

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING



A RESEARCH-BASED SUPPLEMENTAL CURRICULUM

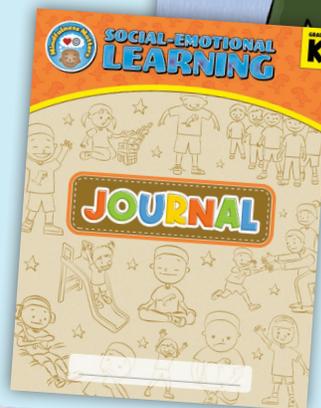
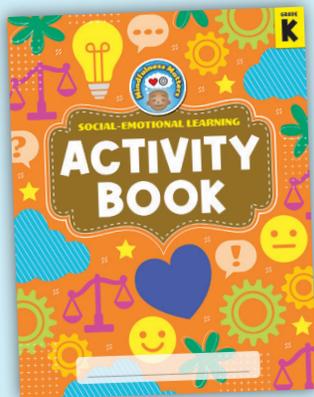
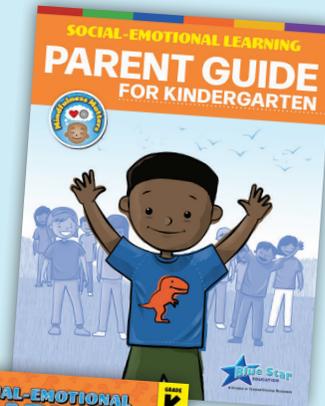
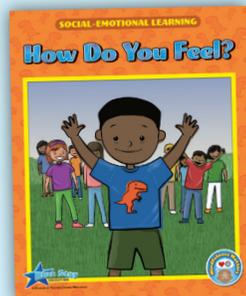
Introduction

It is no secret that students come to school from a variety of backgrounds, family structures, daily experiences, and more. All of these factors can influence a student’s academic success. Parents, teachers, and guardians must work together to help students navigate emotional and social challenges in addition to meeting the academic standards that students work toward achieving.

Academic success is just one piece of the puzzle. In order to meet academic standards, students must also be taught how to deal with social and emotional situations that can impede academic learning. Social-emotional learning (SEL) content is becoming a part of the standard curriculum. The *Mindfulness Matters* packs are designed to address these crucial skills and promote greater emotional intelligence in children. Each *Mindfulness Matters* pack includes one high-interest leveled-text reader, a full-color informative parent guide, an engaging student activity book, a grade-friendly student journal, and a write-on/wipe-off mood meter. These comprehensive packs provide opportunities for children to practice identifying and expressing their feelings, offer coping strategies for managing emotions, promote positive thinking, and teach inclusion, respect, and acceptance. Time spent investing in social-emotional learning will benefit children well into their teen and adult years.

Each pack includes:

- 1 Fiction/Nonfiction Reader
- 1 Parent Guide
- 1 Activity Book
- 1 Journal
- 1 Mood Meter



