

Key indicators for Well-being Index:

- optimism
- empathy
- prosocial behaviour
- self-esteem
- happiness
- sadness
- worries
- self-regulation
- responsible decision-making
- self-awareness
- perseverance
- assertiveness
- citizenship
- social responsibility

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the development of skills or competencies that help us “feel” and “positively relate to one another.” This learning can take place at home, in schools and in the community and will not only help promote children’s well-being and success in life now, but will also equip them with lifelong tools to foster well-being. On the MDI, social and emotional competencies are measured by asking children about their levels of optimism, empathy, prosocial behaviour, self-esteem, happiness, sadness, worries and self-regulation. For grade 7, the MDI also includes questions about responsible decision-making, self-awareness, perseverance, assertiveness, citizenship, and social responsibility.

research

In the short-term, SEL is linked to:

- Positive attitudes towards oneself, others and school
- Confidence, persistence and a sense of purpose
- Positive social behaviours with adults and peers
- Decreased behavioural issues and risky behaviour
- Increased school success

In the long-term, SEL is linked to:

- Better chance of high school graduation
- Readiness for post-secondary education
- Career success
- Positive family and work relationships
- Reduced criminal behaviour
- Better mental health
- Engaged citizenship

(see Weissberg, Durlak, Domitrovitch, & Gullotta, 2015).



SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A complete list of action ideas resources can be downloaded at discovermdi.ca/resources

at home

- Be a good listener. Invite your children to talk to you about their feelings without offering judgment or unsolicited advice.
- Strong emotional reactions from children require calm and caring responses rather than threats or punishments. Parental warmth helps children calm down so that they are better able to self-regulate, whereas trying to impose control on children’s behaviour impairs self-regulation. Allowing them to solve their own problems also promotes self-regulation.
- Practice self-care and self-kindness so you can be your best self with your children.
- Model gratitude for your children by regularly saying the things you are thankful for, such as nature, family, friends, and food.

in school

- Greet each student every day as they come into class so you can notice how they doing.
- Remember that SEL isn’t a program - it’s a way of classroom life. A classroom focused on SEL is one where teachers provide a safe environment for students, use instruction as a tool to develop working relationships between peers, increase engagement, and allows students to develop and practice using their social and emotional skills.
- Take part in a program to promote teacher and staff social and emotional well-being, such as CARE or SMART-in-Education
- Increase opportunities for parent-teacher interactions. Connecting with parents, and sharing with them what social and emotional skills are being taught in school will help emphasize the learning taking place. The more settings in a child’s life that promote SEL, the more opportunities the child will have to practice and develop SEL behaviours.

in the community

- Check in with kids each day to see how they are feeling. Try to recognize and help them name their specific feelings rather than a generalized state, such as irritated, distracted, or unmotivated instead of simply bored.
- Have children participate in creating after-school program agreements of how they would like the group to run including behaviour expectations and problem solving.
- Provide training for after-school staff on how to model social and emotional competencies.
- Give kids a break! Introduce stress management techniques, such as listening to calming music, progressive muscle relaxation, or breathing techniques.