

Dear Parents and Families,

Between juggling work, helping your children with their schoolwork, and getting through your normal daily routines, we know your plates are full.

One thing that can help is [social and emotional learning \(SEL\)](#). We've been working with your children to help them develop these important skills and we want to share a little more about why they're so important — for you and your child!

SEL can help your children:

- Manage stress
- Improve relationships with family, friends, and peers
- Find healthy ways to communicate their needs
- Increase social engagement
- Promote the well-being of themselves and others
- Increase their academic success

These skills will be particularly important during winter break when stress and anxiety can run high. We encourage you to continue helping your children build their social-emotional skills at home. I've included some SEL activities that will be fun for the whole family.

Have a safe and happy winter break!



What is SEL?

Social-emotional skills are important for both children and adults to build and maintain healthy relationships and to develop a strong and balanced sense of self. These skills are vital in school and the workplace.

[Click to learn more about SEL](#)

Fun Holiday-Themed SEL Activities

There are many ways to build social-emotional skills at home. Here are three activities to help your children learn social awareness and celebrate diversity.

Nothing brings people together like food! A sweet way to help your children learn about different holiday traditions is by baking holiday treats from different cultures. Try out the German Christmas cookie [lebkuchen](#), traditional Kwanzaa [sweet potato pie](#), Winter Solstice [tang yuan](#) (sweet dumplings), or Hanukkah [rugelach cookies](#).

Buone Feste! This is how you say “Happy Holidays!” in Italian. As a family, learn how to say season’s greetings in [different languages](#) as a way to celebrate diversity — and a fun way to spread good tidings to all.

Reading books about different winter or holiday traditions can be a great way to spend quality time with each other while learning about other cultures. Start with [this list](#) of books that celebrate diverse holidays and traditions (helpful tip: many of these titles can be found at your local library).

Promoting SEL at Home Activities

Here are three *Promoting SEL at Home* resources, created by Aperture Education, that will be particularly helpful during the holidays and winter break.

Optimistic Thinking: The belief that things will turn out well is what motivates effort and encourages us to keep trying. [These activities](#) teach children to reframe losses as opportunities for growth. ([Click](#) for Spanish version).

Relationship Skills: Relationship skills are essential to our success, productivity, and happiness. In [these activities](#) children learn to recognize and build strong, healthy relationships. We’ve also included some relationship tips for parents and caregivers. ([Click](#) for Spanish version).

Self-Management: Both children and adults need to learn how to control their emotions so we can calm down when we are angry, upset, or scared. We also need to know how to “psych ourselves up” to get the energy needed to tackle our schoolwork, chores, or jobs. [These activities](#) teach adults and children how to get through the day’s challenges. ([Click](#) for Spanish version).

These are just a few ways children can build social-emotional skills at home. Thank you for helping your children develop these important skills! Strong social-emotional skills will help them succeed in school and in life.