



Universal evidence-based programmes supporting social & emotional learning in primary schools

This document provides an overview of universal programmes currently listed on the EIF Guidebook that promote social & emotional learning in all primary school children.

It supplements the guidance report *Improving social and emotional learning in primary schools* which is also concerned with social & emotional learning in all primary school children, independent of their level of need.

Visit: EIF.org.uk/SEL-guidance

All these programmes:

- offer **sequenced activities**
- use **active forms of learning**
- provide students with focused time to practice skills and explicitly define and **target specific social-emotional skills**
- are intended for **all children**, independent of risk for negative outcomes
- have a **low cost** to set up and deliver, compared with other interventions reviewed by EIF – they all cost less than £100 per child
- have been designed with an underlying **theory of change** in mind
- have some **evidence** of improving social-emotional learning in primary school children
- have undergone a **rigorous assessment by EIF** to understand the evidence underpinning each intervention.

What is the EIF Guidebook?

More detailed information on all of these programmes is available on the EIF Guidebook.

The Guidebook is a searchable online database designed to support school leaders and teachers in making evidence-based decisions about how to improve children's mental health, wellbeing and learning outcomes.

Visit: Guidebook.EIF.org.uk

EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMMES SUPPORTING SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Programme	Age group	Aims	Delivery	EIF evidence rating*	Strongest evidence is from the UK?
All Stars Core See on the EIF Guidebook	11–13 years	Aims to prevent or delay risky behaviours, specifically substance misuse and antisocial behaviour.	All Stars Core is a classroom intervention delivered in 14 sessions of 45 minutes' duration each by a class teacher.	2	✗
FRIENDS for Life (health-led) See on the EIF Guidebook	7–13	Aims to increase children's resilience and emotion management, and in the long term decrease anxiety disorders.	FRIENDS for Life is a classroom intervention delivered in 10 sessions of one hour duration each to a class of children by a psychologist or teacher. The evidence rating pertains to the psychologist-led version of the programme; the teacher-led version had no effect in the strongest study.	3	✓
Fun FRIENDS See on the EIF Guidebook	4–7	Aims to increase children's resilience and emotion management, and in the long term decrease anxiety disorders.	Fun FRIENDS is a classroom intervention delivered in five sessions of 2–2.5 hours duration each by a teacher.	2	✗
Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management See on the EIF Guidebook	4–8	Aims to improve teacher competencies in supporting children in the classroom, and in developing children's social, emotional and problem-solving skills.	Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management is a teacher programme delivered to groups of teachers in six full-day sessions over the course of six months. Teachers then use strategies with their own classrooms. Additionally, teachers are supported individually by a coach (including classroom observations, performance feedback, problem-solving, goal-setting, implementation of strategies and behaviour plans developed in workshops).	3+	✓
MindUP 3–7 See on the EIF Guidebook	3–7	Aims to improve self-regulation and prosocial behaviour in the short term, and academic achievement and positive mental health in the long term.	MindUP 3–7 is a classroom intervention delivered in 15 lessons of 20–30 minutes duration each. Additionally, children practise a mindfulness technique three times a day. MindUP 3–7 is delivered by a class teacher.	2	✗

Programme	Age group	Aims	Delivery	EIF evidence rating*	Strongest evidence is from the UK?
MindUP 8–11 See on the EIF Guidebook	8–11	Aims to improve self-regulation and prosocial behaviour in the short term, and academic achievement and positive mental health in the long term.	<p>MindUP 8–11 is a classroom intervention delivered in 15 lessons of 40–50 minutes duration each.</p> <p>Additionally, children practise a mindfulness technique three times a day. MindUP 8–11 is delivered by a class teacher.</p>	2	✘
Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme See on the EIF Guidebook	5–18	Aims to prevent bullying and improve peer-relations and prosocial behaviour.	<p>Olweus Bullying Prevention Programme is a whole-school approach with components at school, classroom, individual and community level.</p> <p>At classroom-level, the classroom teacher holds weekly meetings of 15–30 minutes each. Most of the programme components are expected to have been implemented and in use within a period of 12–18 months.</p>	3+	✘
PATHS Elementary Curriculum See on the EIF Guidebook	6–12	Aims to increase emotional and social competencies and reduce aggression and behaviour problems in elementary school-aged children while enhancing the educational process in the classroom.	PATHS Elementary is a classroom intervention delivered in 30–55 sessions per school year, of 20–30 minutes duration each. It is delivered by a class teacher.	3+	✘
Penn Resilience Programme See on the EIF Guidebook	10–11	Aims to reduce mental health issues and improve behaviour, wellbeing, and performance.	The Penn Resilience programme is a classroom intervention delivered in 18 sessions of one hour duration each by teachers, to groups of 6–30 students.	2	✓
Positive Action See on the EIF Guidebook	4–15	Aims to enhance children’s social and emotional skills and school climate.	<p>Positive Action is a whole-school intervention with whole-school, classroom, and parent components. It is delivered by classroom teachers to the whole class with the following number of sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception–Year 7: 140 sessions of 15 minutes duration each • Years 8–9: 82 sessions of 15 minutes duration each • Years 10–13: 132 sessions of 15 minutes duration each. 	3+	✘