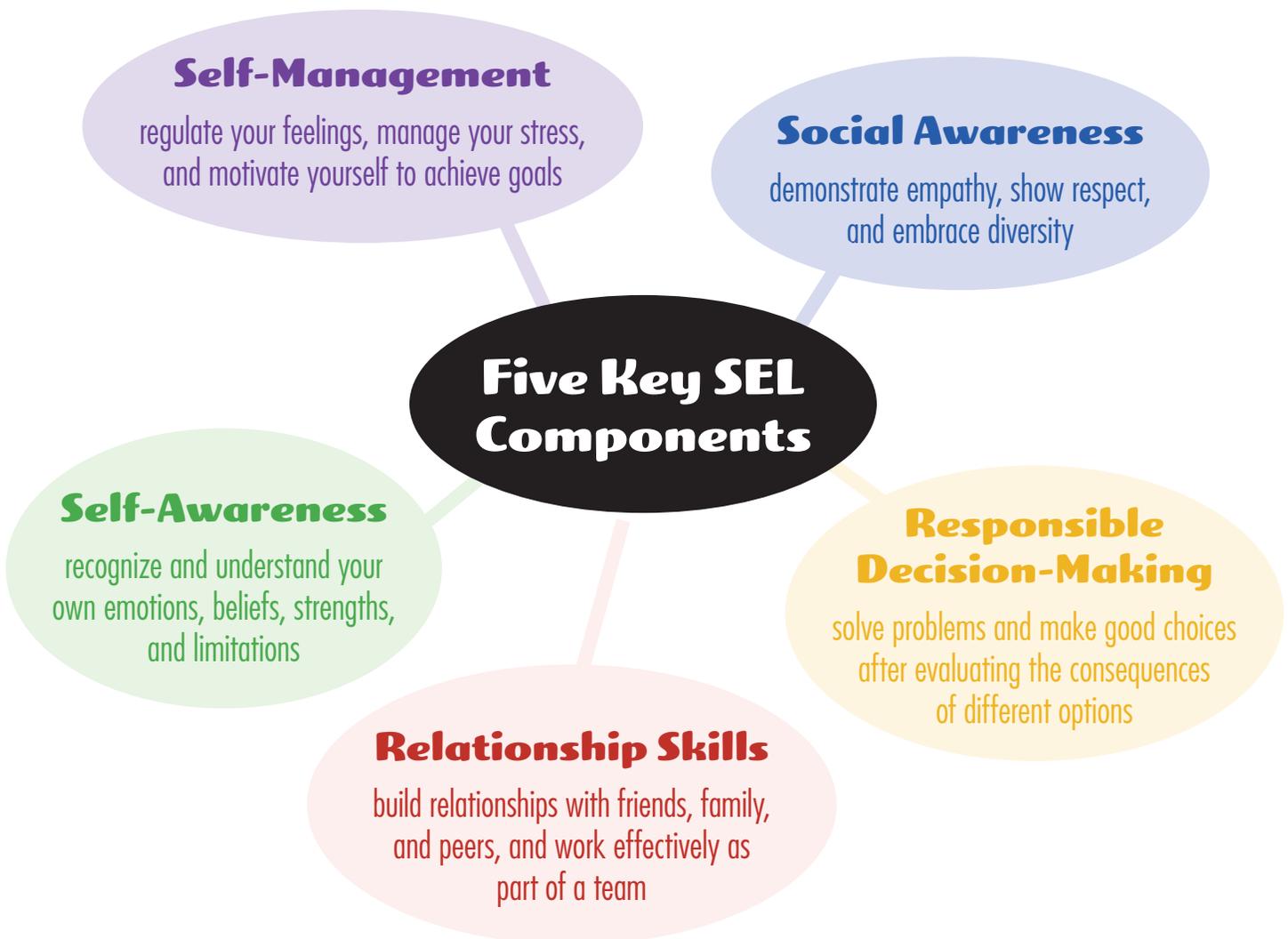
Complete Student Learning Pack for Kindergarten

What Is Social-Emotional Learning?

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) identifies social-emotional learning as the process that enables children to learn how to understand themselves and those around them, manage their emotions, display empathy and respect, build solid relationships, and make smart choices (CASEL 2018). Young children who are taught emotional intelligence have the tools they need to communicate successfully, maintain healthy relationships, and function in society. SEL is simply the process of learning and growing these necessary life skills.

Research shows that SEL instruction “reduces problem behaviors and emotional distress that interfere with the learning and development of some students” (U.S. Department of Education 2013). Eliminating or reducing behaviors that interfere with learning has been shown to significantly raise test scores and academic performance (CASEL).

CASEL breaks SEL into five main components: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.



Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is the first step in growing one's emotional intelligence, making this the perfect place to begin. When a person is self-aware, it means they are able to recognize characteristics about themselves, including their emotions, strengths, and ways they can grow as a learner and as a person (CASEL). At a young age, children begin to experience a wide variety of emotions. The key to self-awareness is understanding these emotions and how they influence one's behavior.

