



Office of the State
Superintendent of Education



PARENT, FAMILY, AND CAREGIVER GUIDE

Welcome to the DC Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Parent, Family, and Caregiver Guide! This brief resource guide is intended to support you – the parents, family members, and caregivers of DC students – in understanding the DC SEL standards and knowing how to support social and emotional development both at home and at school.

THIS GUIDE INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS:

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Each section has links to helpful tools and resources so you can immediately support your student in developing their self-awareness, self-management, social and cultural awareness, relationship skills, and decision-making and agency.

SECTION 1: UNDERSTANDING THE DC K-ADULT SEL STANDARDS

SEL OVERVIEW

SEL is the process through which children and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions (CASEL, 2020).

Active involvement from families, schools, and communities in SEL initiatives fosters an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students. SEL focuses on developing comprehensive skills and a positive identity that students need for academic achievement, fulfilling careers, healthy relationships, and responsible citizenship.

In spring 2024, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) released the SEL standards for all DC students from kindergarten through adult education. As part of the 2023-2025 OSSE strategic plan, these standards were developed to ensure strong SEL instruction across all DC schools. The DC SEL standards are organized across five core competency areas: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social and Cultural Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Decision-Making and Agency. During the 2024-25 school year, educators in DC public and public charter schools will begin integrating SEL across all subject areas to create supportive learning environments guided by these standards and their accompanying indicators of success.

RESOURCES: [DC Social and Emotional Learning](#) (OSSE) (2024); Coffee Chat on SEL Standards and School Climate with OSSE, [Parents Amplifying Voices in Education](#) (PAVE) (2024); Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) (2019), [What is SEL?](#), District of Columbia SEL standards and indicators of success: [K-Adult Social and Emotional Learning Standards](#); CASEL's introductory video to SEL: [What is Social & Emotional Learning](#)

DC K-ADULT SEL STANDARDS

COMPETENCY	STANDARD
Self-Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Self-awareness is the ability to recognize, understand and express one's emotions and how they impact one's actions. Self-awareness includes the ability to identify one's personal strengths, interests, values, and challenges, develop positive self-identity, recognize oneself as a lifelong learner, and know when one needs to seek help.
Self-Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Self-management is the ability to manage and express one's emotions, set and achieve personal and academic goals, and persevere through challenges.
Social and Cultural Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Social and cultural awareness is the ability to empathize with and respect others, including those with different and diverse perspectives, abilities, backgrounds, and cultures. Social and cultural awareness includes the ability to understand and use positive social and communication skills.
Relationship Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Relationship skills are the ability to build and maintain positive, respectful, and healthy relationships across different environments by listening, communicating, using perspective-taking skills, resolving conflict, and collaborating.
Decision-Making and Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Decision-making and agency is the ability to make individual decisions and take self-directed action. Decision-making and agency include the ability to recognize and connect how one's decisions impact oneself and the community.

SECTION 2: SEL STRATEGIES TO USE OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

When educators and families work together, they can build strong connections reinforcing social and emotional skills developed in the home, schools, and their communities.

Parents, families, and caregivers model and practice SEL with their children through supportive relationships and home environments. As experts in their children’s development, interests, cultures, and strengths, families are also influential advocates for SEL at their child’s school. Parents, families, and caregivers can also be critical partners in shaping school SEL implementation.

RESOURCES: [SEL with Families & Caregivers](#) (CASEL), (2024); [Leading with SEL: Parent Toolkit](#) (2024); [OSSE SEL Wheel](#) (2024)

The [DC K-Adult SEL Standards](#) are a framework for supporting students’ social and emotional learning at home. Below are some strategies and resources aligned with each competency and a sampling of indicators of success from across all grade bands.

SELF-AWARENESS

Sample Indicators of Success

- Recognizes, identifies, understands, describes, or interprets one’s own emotions.
- Identifies personal likes or dislikes, describes interests, demonstrates positive self-identity, or communicates personal strengths.
- Identifies when to seek support or ways to reach out to trusted adults and supportive community members or networks.



