

# ParentBrief



## School-Home Partners in Social Emotional Learning

When it comes to education, a partnership with our kids' teacher can make all the difference in the learning journey. From preschool up, parent-teacher partnerships ensure we support education and the school's values, and the school in turn supports our kids and our family values.

Schools today are incorporating social-emotional learning (SEL) into the curriculum, but as with most learning, reinforcement on the home front makes for a strong, effective partnership, and caring, competent kids. A purely academic curriculum addresses intellect; a purely SEL curriculum addresses emotions; but the combination of both addresses the healthy development of the whole child.

### The benefits of SEL

When it comes to educating kids, teaching the basics of SEL is no different to teaching the basics of numeracy or literacy. Skills are taught and then mastered. The child becomes proficient and can move to the next stage. We all need skills in numeracy and literacy to navigate life. The same applies to SEL. Numerous studies have found that young people who possess social and emotional skills are in fact happier, more confident, and more capable as students, family members, friends and workers. Studies have also shown that they are also less likely to experience harmful behaviours such as substance abuse, depression, or violence. SEL is a powerful way to help kids become healthy, caring and competent individuals.

### When parents and schools work together

The benefits for students (academically, socially and emotionally) are greatly increased when families and schools work together. When kids experience a strong

connection between their home and school, they are motivated to attend regularly, behave appropriately and display better social skills and adjustment to school. This impacts learning across the board.

Parents also benefit from a partnership with the school. Research suggests that involved parents are more confident in making decisions about their family and enjoy being with their children more. They tend to be more sensitive to their kids' social, emotional and intellectual needs, are more affectionate, use less punishment and enjoy communication with teachers.

### 10 ways to work with your school

- 1. Focus on the value of learning.** Encourage your kids to learn for life, not just to master curriculum topics that they may be good at.
- 2. Keep the lines of communication open.** Discuss with your child's teacher how best to keep in regular contact: emails, texts, phone calls, or visits to the classroom.
- 3. Know the school's policy on bullying.** If you suspect bullying may be an issue involving your child, contact the school. Don't take a child's word as gospel, or take sides before you've heard the whole story.
- 4. Support school policies at home.** Be positive and supportive about the school and the policies they have in place. If you do have concerns, contact the school and speak to the principal direct, rather than criticise within a child's hearing.
- 5. Be realistic when it comes to behaviour.** A teacher can give you the ins and outs of classroom behaviour or whether your child is having problems in the playground. A teacher can also give you a heads up as regards class and curriculum related perseverance, resilience, frustration levels, and any problems with listening or cognition.
- 6. Talk to your child about friendships at school** and how they're managing in the playground and whether they're having difficulties settling in socially.
- 7. Create a learning space at home.** Set up a corner for homework, limit screen time and social networking. Give help when needed, but don't do homework for them.
- 8. Keep up to date with school news.** Check the web site, respond to emails, read printed notices.
- 9. Be seen at meetings or working bees.** Not everyone can volunteer in the classroom but working bees are often on weekends, and meetings at night.
- 10. Make the effort for special interests.** Supporting our kids in the school musical, or poetry slam or on the sports field can make all the difference to their motivation to make the most of their talents.

Source : CASEL Parenting Pack : Ideas and Tools for Working with Families : Schools, Families, and Social and Emotional Learning. (CASEL is the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning - University of Illinois at Chicago).