotional coping skills.

Tantrums

Understanding Temperament – temperament is innate. It's a child's emotional style and influences how quickly and strongly children react to things like frustrating events or changes in their environment. Children who are more sensitive might be more easily upset by these things. Different characteristics of someone's temperament can include: how well they adapt to changes, their energy level in response to situations (positive or negative), their overall mood, attention span and distractibility, and their sensory threshold (amount of stimulation they respond to – some children are very sensitive to sensory stimulation and others are not)

Factors that increase tantrums: Stress, hunger, tiredness and overstimulation – these can make it harder for children to express and manage feelings and stay calm.

Stressful Situations: Certain situations that seem small to us are huge for a toddler, and they elicit strong emotions that can be overwhelming to a child.



Preventing Tantrums

- Help your child understand their emotions by labeling the feelings like 'happy', 'sad', 'tired', 'hungry' and 'comfy'.
- Identify tantrum triggers like tiredness, hunger, worries, fears or overstimulation.
- Model positive reactions to stress. For example, 'I'm worried this traffic is making us late. If I take some deep breaths, it will help me stay calm'.
- Create consistent daily routines.

Managing a Tantrum

- Try a **time-in** – stay close, offer comfort, and reassure children that you understand their feelings.
- Identify the emotion, name it, pause, support your child while they calm down, and then (potentially) address the issue that sparked the tantrum.
- Make sure that your child and others nearby are safe. This might mean carrying your child somewhere else if you need to.
- Be consistent about not giving in to demands. This will help your child learn that tantrums don't help them get what they want.
- Try a 'paradoxical instruction'. This means giving your child permission to scream and shout until they're ready to stop. For example, 'You can yell louder if you want to. It's a big park and we're not bothering anyone'.



Toddlerhood (24-36 months)

Sense of Self and Self Regulation

- Begins to be able to look at a situation differently or delay gratification
- Begins to manage classroom rules, routines, and transitions with occasional reminders
- Demonstrates confidence in meeting own needs; Show greater independence as they try to do more for themselves without seeking adult support
- Tantrums still occur!

Positive Relationships

- Manages separations without distress and engages with trusted adults
- Demonstrates concern about the feelings of others
- Begins to use successful strategies for entering groups
- Begins to play with one or two preferred playmates

Group Participation

- Begins to take turns
- Seeks adult help to resolve social problems
- Begins to show more interest in other children
- Models and mimics the actions of others
- Feels comfortable playing in social settings

Examples:

- Moves to the sand table at suggestion of adult when there are too many at the art table
- Initially refuses to go inside but complies when the teacher restates the request
- Holds hands under faucet and waits for adult to turn on water
- Tries to zip jacket, but throws to ground in frustration
- Waves good-bye to mom and joins speech therapist in a board game
- Accepts teacher's explanation of why she is leaving the room and continues playing
- Hugs a child who fell down
- Leaves library area to greet another child upon his arrival
- Seeks preferred child to sit next to at group time
- Gets an adult to assist a child who needs help
- Waits behind another child at the water fountain



Age 3

Sense of Self and Self Regulation

- Begins to express emotions
- Comprehends possessions (“mine” and “theirs”)
- Uneasy when the daily routine is changed
- Will seek out and ask caregivers for help

Examples:

- Washes hands and uses towel to dry
- Stays involved in activity of choice
- Begins to put away toys
- Talks about their preferred playmates
- Builds block tower with another child during choice time and then looks at books with same child later in the day
- Joins same two friends for several days to play a running game outside
- Watches what other children are doing for a few minutes and then joins
- Asks, “Can I run with you?”
- Says, “It’s your turn now; the timer is up.”
- Goes to adult crying when someone takes the princess dress she wanted to wear
- Calls for the teacher when another child grabs the play dough at the same time he does

Positive Relationships

- Manages separations without distress and engages with trusted adults
- Demonstrates concern about the feelings of others
- Begins to play with one or two preferred playmates

Group Participation

- Begins to imitate parents and peers
- Begins to use successful strategies for entering groups
- Begins to take turns
- Seeks adult help to resolve social problems



Ages 4 + 5

Sense of Self and Self Regulation

- Begins to control strong emotions in an appropriate manner most of the time
- Begins to apply rules in new but similar situations
- Takes responsibility for own well-being

Group Participation

- Initiates the sharing of materials in the classroom and outdoors
- Begins to resolve social problems through negotiation and compromise

Examples:

- Scowls and says, "I didn't get to paint this morning." Pauses and adds, "I have an idea. I can paint after snack."
- Says, "I'm so excited! We're going to the zoo today!" while jumping up and down
- Walks and uses a quiet voice in the library
- Runs and shouts when on a field trip to the park
- Listens attentively to a guest speaker
- Completes chosen task
- Waits for turn to go down slide
- Creates a "Do not touch" sign for construction
- Tells why some foods are good for you
- Takes care of personal belonging

Positive Relationships

- Engages with trusted adults as resources and to share mutual interests
- Identifies basic emotional reactions of others and their causes accurately
- Initiates, joins in, and sustains positive interactions with a group of two to three children
- Establishes a special friendship with one other child, but the friendship might only last a short while
- Expresses feelings towards others; "I love Aunt Debbie".
- Develops understanding of others' likes and dislikes



- Talks with teacher every day about their pets
- Brings in photos of home garden to share with teacher who also has a garden
- Says, "I like riding fast on the trike, but Tim doesn't."
- Shows Meir a picture of a dinosaur but doesn't show it to Lucy because he remembers that she's afraid of dinosaurs
- Finds her friend's favorite purple marker and gives it to her
- Works on tasks with others toward a common goal
- Plays and works together for extended periods of time
- Responds, "Hey, I know! You two can be the drivers to deliver the pizza."
- Says, "Let's make a sign to keep people from kicking our sand castle like we did in the block area."
- Asks teacher to make a waiting list to use the new toy

Classic Strategies for Supporting SEL in Everyday Practice

-Everyday modeling and facilitating of positive interactions: your child's social and emotional development starts with you!

- Model how you work through frustration
- Model how you talk to yourself, and others, with respect
- Model positive relationships between teachers and parents
- Talk to your child with care and respect
- Talk ABOUT your child with care