Another aspect of self-awareness is recognizing one's own strengths and limitations. If a child can acknowledge their strengths, they will feel a sense of identity, value, and confidence. In addition, children who are self-aware know how to set goals and work toward personal growth.

Self-Management

Self-management means that a person can identify, regulate, and manage their emotions in different situations. When children learn self-management strategies, they understand how to express their emotions in healthy ways instead of lashing out impulsively. Self-management strategies include learning to breathe, being mindful, and pausing and calming down when upset.

Children who learn self-control can recover more easily from emotional situations, delay gratification, and follow the rules (Larrier & Lewis 2017). Setting and accomplishing goals is also linked to self-management.

Social Awareness

Children who are socially aware are able to demonstrate respect and empathy for others, including those from different backgrounds and cultures. Teaching children to think about what it would be like to walk in someone else's shoes is a key component in being able to feel empathy. Increasing the capacity for empathy strengthens bonds between individuals, groups, communities, and societies (Riess 2017).

Social-awareness activities are designed to get children thinking about others, feeling compassion, showing kindness, and contributing to the greater good of society (Greenberg et al. 2003).

Relationship Skills

Once a child understands both self and social awareness, they can begin to see how these two concepts interact when they start to form relationships with others. Establishing healthy relationships is a fundamental part of emotional intelligence (Osterman 2000). Children who learn how to maintain positive relationships at a young age are better equipped to manage conflict and cooperate well with others as adults. They also become aware of how their behaviors affect those around them, and they learn to see which traits they value when choosing their own friends.

Relationship skills include active listening, clear communication, cooperation, problem-solving, and standing up for others.

Responsible Decision-Making

Children who are taught responsible decision-making strategies grow up with a strong moral identity—they can resist peer pressure and learn to analyze potential outcomes before making choices. They understand that every choice has a consequence, and they can choose to make wise and safe decisions that are best for themselves and those around them (Terzian et al. 2011).

When a child can pause and think before they act, they control their emotions and impulses in positive ways. This allows them to respond to situations instead of reacting to them.



Why Is SEL Important Right Now?



Times are changing, and the past few years have been increasingly hard on everyone, especially children and teens. Teachers, parents, students, and community members do not need to look very far to see an increase in people who are experiencing anxiety, depression, and higher levels of stress. These issues have always been present, but the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated and intensified these symptoms by disrupting normal life, routines, and learning settings (Mental Health America 2022). The pandemic put added pressure on students and families through isolation, work stress, and the effects of life being turned upside down.

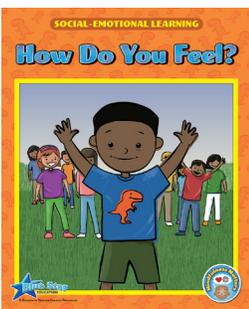
A 2022 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that mental health issues are increasing in children and adolescents. Studies project that as many as 1 in 33 children and 1 in 8 adolescents experience depression (Baker).

With so many people struggling, it is imperative that students are taught SEL skills to address their immediate struggles and prepare them for their lives ahead. Research has shown that SEL programs have had positive effects on students, not only in their academic lives but also in their lives outside of the school setting (Mahoney & Weissberg 2018).

Building Confidence and Emotional Success with Mindfulness Matters Packs

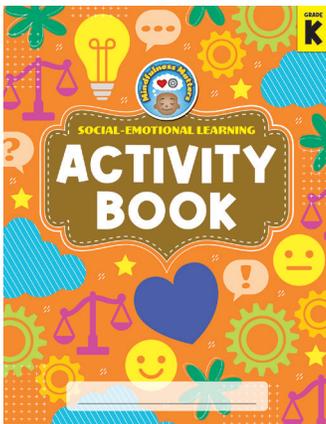
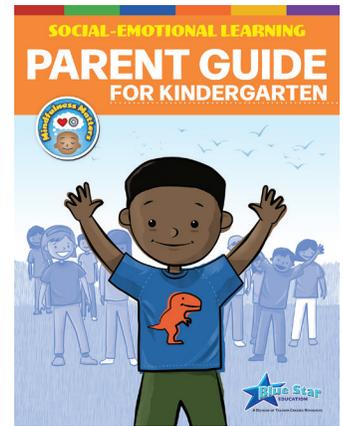


