

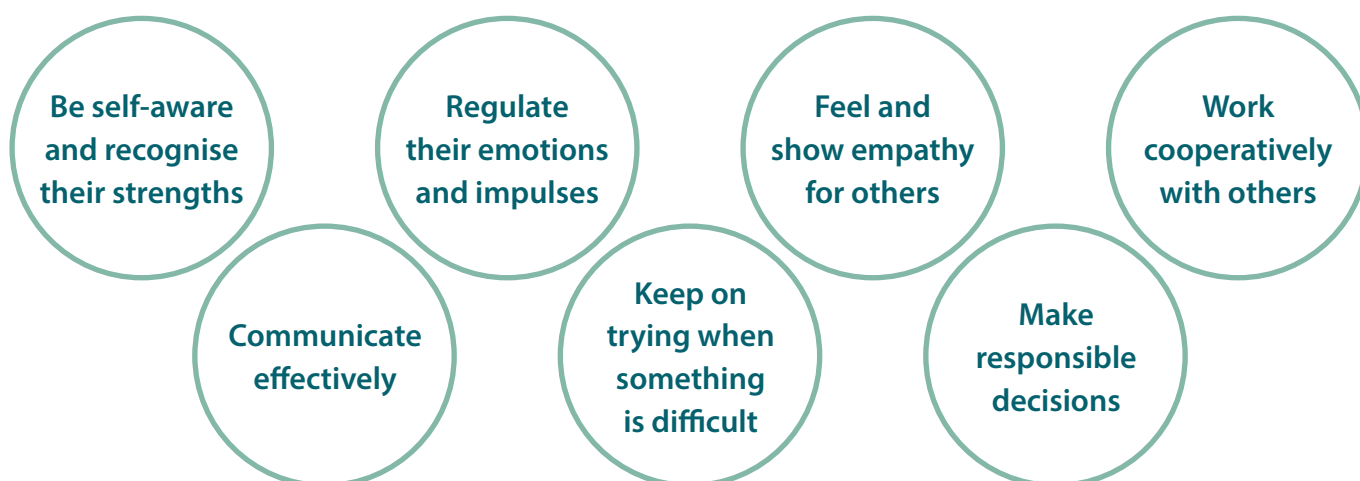
Early Years Library

SERIES INTRODUCTION: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Social skills are necessary to develop and maintain satisfying relationships. Emotional skills are used to identify and manage our thoughts, emotions and behaviours, and to understand the thoughts, emotions and behaviours of other people.

Before their first birthday, children develop attachment with key people in their lives, and they begin to express their emotions, and understand that people's faces and voices can tell you something about how they are feeling. This development continues through to adulthood.

Social and emotional skills help children to:



Social and emotional skills in the early years can be integrated in everyday activities. For example, opportunities for supporting early social skills arise when working in groups, or when dealing with everyday conflicts.

The Early Years Library contains six social and emotional skills booklets, each covering a core social and emotional skill and key practices that can be used to support skill development. The table on the next page presents the six booklets.

If you want to support:	Focus on:
Recognising and expressing emotions	Learning feeling words
	Identifying feelings using facial expressions and body language
	Describing how we feel
	Recognising other people's feelings
Regulating emotions	Calming down
	Generating, choosing and implementing solutions to cope with strong emotions
Communicating with others	Communicating non-verbally
	Engaging in conversation
	Listening
	Greeting others and introducing yourself
	Using polite language
Working together	Sharing and taking turns
	Team work
	Being helpful
	Asking for help
Developing positive relationships	Developing friendships
	Giving compliments and using kind words
	Valuing similarities and differences
	Being kind and caring
Resolving conflict	Speaking up during conflict
	Finding solutions for conflict

For more information on the Early Years Library and to download the booklets, visit www.elf.org.uk/EarlyYearsLibrary

How can I use these booklets?

The booklets can be used very flexibly and for different purposes:

- During new staff induction, to help new staff understand why they focus on certain skills and activities.
- When planning activities for the children based on your understanding of their interests, needs and the curriculum in your setting. Practices and strategies can be adapted to your context, to children's age, and to your daily schedule.
- Throughout the day to get inspiring ideas for extending activities, responding to children and planning in the moment.

As a practitioner, you might find that you are already using many of these strategies and practices. This can give you the confidence that the work you are doing to support the children in your care is underpinned by evidence.



Robert Kneschke

Commonly used strategies

Evidence-based programmes recommend a range of strategies for practitioners. Throughout the Early Years Library, you will notice that some of these strategies are used more frequently to support some skills, while other strategies are used more frequently to support other skills. For instance, modelling praise is used to teach children how to give compliments, while visual displays like stickers and posters are used to support discussions about emotions. Using a range of strategies is most likely to support young children's development. At times, as a practitioner you will also step back and let children experience challenge and joy in their learning without getting involved.

Strategies to support social and emotional skills include:

- Discussion, questions and answers
- Didactic instruction and teacher modelling
- Games, role-play and child modelling
- Strategy practice and physical learning
- Visual displays, objects and materials
- Books, songs and nursery rhymes
- Art and creative projects
- Drawing and writing
- Timetabled routines
- Multimedia

Inspiring ideas

To support each of the skills, the Early Years Library offers inspiring ideas based on typical activities in evidence-based programmes. There are a range of activities suitable for individual, small group, and whole group activities. Some of the inspiring ideas are appropriate for in-the-moment interactions with children, while others require more planning. They are meant to inspire your practice, not dictate it. You can use the inspiring ideas to reflect on your practice, discuss ideas with colleagues and plan how to respond to children's interests and needs in relation to your curriculum.



Charlein Garcia/Unsplash

Unique individuals

Research shows that each child develops in a unique way, rather than following a strictly linear pre-defined route through development in a specific order or timeframe. For this reason, the Early Years Library is not presented in chronological order by age. Practitioners can use their professional judgement to gauge which skills a child may benefit from focusing on at different times.

Inter-connected areas of development

While the booklets are presented separately, research shows that all areas of development are inter-connected. Supporting children's social and emotional skills will call on language and early literacy; supporting children's early numeracy will call on social and emotional skills; and so on. The Early Years Library is designed to be flexible, allowing you to combine practices from across the booklets and return to the booklets in different ways at different times.



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Role of the adult in supporting child development

Early childhood education can help children build strong social and emotional skills. When children play together, they have opportunities to manage their emotions and behaviours and deal with everyday problems. Children benefit from warm and supportive interactions with early years practitioners who can give guidance and opportunities to develop a range of social-emotional skills. Striking a balance between child-led and adult-guided experiences helps children develop their love of learning while also supporting and extending their learning.



Practitioners can support children to develop these skills in a range of ways, for example by modelling friendly behaviours, introducing books and discussions on the topic, or supporting role-play activities and games. The Early Years Library highlights specific effective practices from evidence-based programmes that you can weave into your existing approaches.

**Are you using the
Early Years Library?**

We'd love to hear from you.
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