STRATEGIES & RESOURCES BY GRADE BAND

(K-2) Show Your Child What Feelings Look Like

A wonderful way to help young children develop their understanding of feelings is to use a “*faces of feelings*” poster or create one together with your child. Draw different faces showing various emotions. Encourage your child to pick an emotion from the poster and discuss when they last felt that way and what caused it. Then, ask them to describe how they are feeling currently and why. This activity expands their emotional vocabulary and helps them better recognize and express their emotions.

RESOURCES:

1. The “[Feelings Wheel](#)” by Anchor Light Therapy Collective is one tool to support kids in developing emotional intelligence. Many children forget what emotional words to use when describing their experience while upset in the moment. The feelings wheel can give them an idea of what word to use.
2. [Happier Human: 21 Self-Awareness Activities for Kids & Young Students](#) offers various activities such as practicing gratitude, using positive affirmations, and making vision boards. These activities help young children focus on their strengths and understand their emotions better, fostering self-awareness and a positive mindset.

(3-5) Use Books or TV to Point Out Complex Emotions

Take moments while reading storybooks or watching movies to highlight the nuanced feelings of characters. Engage your child by asking why they think a character feels a certain way. For example, explore if a character might be feeling jealous of a classmate yet hurt because they weren’t invited to their birthday party.

For children who may be less aware of their own emotions, take an additional step by drawing parallels between the characters and your child’s own experiences. You might say something like, “This character reminds me of you because people enjoy talking to them—they’re such good listeners!” or “This character reminds me of when you were nervous because none of your old friends were in your class.” Relating your child’s experiences to the characters’ emotions can help them develop greater self-awareness.

RESOURCES:

1. [The Pathways 2 Success Guide](#) features activities like emotions check-ins, writing self-compliments, and discussing strengths and challenges. These exercises are designed to help children identify and understand their feelings, fostering emotional regulation and self-awareness.
2. [Self-Awareness Worksheets for Kids](#) are downloadable worksheets to help kids understand their strengths and challenges. The worksheets encourage children to reflect on their emotions and thoughts, facilitating discussions about how to approach and overcome challenges in the future.
3. The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance [Mood Crew program](#) offers interactive and downloadable resources to help adults have positive conversations about feelings with children.

(6-11) Tell Your Child What You See, Not What They Feel

Help your child describe what you observe rather than what you interpret. For instance, you might say, “It looks like you are feeling conflicted about going to that party because you don’t seem as excited as you usually do,” or “You say you’re not nervous about the test, but you’re very fidgety when you try to study.” By describing what you see, you give them a chance to correct, explain, or deny what you said while still receiving feedback. This approach differs from saying, “You don’t really want to go to that party, do you?” or “I can’t believe you’re not nervous about that test.”

RESOURCES:

1. Positive Psychology: [18 Best Self-Esteem Worksheets and Activities](#) are designed to help teens challenge negative self-talk and develop self-compassion.
2. [Teens Health](#) offers practical tips for teens to boost their self-esteem, such as spending time with supportive friends, practicing self-kindness, and setting achievable goals. It also explains the importance of understanding and managing the voice in their head while offering strategies to build a healthier self-image.
3. These [scenarios and questioning prompts](#) can help teens reflect on their identity and understand their own needs when forming new relationships.
4. Bring Change 2 Mind offers a free [Talk Tool](#) where teens can generate prompts and watch videos to help them explain mental health concerns and how they are feeling to various people in their lives.



(12-Adult) Life After High School

Reflect with your child on how their future (or current) post-secondary experiences have shaped their self-perception and goals. How can you encourage them to deepen their self-awareness, recognizing their strengths, weaknesses, and evolving identity as they navigate academic and/or personal challenges?

RESOURCES:

1. Positive Psychology offers three [Emotional Intelligence Exercises](#) for free. These science-based exercises can enhance one’s ability to understand and work with emotions but can also give you the tools to foster the emotional intelligence of students.
2. [An Integrated Approach to Developing Greater Self-Awareness](#) offers a deep explanation of the science of SEL and self-guided paths to explore.



Sample Indicators of Success

- Identifies and practices using self-regulating strategies to manage emotions.
- Approaches challenges and obstacles with a growth mindset.
- Identifies or develops short and long-term goals, and strategies to reach those goals, with or without support.
- Makes decisions or practices agency over one's environment or interest.

