

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)



Climate Connection is a publication of the NYS Center for School Safety.

What is SEL?

The Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines social emotional learning (SEL) as “the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.” Research shows that SEL positively impacts a range of outcomes, including academic achievement, the development of social and emotional skills, and student engagement.

The adjacent image (Figure 1.1) from CASEL may be familiar to you. This presents the five Core Competencies of SEL. The surrounding rings represent the environments and settings in which SEL is used or implemented.

This issue of Climate Connection will focus on the connection between SEL and school climate and provide tangible skills and information for linking SEL to your daily activities.

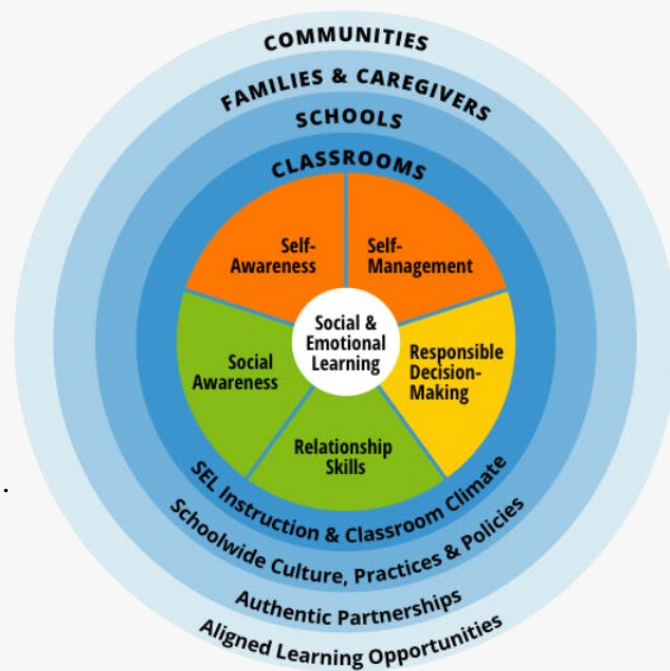


Figure 1.1. CASEL Framework

The Connection between SEL and School Climate



As educators, we know that social and emotional skills, for both youth *and* adults, can impact how we interact within the school setting. For students, this is displayed in the ability to navigate and cope with emotions during the school day, the level of engagement with academic tasks, and in the use of skills like attention, frustration tolerance, and motivation or perseverance.

As adults, we demonstrate our social and emotional skills by modeling stress management, practicing coping skills, or using effective conflict resolution strategies. Adult SEL directly impacts the quality and nature of teacher-student interactions, as well as the development of positive, supportive relationships. In turn, this affects the overall classroom and school climate.

To read more about the relationship between school climate and SEL check out this [research brief](#) from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

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Adult SEL

SEL isn't just for students. Adult SEL prepares educators with the skills they need to foster a prosocial environment and support the development of SEL skills in students.

When staff are stressed or burned out, this has a dramatic and direct effect on well-being, as well as the climate as a whole. In turn, it can become challenging to build positive and supportive relationships, model and teach SEL, and use proactive strategies for managing behavior.

To learn more about how stress impacts teachers in the classroom, read [this study](#). Then, head to the [CASEL](#) website to learn more about SEL for adults!

We can't pour from an empty cup. When we prioritize self-care, or engage in actions that focus on our physical, emotional, social, or professional health, we can enhance our own SEL skills.



SEL and Sleep

Sleep is an extremely overlooked but underutilized self-regulation tool. Sleep deprivation directly impacts our nervous system, circadian rhythms and other bodily systems. Learn more about the impacts of sleep [here](#) as well as information from the CDC detailing [how early school starts impact students](#).



Tips for Integrating SEL

Review

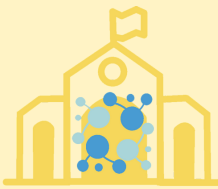
- What is our current approach to SEL at the school and/or district levels?
- How do our current SEL practices align with our vision for a positive climate?
- What systems (e.g. training, resources, processes) are in place to support the implementation of SEL?

Consider

- What action steps can build on our current strengths or success in the area of SEL?
- In what area(s) can we grow to improve SEL implementation? What are the SEL skills we want to focus on?
- How can we improve SEL implementation within the timeline and resources currently available?

Reflect

- How do we continue to make SEL a priority at the school and/or district levels?
- How can we support adult SEL, including resources for staff and caregivers?
- What outcomes do we want to see? Which improvements are most likely to help us reach our goal(s)?



CLIMATE CONNECTION

Information and strategies
linking Climate and School Safety.

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Simple 5-Minute SEL Focused Check-Ins



These are five simple ways to check-in with your students or colleagues across settings

- **Post-It Activity:** Write one word to describe how you are feeling today put it on the board or fold and put in a box (can be done anonymously).
- **Battery Life:** Ask, what percent battery life are you working with today? Show of hands or write on post-it notes.
- **What is Your Weather:** Ask, what is your weather? Have each person briefly share out what their weather is and why, i.e. sunny may mean feeling energized, rainy may mean feeling tired, etc.
- **Draw it Out:** Take one minute and draw a picture of something you are looking forward to in the next week, month, year, etc. Share out your drawings and explain.
- **Who Do You Feel Like:** Ask, what book or movie character do you feel like today and way? Share out as desired.

RESOURCES TO STRENGTHEN SEL UNDERSTANDING

RESOURCE



HOW CAN IT HELP?

[Customizable PowerPoint on the benefits of SEL and research for presentations \(CASEL\)](#)

Advocate for SEL instruction time to policy makers or the school community using this CASEL PowerPoint.

Compare SEL frameworks with this [comparison tool](#) from Harvard

Learn more about SEL Frameworks and delve deeper to understand your district's approach.

[Social Emotional Learning Research and Meta-analysis](#)

Explore what the research is saying about SEL and its effectiveness.

SEL Resources from the [NYS Education Department](#) including [Benchmarks](#) for voluntary implementation

The benchmarks present a structural starting point for district and school integration of SEL.