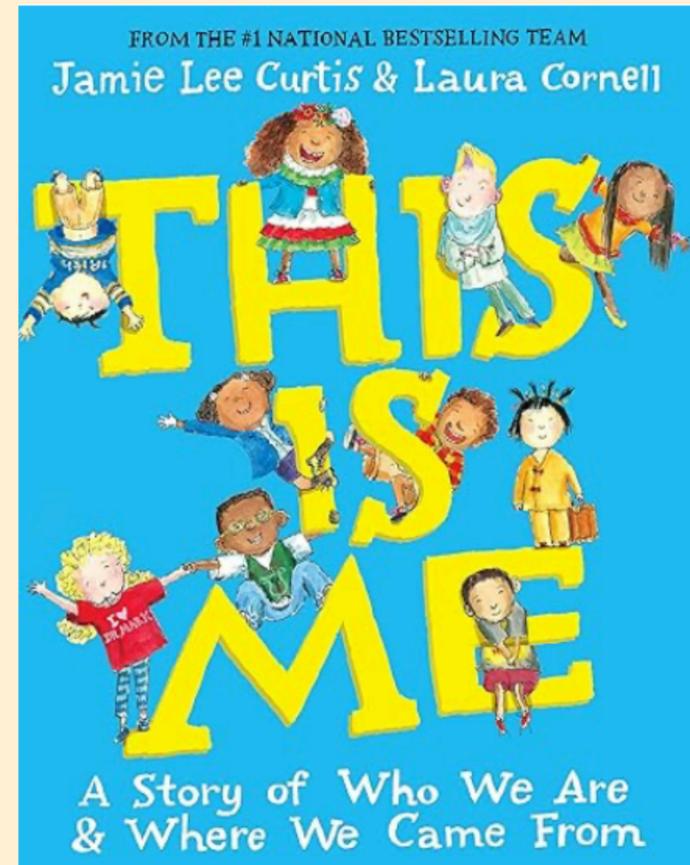
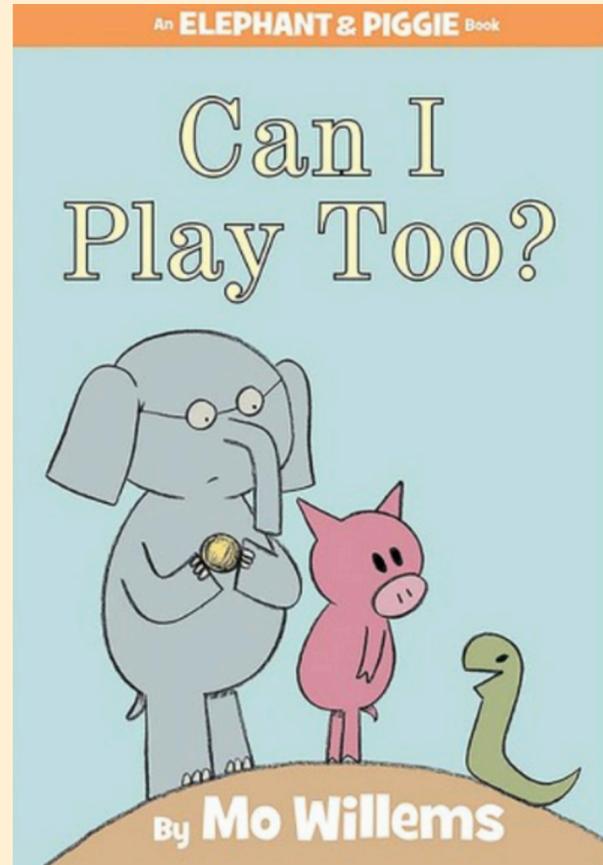
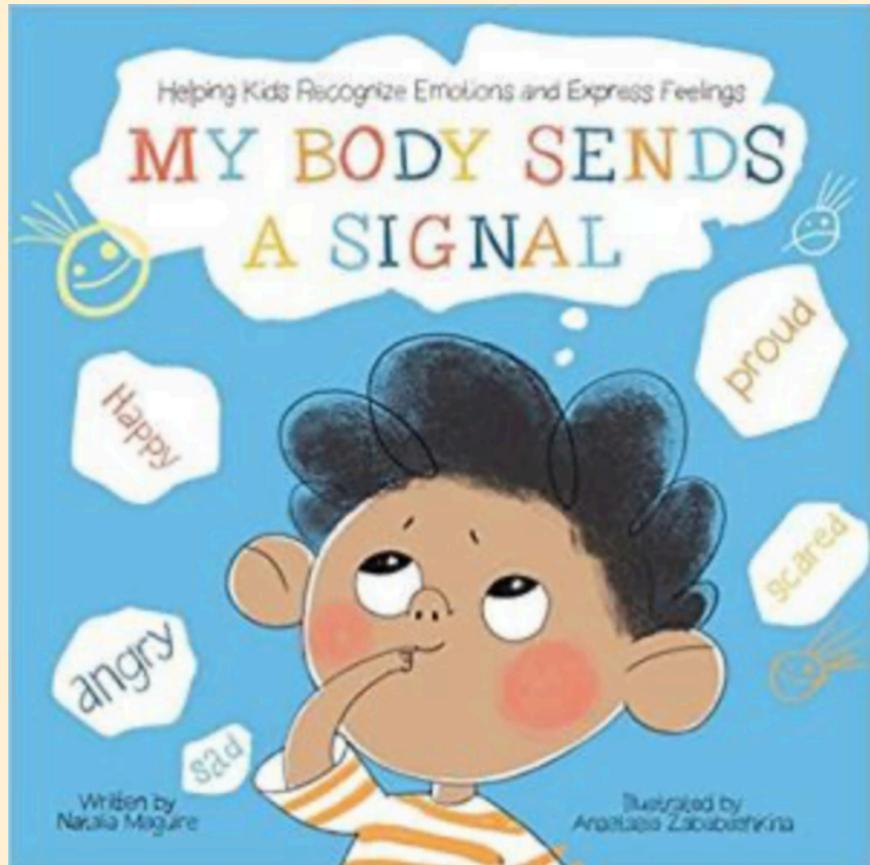
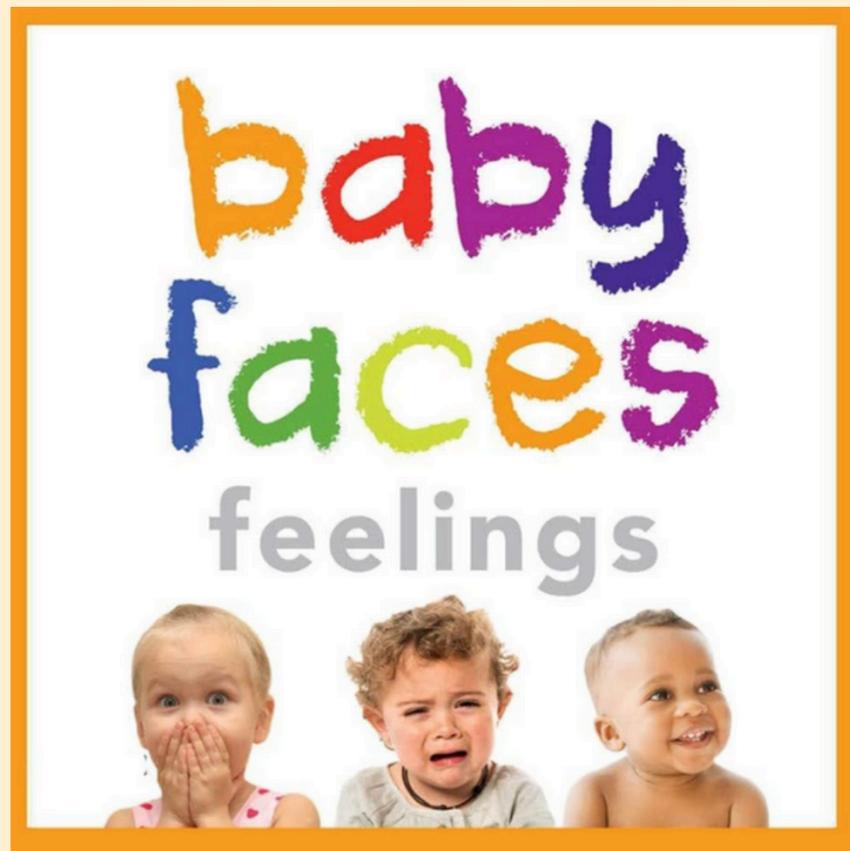
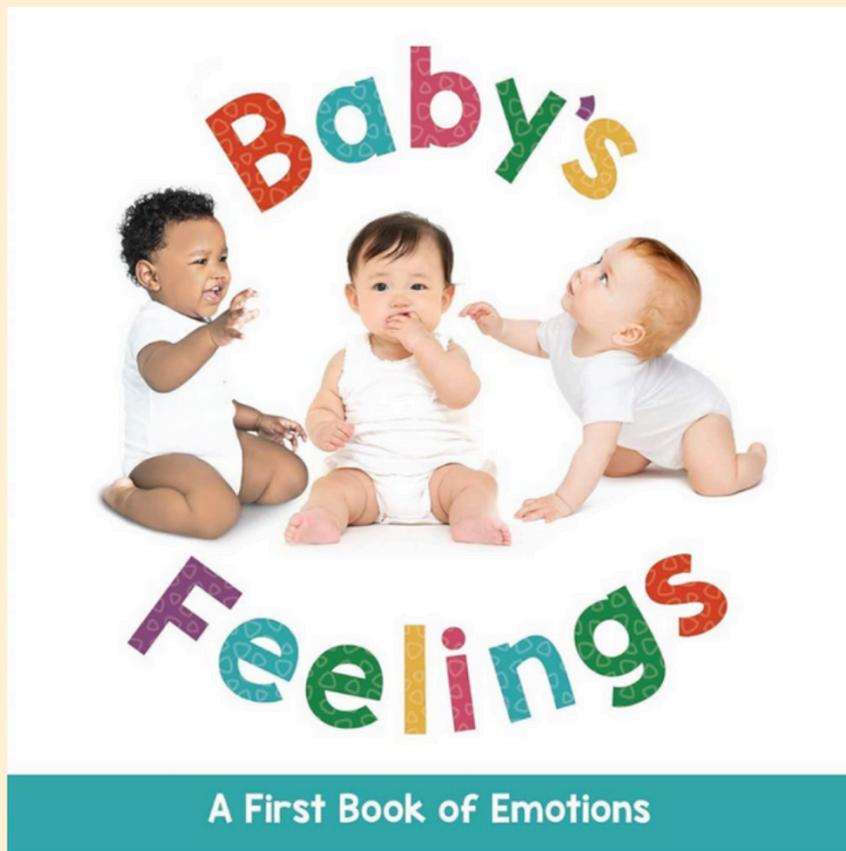
-Consistent Routines and Boundaries



Classic Strategies for Supporting SEL in Everyday Practice

- Play-based, Child-led approaches
- Feelings Charts (labeling emotions; normalizing emotions)
- Discuss feelings in conversation with coping strategies
- Cozy/Calm Down Corners
- Puppets for Role Playing Social Situations
- Prioritize your Dramatic Play Center
- Lots of social & emotional learning targeted books
- Group book discussions
- Celebrate ourselves, each other, and the community





Check in on yourself.

Our mental health and emotional regulation impacts that of our children. If we feel dysregulated, that will directly impact our child's ability to regulate. This is hard work for us; but it is necessary seek out 1-1 therapy or, if it's enough, stay attentive to yourself, and keep educated and engaged in helpful mental health practices.



Questions? Let's Hear Them!



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