

Affirm the importance of social and emotional learning and resilience

Learning how to manage feelings and friendships and solve problems supports mental health and wellbeing.

What is social and emotional learning?

This module introduces and affirms the importance of social and emotional learning (SEL) and resilience – the ability to cope with challenges. It outlines the specific skills and aspects that make up SEL and looks at how developing these skills helps build resilience.

It also covers a range of everyday strategies educators can use to help foster these important skills in children and young people.

SEL refers to learning the values, knowledge and skills that help children and young people relate to others effectively and contribute positively to their environments. Children and young people who have developed these skills find it easier to manage their emotions, relate to others, make decisions, resolve conflict, and feel positive about themselves and the world around them. They're also likely to have enhanced motivation to engage and achieve.

What do you need to know about SEL?

From infancy, children are motivated to relate to other human beings and develop socially in the context of relationships.

However, a person's ability to understand others and consider their needs and views develops over time. Young children are naturally self-focused. As they get older, they learn that others may see things differently. Then, as their thinking skills develop, they're more able to understand another person's point of view and, finally, to appreciate multiple ways of looking at the same event or situation. Children and young people develop socially in the context of relationships. Warm, responsive and trusting relationships help them feel safe and secure to explore the world around them.

This module explores how you can affirm children and young people's SEL skills as an educator.

What do you need to know about resilience?

Resilience shares a close relationship with mental health because being able to bounce back from challenges or adversity is a significant protective factor that supports children and young people's mental health.

Resilience is not something a person is born with – it can develop and change over time and is best expressed on a continuum. Depending on their circumstances, people may have more or less resilience to draw on at any given time.

Children and young people develop resilience through individual, family, community and societal factors. Building a child's resilience involves both improving their skills and capabilities and improving the environments around them.

Supporting SEL and resilience in your learning community

SEL is an effective way to foster resilience and promote children and young people's mental health.

Children and young people benefit from having plenty of opportunities to learn and practise these skills in their everyday experiences. They'll develop these skills at different paces due to having different temperaments, skills, opportunities, experiences, and various risk and protective factors in their lives.

Your role is to make the most of opportunities to model, teach and support them to do so.

By completing the Affirm module, you will be able to:

- appreciate the interplay between social and emotional learning, resilience and mental health and wellbeing in children and young people
- understand how social and emotional learning and resilience develop
- apply everyday skills to support social and emotional learning and resilience in your learning community
- build on your ability to role model social and emotional skills and resilience.