**(K-2) Be a Good Example of Self-Management**

Most parents, families, and caregivers experience upsetting moments. During these times, inform your family that you need a short break to calm down. Use this break to think about how to return to the situation positively. Your child will observe you taking steps to calm yourself and will be more likely to adopt this technique. You can also talk to your child while calming yourself. Consider saying, “I’m going to take some deep breaths and count to 1, 2, 3.” One of the best ways to teach your child about self-management is by modeling it yourself.

RESOURCES:

1. [12 Self-Regulation Strategies for Young Children](#) provides various strategies, such as singing vowel sounds, moving like animals, and playing mindful games to help children regulate their bodies, sensations, and thoughts.
2. The [Big Feelings](#) list can help young children notice and name their feelings leading to greater management of those feelings.
3. The Child Mind Institute’s [Tips for Managing Behavior](#) guide provides parents, families, and caregivers with insights and skill-building activities to understand why some children may struggle with certain behaviors and how to best respond.

(3-5) Identify a Place or Technique to Help your Child Calm Down

Pay attention to your child’s natural calming strategies. For example, they might seek comfort in a pillow or blanket or walk away from upsetting situations. Understanding these natural tendencies can help you encourage such behaviors at other times. You can also help identify a special place for them to calm down and let them name it, such as the “safe place” or the “peace corner.” Teaching your child that it’s okay to take some time to collect themselves will encourage them to take the initiative when needed. It’s best to practice this technique before your child is upset, so they can easily return to it when necessary.

RESOURCES:

1. [Guided Meditation for Families](#) can be used with children and ourselves to practice calming strategies as a family.
2. Practicing mindfulness can help with self-regulation. The [Child Mind Institute](#) offers activities in mindfulness that teach kids how to focus on the present instead of the past or the future. For some families, parent and caregiver training programs may also be helpful.
3. Mindset Works explains [How Parents Can Instill a Growth Mindset At Home](#) by providing key phrases caregivers can use to help children cultivate a growth mindset.



(6-8) Help Your Child Understand the Consequences of Their Actions and Set Goals for Future Improvement

At this stage, slamming doors, yelling, or acting out against family members or friends may occur. When your child has calmed down from an outburst, talk to them about how their actions reflect on them and affect the family. For example, you can explain that slamming doors may scare younger siblings or pets. Point out a time when they handled a similar situation better. By highlighting their self-management skills and explaining how their actions affect others and shape perceptions, you provide them with the tools to understand the impact of their behavior on those who matter to them, including themselves.

RESOURCES:

1. When it's time to take on responsibilities in the home, a [chart of responsibilities](#) can teach tweens skills to manage their roles in the house. This tool can also help you understand developmental stages at each age.
2. Middle and high school students often experience strong feelings; self-regulation tools can help them feel in control. Here are some [Emotional Regulation Activities](#) for tweens and teens.
3. Families can help their children [set and reach realistic goals](#) to better manage behavior in the future, improve academics, and address other important parts of life.

(9-11) Help Your Child with Stress Management

As your child ages, they may begin to feel stress from more demanding coursework or the increased social pressures of high school. You can help them find ways to reduce stress. For example, if they are worried about a test, suggest that they speak with the teacher beforehand or study with a classmate. Physical exercise is also a great way to manage stress. Many people find that simply walking or jogging helps relieve stress, so the next time your child seems stressed or upset, invite them to join you for a walk!

RESOURCES:

1. [Stress management reminders for teens](#) is an at-a-glance chart with pictures to help teens remember how they can care for themselves.
2. [10 steps to help manage stress](#) offers tips for teens on responding to stressors and caring for their mental and physical well-being.

(12-Adult) Work/Life Balance

Discuss with your child the strategies they use to balance academic demands, extracurricular commitments, and personal well-being in their final year of high school. Explore how you can support them in refining these strategies and maintaining a healthy work-life balance during stressful periods. Deepen these discussions by asking how they plan to apply self-management skills to their lives beyond high school.