Using the *Mindfulness Matters* packs can reset children on a healthy emotional path. Learning to identify, accept, and manage one’s emotions will help children build their confidence and self-esteem. Additionally, children will learn how to effectively work with others and persevere in difficult situations in order to reach their goals. The *Mindfulness Matters* packs also encourage children to expand their global awareness by learning more about cultures that may differ from their own and promote the inclusion and acceptance of others. Furthermore, these packs offer guidance and instruction for parents, teachers, and guardians to guide children in their social-emotional development. Many of the activities encourage communication and collaboration between all family members and serve to create a wellness practice that can become a beneficial part of a family’s daily routine. As adults improve their own emotional intelligence, children will be inclined to mirror and follow along.



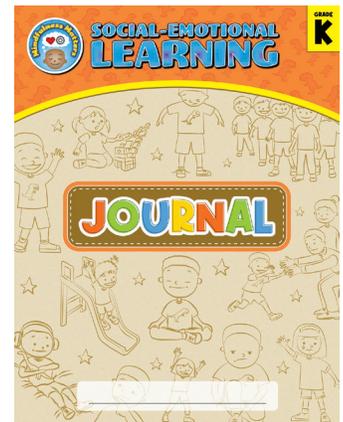
Students need to engage with texts that support social-emotional learning by reading stories that exemplify effective ways to manage and understand emotions. The readers included in the *Mindfulness Matters* packs show diverse characters and the challenges they face as they learn to navigate and deal with the many mixed emotions associated with everyday life.

Parents play a crucial role in the social-emotional development their child. This is why each *Mindfulness Matters* pack includes a comprehensive social-emotional learning parent guide. Incorporating parents into their child’s social-emotional journey will help create a positive and safe space for student learning and growth. An added bonus—social-emotional learning benefits adults, too! Parents and children will learn and practice social-emotional skills together.



Social-emotional learning teaches students real-life skills that help bolster academic success and promote positive social interactions. The *Mindfulness Matters* activity books provide students with opportunities to learn and practice a wide variety of social-emotional skills that will help inside and outside of the classroom, both now and in the future.

Journaling is an excellent way to help students express their feelings. The *Mindfulness Matters* journals provide them with a safe space to explore their thoughts and work through their emotions. With this little bit of self-reflection and mindfulness, students will come to have a better understanding of themselves and others. They will gain confidence and empathy and will be more successful in their relationships.



Regular social-emotional check-ins provide students with an opportunity to identify and understand their feelings. The *Mindfulness Matters* mood meter allows students to circle (with a write-on/wipe-off pen) or point to the emotion they are experiencing, which is a crucial step in the journey toward better understanding one’s own emotions.



Conclusion

Social-emotional learning is a key element in children’s academic and emotional growth. SEL is not a separate subject to teach; rather, it is one that is already integrated into many academic standards that children are asked to master in school. Literacy skills improve when students understand how emotions shape decisions and responses. Even math skills improve when students learn to set goals, problem-solve, and persevere to the end. The *Mindfulness Matters* SEL packs focus on the five core competencies of social-emotional learning in order to help children build and strengthen these skills. Moreover, parents play a crucial role in this development in their children, and these SEL packs take the guesswork out of how parents should approach SEL activities with their children. Together, families will learn to use words to express feelings, practice coping strategies for managing big emotions, find ways to promote daily gratitude and positive thinking, explore their own culture and learn about others, and build the tools needed to make responsible decisions. The *Social-Emotional Learning: Mindfulness Matters* packs will help children grow and mature into confident, self-aware, responsible, and emotionally intelligent individuals.



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