Programme	Age group	Aims	Delivery	EIF evidence rating*	Strongest evidence is from the UK?
Rock and Water See on the EIF Guidebook	7-14	Aims to improve skills such as self-regulation, communication and empathy.	The Rock and Water programme is a group-based programme that can be delivered in schools or youth clubs. It is delivered in 7-10 sessions of 1-1.5 hours duration each by trained teachers, social or youth workers to groups of children and young people.	2+	✘
Roots of Empathy See on the EIF Guidebook	4-14	Aims to help children identify and reflect on their own feelings and the feelings of others.	<p>Roots of Empathy is a classroom intervention delivered in 27 sessions of 30-40 minutes duration each by a volunteer.</p> <p>The core of the programme is nine classroom visits by a local parent and baby, with the programme's core themes centred around the baby's development and feelings.</p>	2+	✓
Second Step Elementary See on the EIF Guidebook	6-11	Aims to improve school success and student behaviour by addressing social & emotional competencies and learning behaviour.	Second Step is a classroom intervention delivered in 22-25 sessions of 5-40 minutes duration each by a teacher.	2	✘
The Good Behaviour Game See on the EIF Guidebook	5-11	Aims to encourage prosocial behaviour and reduce disruptive behaviour.	The Good Behaviour Game is a behaviour management strategy that teachers introduce in the form of a game where children are rewarded for good behaviour. Teachers deliver the intervention and each game lasts 10-45 minutes.	3+	✘
Zippy's Friends See on the EIF Guidebook	5-7	Aims to increase mental health and wellbeing by teaching children coping and social skills.	Zippy's Friends is a classroom intervention delivered in 24 sessions of 45-60 minutes duration each by a teacher.	2+	✓

*EIF evidence ratings

- **Level 2** means the programme has **preliminary evidence** of achieving positive outcomes for children.
- **Level 3** means the programme has **robust evidence** of achieving positive outcomes for children, although these outcomes have not been shown to last for more than 12 months.

What do we mean by ‘evidence-based’?

When we say a programme is evidence-based, we mean it has received a rating of **at least level 3** according to the EIF evidence ratings.

EIF evidence ratings are based on real-life data about what has happened when these programmes have been used in schools before, and provide high-quality information about what is likely to improve outcomes.

- **Level 2** means the programme has **preliminary evidence** of achieving positive outcomes for children.
- **Level 3** means the programme has **robust evidence** of achieving positive outcomes for children, although these outcomes have not been shown to last for more than 12 months.

It can be appropriate to choose a programme with a rating of 2 or 2+ if a level 3 or level 4 programme that fits with local needs and circumstances is not available.

Visit: [Guidebook.EIF.org.uk/EIF-evidence-standards](https://www EIF.org.uk/EIF-evidence-standards)

What about programmes that aren't on this list?

This list is not exhaustive. If a programme addressing social & emotional learning is not on this list, either EIF has not been able to assess it (yet) or the programme has been assessed but does not yet have preliminary evidence showing it can achieve positive outcomes for children. If you would like to know more, please email us at info@eif.org.uk.

Find out more

More information on how to improve children's social & emotional skills can be found in the guidance report, *Improving social emotional learning in primary schools*, produced by EIF and the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF).

Visit: [EIF.org.uk/SEL-guidance](https://www EIF.org.uk/SEL-guidance)

This document is available to download from the EIF website, alongside other resources for teachers and schools to support children's mental wellbeing as they return to the classroom.

Visit: [EIF.org.uk/resource/supporting-childrens-social-and-emotional-wellbeing-as-they-return-to-school](https://www EIF.org.uk/resource/supporting-childrens-social-and-emotional-wellbeing-as-they-return-to-school)