RESOURCES:

1. The [Stress Management Toolkit](#) from the American Heart Association provides comprehensive strategies to manage stress, including deep breathing techniques, physical activities, and the importance of social connections. It emphasizes the benefits of regular exercise, socializing with friends and family, and taking time for relaxation and hobbies to maintain mental and physical health.
2. Child Mind Institute's [Preparing for College Emotionally, Not Just Academically Toolkit](#) provides parents, families, and caregivers with tips to support their child in developing coping strategies, regulating physical and emotional well-being, and planning ahead.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL AWARENESS

Sample Indicators of Success

- Reads and responds to body language of others, identifies verbal and non-verbal cues that signify emotions, or recognizes the effects of words and actions on others' emotions.
- Identifies, acknowledges, describes, or demonstrates concern or empathy for others.
- Recognizes similarities and differences in people and across cultures; identifies varying experiences of individuals and groups based on differences.
- Identifies healthy relationships with students and adults, identifies ways to advocate for the needs of others, or evaluates one's role within the larger community to engage in civic opportunities.



STRATEGIES & RESOURCES BY GRADE BAND

(K-2) Identify Feelings and Cultivate Connection

A good way to teach your child about body language, emotions, and empathy is to play a game of “Feelings Charades.” Use flashcards with different facial expressions or write emotions and behaviors that might hurt others on pieces of paper. Let your child pick one out of a hat and take turns acting out how a person might feel with the emotion or expression on the card. This game can help initiate discussions on topics that a child might otherwise be reluctant to talk about.

RESOURCES:

1. [Embrace Race](#) highlights the importance of introducing young children to concepts of bias, diversity, and social justice early on and provides articles, guides, podcasts, and short audio stories for families to use to kickstart important conversations.
2. Families can help children [develop and nurture their sense of identity](#) by using stories to help them build connections, see themselves, and understand the experiences of others.

(3-5) Discuss Different Perspectives

To help your child understand and respect the perspectives of others, talk with them about a book they are reading or a television show or movie they may have watched recently, and ask them what would happen if the story were written from another perspective. You can also go to your local library and find books about people who are different from your child, books that affirm their identity, or books that expose bias and highlight champions of social justice. By doing this, you are teaching your child to see life through different lenses and build their capacity for empathy and understanding.

RESOURCES:

1. [Embrace Race](#) provides action guides, recorded stories, webinars, and podcasts to help families have “thoughtful, informed, and brave” conversations with young children about race, bias, social justice, and diversity.
2. [Conflict Resolution: How to Settle Your Differences Fairly](#) video resource provides simulated scripts for young people to consider when approaching conflict resolution.

(6-11) Nurture Your Adolescent's Cultural and Community Awareness

Volunteer projects focusing on civic engagement help tweens and teens develop a sense of responsibility and commitment to their communities. These projects can include participating in local government, joining advocacy groups, or volunteering for community service organizations. Engaging in such activities fosters a deeper understanding of social issues, promotes active citizenship, and encourages contributions to the common good.

RESOURCES:

1. Teen volunteerism is a powerful strategy to develop civic engagement and cultural awareness skills. Explore the [Mayor's Serve DC Volunteer Opportunities](#) webpage and filter by the age of your child to find community service opportunities here in DC.
2. Take a family trip to the [Smithsonian's Anacostia Community Museum](#), where children can immerse themselves in the vibrant and “often overlooked stories of people furthest from opportunity in the Greater DC Region.” Families will learn about joy, advocacy, diversity, and the rich cultural history of many DC communities.
3. [Ward Heritage Guides](#) are the official walking trails of Washington, D.C., and cover the diverse social history of over 20 neighborhoods and eight wards. The illustrated guide shows how the ward has changed over time. It also highlights historic properties and other important sites in the neighborhood.

(12-Adult) Open a Book, Open the World

Consider the diverse communities and viewpoints your child may encounter once they leave high school. How can you help them develop a deeper understanding and empathy for others' perspectives, fostering inclusive behaviors and meaningful connections? Use your child's post-secondary planning activities to include reflections on managing the world outside of school.

RESOURCES:

1. Monmouth University Guggenheim Memorial Library offers a [list of recommended diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging books](#). The list includes literature to help teens and young adults expand their cultural lens and various books that guide readers toward incorporating multicultural perspectives into their lives, each with book discussion questions to reflect on.
2. This [ethical leadership reflection](#) can keep maturing adults grounded in their personal values while navigating the world around them.



