



# GPS for Success



**Recalculating Positive Social and Emotional Strategies  
which create healthy climate and learning in the classroom.**

## **Why Social and Emotional Health Matters**

Children's social and emotional health affects their overall development and learning. Research indicates that children who are mentally healthy tend to be happier, show greater motivation to learn, have a more positive attitude toward school, more eagerly participate in class activities, and demonstrate higher academic performance than less mentally healthy peers. Children who exhibit social and emotional difficulties tend to have trouble following directions and participating in learning activities. Compared with healthier peers, they may be more likely to suffer rejection by classmates, have low esteem, and do poorly in school. Thus, children's social and emotional health is just as important as their physical health and affects their capacity to develop in a beneficial manner.

## **Giving Effective Praise**

Meaningful feedback pertinent to the task at hand in the form of effective praise is a powerful strategy for fostering children's social and emotional development. To make praise effective, teachers describe specifically what they see – without generalizing, evaluating, or making comparisons.

## **Promoting Young Children's Social and Emotional Health**

Children who are socially and emotionally healthy tend to demonstrate, and continue to develop, several important behaviors and skills.

They

- Are usually in a positive mood
- Listen and follow directions
- Have close relationships with caregivers and peers
- Care about friends and show interest in others
- Recognize, label, and manage their own emotions
- Understand other's emotions and show empathy
- Express wishes and preferences clearly
- Gain access to ongoing play and group activities
- Are able to play, negotiate, and compromise with others



## Establish Trusting Relationships



Young children develop and learn in the context of relationships. A trusting and caring teacher-child relationship is essential for children's optimum development. Children who have trusting relationships with their teachers are, on average, more willing to ask questions, solve problems, try new tasks, and express their thinking than their peers without such relationships.

Children benefit socially, emotionally, and academically when teachers intentionally create close, trusting relationships. But gaining the trust of every child is not as simple as being nice and engaging. How can teachers create trusting relationships with all of the children? Consistently offering warmth, affection, respect, and caring is essential.

### **Showing Warmth and Affection Consistently**

Warmth and affection, even on bad days and when children are misbehaving, are critical to a child's well-being in early education settings. They contribute to developing secure relationships between children and adults, provide models of gentle behavior, and are linked with children's ability to interact positively with peers. Social and emotional well-being is nourished by a teacher's warmth and affection.

### **Respecting and Caring About Every Child**

Showing respect is a keyway to connect with children and strengthen positive relationships. It helps children feel more confident and competent to explore and learn. Teachers accomplish this by:

- **Listening with full attention and restate what children say (often also seizing the opportunity to expose the children to new vocabulary).**
- **Accepting and reflecting children's feelings.**

When teachers accept and reflect on children's feelings, they exhibit sensitivity and caring in a way children understand. Teachers' acknowledgements make children feel heard and accepted. As a result, children feel safe to express their emotions – and receive support in identifying, labeling, and better understanding their emotions.

- **Spending private, quality time with individual children through one-on-one activities, such as story reading and game playing.**
- **Teach social and emotional skills intentionally**

Teachers intentionally support social and emotional growth by using children's books, planning activities, coaching on the spot, giving effective praise, and modeling appropriate behavior.

# 13 Benefits of Reading Aloud



1. Develops language skills
2. Improves listening comprehension
3. Increases attention span
4. Builds vocabulary
5. Exposes the child to good grammar
6. Exposes the child to new experiences and information
7. Stimulates the imagination
8. Stimulates brain development
9. Promotes critical thinking skills
10. Creates bond between the child and the reader
11. Builds confidence and self-esteem
12. Teaches values
13. It's fun!

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