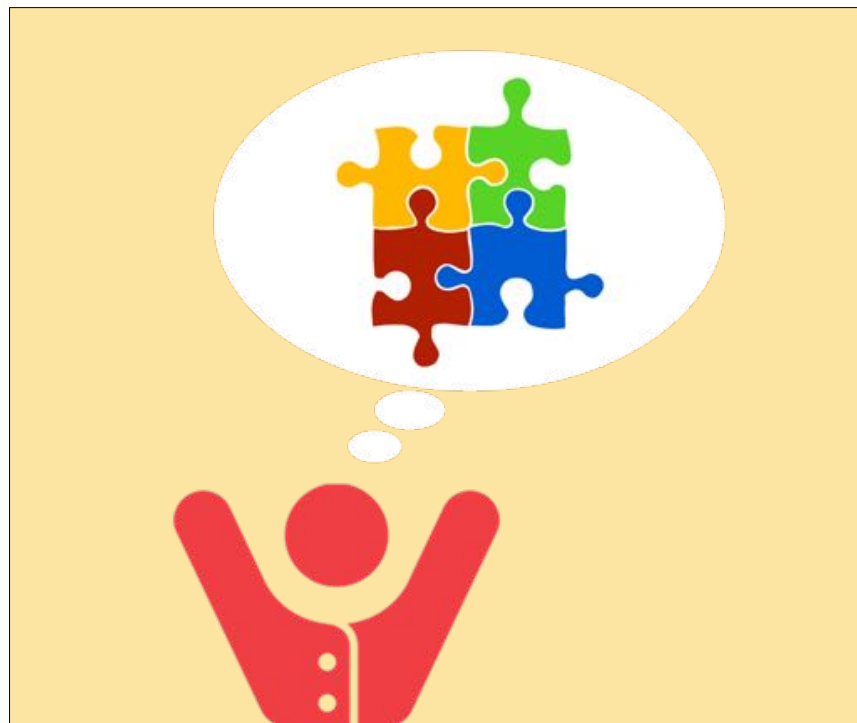


PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER



Steps For Integrating Social-Emotional And Character Skills



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All children and youth need social-emotional and character skills in order to thrive in school, work, and life. (By “skills”, we are referring to actual skills as well as attitudes and beliefs.) A broad body of research substantiates that academic ability works in tandem with social-emotional and character skills. We want our youth, as they reach adulthood, to be well prepared for productive careers and as socially conscious, engaged citizens.

Through their design and structure, high-quality expanded learning programs provide valuable opportunities for children and youth to develop social-emotional and character skills. (By programs, we are referring to both the youth program staff as well as the larger parent organization.) These skills are both “taught” (through program structures and activities) and “caught” (by exposing youth to the program culture and the modeling/behavior of program staff). Below we suggest a number of intentional steps to promote these skills in expanded learning programs. It is important to note that promoting these skills is an important part of promoting a quality program.

STEPS FOR INTEGRATING SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL AND CHARACTER SKILLS



1. Build Awareness and Understanding

To begin, organizational and program staff must have an understanding of what is meant by social-emotional and character skills. We suggest that everyone review *Student Success Comes Full Circle* at this link: <http://bit.ly/FullCircle360-365>. It details six essential social-emotional and character skills that expanded learning programs are best suited to promote with young people. These are skills youth need to be successful in school, work, and life.

2. Name Skills

Can leaders and staff specifically name the social-emotional and character skills that are important to the program – skills that the program is committed to? How important are these skills and to whom are they important? For example, is self-management *very important* to staff and leaders of the program as well as youth and their parents?

EXPANDED LEARNING 360°/365 FOUNDATIONAL AREAS:



I AM

Self-awareness
Self-management



I BELONG

Social awareness
Interpersonal skills



I CAN

Self-efficacy
Growth mindset

3. Explore Them

Can leaders and staff write down three things a young person would say or do if they were practicing these skills? Are these skills best “taught” or “caught”? For example, a younger youth might demonstrate self-management by waiting patiently for their turn on the play structure. This skill might be “taught” by playing a game like *Mother May I* where youth have to wait their turn, and ask before they can move. An older youth might show their ability to self-manage by solving their own problems. This can be “taught” using restorative justice practices or “caught” by watching program staff work out differences in a calm and respectful manner.

4. Build on What You Do

You are probably already doing things in your program that support social-emotional and character skills. Can leaders and staff name program activities and practices that support specific social-emotional and character skills? For example, existing program activities and practices could include Restorative Justice Practices, Cool Down Spaces, and A “Talk it Out” Tool.