Sample Indicators of Success

- Demonstrates cooperative behaviors when working with others, practices active listening skills, models appropriate communication, or applies skills to prevent and resolve conflicts.
- Identifies, demonstrates, builds, or practices strategies for maintaining healthy relationships.
- Shares with others, collaborates with peers, or practices teamwork and cooperative problem-solving.

**(K-2) Talk to Your Child About Friendships**

Ask your child about their friends and the qualities they value in a friend. For instance, you might ask, “Why do you enjoy spending time with this friend after school?” or “What makes them a good friend to you?” Also, inquire about qualities they dislike, and how they believe they are a good friend to others. Questions like, “Has your friend ever said something that made you feel sad?” can help you understand their experiences and feelings.

RESOURCES:

1. Keep Connected offers a free [Tips and Relationship Builders for Families](#) guide that has relationship-building activities to help parents, families, caregivers, and children connect more deeply and understand each other better.
2. UNICEF offers [9 Tips](#) to build healthy relationship skills in young children.

(3-5) Use the ‘Sandwich’ Technique

Consider using the “sandwich technique” to guide your child in handling conversations, especially when providing feedback or addressing issues. This method involves “sandwiching” the feedback or problem between a compliment and a positive conclusion. For instance, if your child feels a friend treated them poorly, they could start with a positive comment like, “I really appreciate our friendship, and you’re always so kind to me,” then address the issue with, “However, when you yelled at me at lunch the other day, it made me feel sad.” They can conclude with, “I want to keep being friends, so if something bothers you, let me know, and we can address it together instead of getting upset.”

RESOURCES:

1. Here is a developmental [fact sheet](#) on what to expect as young children build relationship skills.
2. Use this simple [problem-solving process](#) to help your child identify their feelings, unpack problems, and develop solutions.

(6-8) Connect with Tweens: Take a Walk

Set a specific time for a family walk after dinner, aiming at least 2-3 times a week to establish a routine. During the walk, focus on actively listening to your child. Use gestures like smiles and nods to show you’re engaged. When your child shares something, repeat back what they said in your own words. For example, if they say, “I was really tired at school today,” you can respond, “You were tired at school? What do you think caused that?” This approach demonstrates that you’re attentive and care about their feelings.

RESOURCES:

1. The Community Health Council’s [Positive Parenting: Building Healthy Relationships With Your Kids](#) article illustrates how to engage positively with your children, teaching them the behaviors and skills necessary to build and maintain healthy relationships and cope effectively with the world.
2. Keep Connected provides free [Talk About It conversation starter cards](#) that can help adults understand and unpack their own feelings and experiences to kickstart conversations with their children.

(9-11) Nurture Your Adolescent's Empathy

Moving from middle school to high school can be a challenging transition for any young person. It may involve adapting to a larger school with more peers and navigating multiple classrooms for the first time. Your child might feel uncertain in this new social environment and anxious about making friends. By talking with your child and explaining that everyone faces similar challenges, you can help them understand their peers better and emphasize the importance of empathy in their social interactions. Support them in making friendships at their own pace and encourage them to overcome their social challenges.

RESOURCES:

1. The [Tough Conversations with Teens](#) resource provides practical tips for parents, families, and caregivers on how to engage their teens in conversations about healthy relationships and conducting difficult conversations.
2. The [Parent's Guide to Teen Parties](#) provides guidance for caregivers to support high school students who are facing relationship pressures at parties.

(12-Adult) Reflect and Refine: Mental Yearbook

Reflect on the relationships your child has cultivated over the last four years in high school - from family to friendships. How can you assist them in navigating complex social dynamics, resolving conflicts diplomatically, and fostering mutually supportive relationships that contribute to their personal and professional growth in the future?

