

Portrait of a Social-Emotional Learner

We, in Boston, believe that every young person has the capacity to realize their full potential as a social-emotional learner. This document presents Boston's framework for social-emotional learning at the student-level, and outlines the key social-emotional skills that our city is committed to advancing. Educators, parents, mentors, and community leaders all have a role to play in supporting the development of skills that young people need to navigate school, college, work, and life. This document provides adults with a common language for social-emotional learning that works across settings, including school, after-school programs, home and community, and aligns to the city's broader educational agenda.

INTER-PERSONAL SKILLS

These skills help young people develop healthy, supportive relationships with peers and adults, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures, and make contributions to their community.



INTRA-PERSONAL SKILLS

These skills help young people recognize and manage their emotions, anticipate the impact of their behaviors on others, and take ownership over their actions.



APPLIED SKILLS

These skills help young people process information, assess situations and potential outcomes, and connect actions to future goals.

When young people **Connect**, using **Social Relationships** skills...

They work constructively and cooperatively with others, empathizing with and taking the perspective of peers, advocating for their views respectfully, understanding social and ethical norms for behavior, and sharing ideas clearly and compellingly. Research shows that these skills of social awareness, communication and teamwork are integral in developing **positive, supportive relationships with friends, classmates, and adults, and also lead to improved academic and job performance, improved social skills, and improved self-efficacy and problem-solving skills.**

When young people **Thrive**, using **Self-Awareness and Self-Management** skills...

They believe that their abilities can grow with effort, have confidence in their ability to accomplish an outcome or goal, and are able to manage their emotions, thoughts and behaviors as appropriate to different situations. This first requires an awareness of self – the recognition of their emotions, thoughts, motivations, strengths and weaknesses. Research shows that when young people have a growth mindset and high self-efficacy, and can self-regulate, these skills lead to **improved perseverance, reduced stress, improved academic performance, and positive social outcomes such as increased empathy and perspective taking.**

When young people **Achieve**, using **Decision Making** skills...

They engage in disciplined thinking that is rational, open-minded, and informed by evidence, consider consequences and alternatives, and evaluate information to reach a conclusion. They demonstrate imagination and originality and stay focused on their goals despite obstacles or distractions. Research shows that these skills of critical thinking, creativity and perseverance result in **improved academic achievement, greater workforce readiness, fewer career changes, and better work habits.**



READY FOR SUCCESS

Students who are social-emotional learners know that they are in control of their learning and know their effort counts. They are self-disciplined and able to access strategies and skills to achieve their personal goals. They use evidence to support rational decision making and demonstrate creativity to explore multiple solutions to a problem. They calibrate their emotions depending on the situation and understand that their actions have an impact on others. They know that communication and negotiation are vital to healthy relationships, and value the perspectives and ideas of others. By activating these skills, they can advocate for themselves and their peers, aligning their actions to be a force for good in their community.

OBSERVABLE BEHAVIORS

Context plays a critical role in shaping young people's development. Young people are both creators of and influenced by their experiences and social interactions, as well as broader factors like cultural values, linguistic norms, and the sociopolitical climate. Additionally, these skills may manifest in different ways depending on young people's developmental stages and multiple aspects of their identity. Despite these variations, researchers and practitioners have converged on a common set of indicators that can help adults identify when young people are acting as social-emotional learners.



INTER-PERSONAL SKILLS

These skills help young people develop healthy, supportive relationships with peers and adults, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures, and make contributions to their community.

When young people **Connect**, using **Social Relationships skills...**

Adults can look for the following indicators:

- Shows respect and consideration for peers, e.g. those who may differ by gender, age, race, or peer group
- Disagrees with or questions peers and adults in a respectful manner
- Recognizes when to compromise during disagreements or conflicts and when to advocate for themselves
- Articulates their point of view and also listens to different opinions during cooperative tasks and disagreements
- Stands up for others and for themselves
- Forms friendships with peers
- Shares interests and initiates interactions with adults
- Listens actively and can summarize key points
- Works well in pairs or groups on cooperative tasks
- Contributes ideas or information when in a group
- Communicates ideas or information to others effectively by presenting information in logical sequence with main points clearly articulated
- Asks and/or answers questions



Linkages: Developing positive relationships draws not only on social awareness, teamwork, and communication skills, but also upon **self-management** and **decision making** skills.



INTRA-PERSONAL SKILLS

These skills help young people recognize and manage their emotions, anticipate the impact of their behaviors on others, and take ownership over their actions.

When young people **Thrive**, using **Self-Awareness and Self-Management skills...**

Although some intra-personal skills aren't easily observed, adults can look for the following indicators:

- Maintains focus and attention on task
- Reflects, plans, and thinks ahead
- Shows confidence in their own abilities
- Considers the impact and consequences of their behaviors before acting or reacting to a situation
- Gains control or adjusts behavior as needed
- Works well independently
- Thinks before they speak
- Accepts when things don't go their way and seeks opportunities to try again and learn from their experiences



Linkages: Young people develop self-awareness through reflection and self-assessment, and apply their self-management skills when **achieving tasks** or **connecting with others**.



APPLIED SKILLS

These skills help young people process information, assess situations and potential outcomes, and connect actions to future goals.

When young people **Achieve**, using **Decision Making skills...**

Adults can look for the following indicators:

- Identifies connections and analyzes relationships between ideas or concepts
- Generates many possible solutions to a problem and looks at situations in different ways
- Considers perspectives other than their own and identifies their own biases
- Explores different solutions when encountering difficulties
- Shows originality when solving problems
- Asks questions and demonstrates curiosity
- Provides evidence/examples to support conclusions
- Sets goals and identifies steps to achieve goals
- Persists in completing a task or goal, even when challenges arise or it takes longer than anticipated
- Connects a current task to future goals
- Tries again when fails at doing something



Linkages: Decision making skills are also critical to **navigating relationships and social situations**. To achieve tasks or goals, young people often draw on their **self-awareness and self-management** skills.