5. Align with Quality Standards

Several organizations and state networks have developed quality standards for expanded learning programs. (See CA Quality Standards for Expanded Learning Programs at <http://bit.ly/CalQSELP>). It is important to note that promoting social-emotional and character skills is not separate and apart from quality standards. Rather, this work supports program quality standards. For example, how do efforts to create a safe and supportive environment involve social-emotional and character skills?

6. Collect and Use Data

Many programs collect data to provide feedback regarding program quality. These can be observations, reflections, or self-assessments completed by program staff. Data can also be collected from youth participants, their families, and/or other stakeholders and partners. What does your data on program quality tell you about the state of social-emotional and character skills in your program? You can access a social-emotional and character staff self-reflection tool at <http://bit.ly/SECtool>.



7. Plan and Improve

If your program can improve how it promotes social-emotional and character skills, make a plan for improvement. Use your data and be specific as possible about what you will change. Remember that skills can be “taught” or “caught”.

In developing an improvement plan, think about your program culture, your program practices, and activities.

Think also about how these skills that you deem important are reflected in your program vision and mission statements, hiring practices, and professional development plans for your program and larger organization. Institute intentional changes and determine if they make a difference. Improvement efforts can be supported by training and/or facilitation, which are services offered by the Expanded Learning 360°/365 project and other organizations.

RESOURCES

As a result of growing interest in the promotion of social-emotional and character skills, there are a number of websites that program leaders can explore to access articles, research, measurement and self-assessment tools, as well as videos and training opportunities. Below we list just a few.

[Expanded Learning 360°/365: Skills for Success in School, Work, and Life](http://www.expandedlearning360-365.com/) - Check out the low-cost or no-cost training and support on how to integrate these social-emotional and character skills into your program. You can also access an online self-reflection tool. Visit <http://www.expandedlearning360-365.com/>.

[Mindset Works](https://www.mindsetworks.com/) - Mindset Works is a global leader in growth mindset training for educators and students, leveraging the pioneering research of co-founders Carol Dweck and Lisa Blackwell. You can access a number of videos and training opportunities by visiting <https://www.mindsetworks.com/>.

[CASEL](http://www.casel.org/) - The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is the world’s leading organization advancing the practice of integrated academic, social, and emotional learning for all children in preschool through high school. Visit <http://www.casel.org/>.

[University of Minnesota, Extension](http://www.extension.umn.edu/youth/research/sel/index.html) –The University of Minnesota convenes youth workers and policy makers, delivers trainings, and researches social and emotional learning and its contribution to closing the achievement and opportunity gaps. Visit <http://www.extension.umn.edu/youth/research/sel/index.html>.

[Character.org](http://character.org/) - Character.org is a nonprofit that works with schools, districts and organizations to develop a culture where young people thrive both academically and ethically. They provide the tools, methods and strategies that educators, parents, community members and workplaces need to create caring and productive environments. Visit <http://character.org/>.

[Edutopia](https://www.edutopia.org/) - Edutopia is a comprehensive website and online community that increases knowledge, sharing, and adoption of what works in K-12 education. They emphasize core strategies: social-emotional learning, growth mindsets, character skills, and other areas. They offer excellent articles and videos on these topics. Visit <https://www.edutopia.org/>.

[Transforming Education](https://www.transformingeducation.org/) - TransformEd supports educators and education systems in equipping students with the Mindsets, Essential Skills, and Habits they need to succeed in college, career, and life. Visit https://www.transformingeducation.org.

[Preparing Youth to Thrive: Promising Practices in Social & Emotional Learning](https://www.selpractices.org/) – This website serves as an excellent clearinghouse for resources including reports and toolkits related to social-emotional learning and character skills. Visit <https://www.selpractices.org/>.



About Expanded Learning 360°/365 - Expanded Learning: 360°/365 is a collaborative project dedicated to promoting the development of critical skills beyond academics that research has identified as essential to young people’s success in school, work, and life. Collaborators include ASAPconnect, CalSAC, Learning in Afterschool & Summer, Partnership for Children & Youth, and Temescal Associates.



About Temescal Associates - Temescal Associates is dedicated to building the capacity of leaders and organizations in education and youth development who are serious about improving the lives of young people. They offer resources as well as training opportunities for expanded learning programs. Visit www.temescalassociates.com.