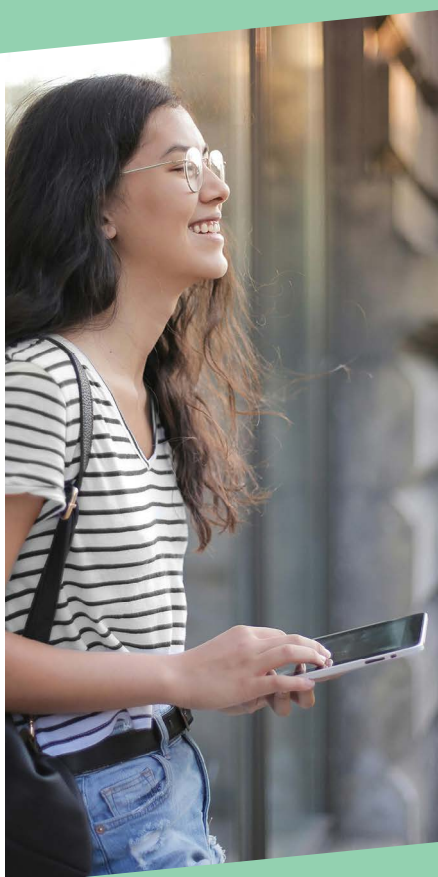
RESOURCES:

1. These [family relationship quizzes](#) cover everything from money management to communication skills and offer insight into family dynamics for older youth.
2. Some relationships place unrealistic expectations on older youth as they prepare to live independently. [This video tackles perfectionism and the realities of adult life.](#)



Sample Indicators of Success

- Considers or generates possible solutions to problems.
- Recognizes that individuals have choices and the positive and negative consequences of one's choices or behaviors.
- Makes responsible choices, takes self-directed action, or demonstrates personal responsibility in decision-making.
- Identifies or considers expectations for safety; understands or evaluates how external influences impact decision-making.

**(K-2) Talk to Your Child About Consequences**

Discussing consequences with your child can help them develop tools for making their own decisions in the future. Ask questions like, “What do you think will happen if we don’t wear our coats outside today?” or, “If you don’t go to sleep on time, how might you feel at school tomorrow?” Exploring different perspectives enhances your child’s decision-making skills. Understanding how their actions affect others is crucial for making responsible choices. Teaching them about the consequences of their actions helps promote empathy and responsible decision-making.

RESOURCES:

1. [Parents’ Guide to Critical Thinking](#) helps parents, families, and caregivers foster critical thinking skills in young children by involving them in discussions on various topics and encouraging them to express their thoughts. It highlights the importance of taking children’s ideas seriously to promote cognitive and emotional development.
2. Even young children can participate in family decision-making, boosting their sense of agency and value. Here are [three steps](#) to consider.

(3-5) Point Out When Your Child Makes Good Decisions

Children often don’t realize they are making decisions. Praising good choices encourages your child to continue making thoughtful decisions. Additionally, take time to discuss your child’s day, highlighting positive decisions they made and exploring why they made those choices. This approach reinforces their understanding of decision-making and its impact.

RESOURCES:

1. The [Tool to Help Students Make Good Decisions](#) introduces a decision-making matrix that helps students evaluate their choices by weighing the pros and cons.
2. Making Tough Choices with Kid President [video](#) on decision-making and consequences to share with your child.

(6-8) Talk to Your Middle-Schooler About Responsible Online Behavior

Most adolescents use electronic devices and social media, making it essential to teach them appropriate online behavior. Use this opportunity to discuss how the digital age has enhanced our lives, but also remind them that a person’s online footprint persists and is nearly impossible to erase once posted. Address the issue of online bullying by emphasizing the importance of being kind and standing up against bullying, even if it means resisting peer pressure. Monitor their social media use and clarify that “friends” online are different from real-life friends. Encourage them to develop skills for interacting with people in everyday, non-digital situations.

RESOURCES:

1. This [parent’s guide to social media](#) provides a snapshot of current social media trends and practical, actionable strategies to empower your child, boost their digital discernment, and foster healthy mental habits.
2. [Help Your Child Handle Peer Pressure](#) is a great resource with decision-making tips to support them.

(9-11) Define Safe and Smart Choices with Your Teen

High school is an ideal time to start discussions about making safe and smart choices regarding physical health and the consequences of irresponsible decisions. Talk to your child about how drugs and alcohol can impact their academic performance, sports, and overall health. Discuss the negative effects substances can have on their well-being and explore alternatives to risky behaviors. For example, emphasize that they can always call you or other family members for a ride home rather than getting into a car with someone who has been drinking or using drugs.

