

# What is social and emotional learning?

School is not only about reading, writing and arithmetic. It's also about making friends, learning how to work with others, and knowing how to be responsible for yourself.

Knowing how to manage feelings and get on with others are important skills for everyone. This kind of learning starts in early childhood with parents and carers as children's most important first teachers.

Research has found that teaching children social and emotional skills at school as well as at home makes a positive difference to their wellbeing. Social and emotional skills help school children settle in the classroom and get on with learning.

Useful skills to learn include:

- coping with frustrations or worries
- getting along with others
- solving problems.

The kinds of social and emotional skills that are important for children to develop have been identified by researchers as:

### **Self-awareness**

Understanding feelings, self-confidence.

### **Social awareness**

Respecting and understanding others, and appreciating differences between people.

### **Self-management**

Managing emotions, being able to set goals and stick to them.

### **Responsible decision-making**

Choosing wisely and thoughtfully.

### **Relationship skills**

Cooperating, communicating, making friends and resolving conflict.

Research shows that children benefit most from social and emotional learning when it is taught in regular school lessons and matched to children's learning stages. All national, state and territory curricula include personal and social development as a major learning area for primary school children.

Children learn best when they are encouraged to practise the skills they learn at school, at home and in the real world.

## How parents and carers can help

You continue to have a critical role to play in supporting children's social and emotional learning throughout the school years. Your child's school will let you know what approach they have chosen for their social and emotional learning curriculum so that you can use some of the ideas at home.

## Other ideas

- 1 Look in the parent and carer resources area at your child's school for information on the social and emotional learning program it has chosen to teach.
- 2 Ask your child's teacher about the skills the children are learning in social and emotional learning classes and how to build on them at home.

For more, see the KidsMatter Primary information sheets on a range of topics that help develop children's social and emotional skills, including coping with fears and worries, managing anger, managing friendships, making decisions, and resolving conflict.

This resource is part of a range of KidsMatter Primary information sheets for families and school staff. View them all online at [www.kidsmatter.edu.au](http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au)



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