RESOURCES:

1. The article [Teen Brain: Behavior, Problem-Solving, and Decision- Making](#) explains the biological differences in teen brains that influence their decision-making processes. It provides insights into why teens may act impulsively and how parents, families, and caregivers can help them develop better decision-making skills by understanding these developmental changes.
2. [Talk It Out](#) focuses on helping teens become independent by involving them in decision-making processes and encouraging them to take on responsibilities. It emphasizes the benefits of letting teens learn from their failures and provides tips for parents, families, and caregivers to support their teens in making thoughtful choices.

12-Adult) Coaching Isn't Just for Sports

Reflect with your child on a recent decision they made independently. Discuss how you can support them in analyzing the potential outcomes, considering ethical implications, and making choices that align with their values and long-term goals. Step through the reflection process together, highlighting the positive aspects of their decision-making. Acknowledge and praise the thoughtful choices they made to reinforce their ability to make informed decisions in the future.

RESOURCE:

1. [What Does Your College-Age Child Need From You?](#) offers concepts to support parents, families, and caregivers of older teens as they grapple with post-secondary decisions.



SECTION 3: BUILDING HOME-TO-SCHOOL CONNECTIONS

Establishing collaborative partnerships between educators and families can help create optimal conditions for all adults to come together to support student’s academic, social, and emotional skill development. As reflected in the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) framework, families and caregivers are essential to the implementation of high-quality social and emotional learning. The resources in this section are specifically designed to support parents, families, and caregivers in engaging with school staff across all grade levels.



STRATEGIES & RESOURCES

Better Understand SEL at School By Asking Thoughtful Questions

Parents, families, and caregivers are encouraged to ask questions, make suggestions, and partner with their child’s teachers as SEL is integrated into their daily routine. Asking specific and targeted questions about SEL can help you discuss your child’s social and emotional growth with school staff.

RESOURCE:

1. [Questions to Ask Schools](#) offers support for parents, families, and caregivers to discuss what their child’s school is doing to foster a safe and compassionate school community.

Establish a Positive Introduction with School Staff

This letter generator aims to assist parents, families, and caregivers in creating a positive introduction to their child’s new school or teacher. By establishing a strong parent-school connection from the start, schools, and families can lay the foundation for an effective partnership that provides the best possible support for student’s social and emotional well-being.

RESOURCES:

1. The [Dear Teacher Letter Online Tool](#) provides parents, families, and caregivers support for initiating discussions with their child’s new teacher or school staff member.
2. The template for [Crafting a Back-to-School Letter](#) assists parents, families, and caregivers in communicating their child’s interests and strengths to the school.

Prepare for Effective Family-Teacher Conferences

By fostering a collaborative relationship between parents, families, caregivers, and teachers, schools can tailor support for every student. This tool is designed to empower parents and caregivers as they prepare for family-teacher conferences and help them remain updated on their child’s social, emotional, and academic progress.

RESOURCES:

1. [Family-Teacher Conference Planning Tool](#) offers strategies to prepare parents, families, and caregivers for teacher-parent conferences and ways to gain information to gauge their child’s progress.
 2. [Tips to Prepare for Conferences](#) offers nine tips to optimize parent-school conferences.
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DC SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING WHEEL

Social and emotional learning (SEL) fosters safe and healthy learning environments by prioritizing students' well-being through authentic partnerships between schools, homes, and communities.



SELF-AWARENESS

Recognizes, understands and expresses emotions, strengths, values, and challenges, and develops positive self-identity by recognizing oneself as a lifelong learner.



SELF-MANAGEMENT

Manages and expresses emotions, sets and achieves personal and academic goals, and perseveres through challenges.



SOCIAL & CULTURAL AWARENESS

Empathizes with and respects others' diverse perspectives, abilities, and cultures using positive social and communication skills.



RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

Builds and maintains positive, respectful, and healthy relationships by listening, communicating, using perspective-taking skills, resolving conflict, and collaborating



DECISION-MAKING & AGENCY

Makes decisions and takes self-directed action to recognize and connect how decisions impact oneself and the community.

The DC SEL Wheel is adapted from the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

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