

A photograph of a classroom with a large yellow circle overlaying the text. The classroom features wooden desks and chairs, a map of the United States on a wall, a portrait of Benjamin Franklin, and a chalkboard. The text is centered within the yellow circle.

PRIORITIES IN
**SOCIAL EMOTIONAL
LEARNING**

By
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THREE IDENTIFIED PRIORITIES IN HOUSTON, TEXAS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & SUPPORT

Developing teacher
competence in addressing
students' developmental
needs

MENTORSHIP

Promoting social emotional
skills by enhancing youth's
social relationships and
emotional well-being

MEASUREMENTS & EVALUATION

Exploring high-quality
social emotional learning
(SEL) assessments that can
serve a range of purposes


An overhead view of a wooden conference table with several people working. There are two computer monitors, keyboards, mice, coffee cups, and various documents and folders on the table. The scene is overlaid with a diamond-shaped grid pattern. A large orange semi-circle is at the bottom, containing the title and text.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & SUPPORT

Although the importance of teachers in fostering the growth of children's social and emotional skills is well-established, adequate teacher training and support for developing students' social-emotional competencies are not always provided (Waajid, Garner, and Owen, 2013).



WHAT DOES RESEARCH SHOW?

- Teachers who participated in a resilience program for themselves and received training to teach social-emotional skills have shown to help students increase their self-management skills (Iizuka, Barrett, Gillies, Cook, & Marinovic, 2014).
 - Social-emotional skills training for teachers themselves had a significant effect on increasing teacher social-emotional skills, which correlated positively with effective teaching (Karimzadeh, Salehi, Embi, Nasiri, & Shojae, 2014).
 - In order to attain the best results in the classroom, teachers must receive continual training, professional development, and support to advance their skills and apply them consistently (Cherniss, 1998).
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MENTORSHIP

Mentoring supports and benefits one or more areas of the mentee's development (DuBois & Karker, 2014). Relationships with peers, parents, and other adults are improved, and mentees exhibit social and emotional growth and overall success in life.



WHAT DOES RESEARCH SHOW?

- Studies have linked mentoring programs (DuBois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002; DuBois, Portillo, Rhodes, Silverthorn, & Valentine, 2011) and afterschool programs (Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010) to advancements in social and emotional skills and knowledge.
- Self-control, social competence, problem-solving ability, goal-setting/pursuit, perseverance, and career exploration are examples of measurable skills that are suitable for a mentoring program to impart upon youth and evidence both long and short-term success in multiple areas such as mental health, behavior, and academics (National Mentoring Resource Center, n.d.).



MEASUREMENTS & EVALUATION

While the push to develop young people's SEL has garnered much attention, there is still a shortage in high-quality SEL assessments that can serve a range of purposes (McKown, 2017). In addition to research-based curricula and instruction, a solid SEL program should have defined goals and standards, tools for targeted and universal screening, and progress monitoring (Denham, 2016).

WHAT DOES RESEARCH SHOW?


Devereaux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA)

- DESSA is a behavior rating scale that allows parents and/or teachers to assess K-8 students' social-emotional competencies in eight areas: optimistic thinking, goal-directed behavior, personal responsibility, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (Haggerty, Elgin, & Woolley, 2011; Denham, 2016).
- DESSA can be used to evaluate SEL outcomes at the child, class, grade, school, and district levels (Haggerty et al., 2011).
- DESSA offers an online option where web-based scoring and interpretation are available (Denham, 2016).

WHAT DOES RESEARCH SHOW?

Social-Emotional Assets and Resilience Scale (SEARS)

- SEARS assesses the positive social-emotional attributes at of K-12 students, parents, and teachers.
- SEARS studies SEL from the lens of a four-core competency framework which includes responsibility, social competence, empathy, and self-regulation (Denham, 2016).
- SEARS measures provide valuable information for intervention planning and strategies and can also be used to create student profiles for progress monitoring.

A photograph of a business meeting with several people sitting around a wooden table. One person is holding a tablet. A large yellow circle is overlaid on the center of the image, containing text.

While DESSA and SEARS both fulfill many important criteria for effective SEL assessment, additional exemplary quality SEL assessments in education include The Social Skills Improvement System Rating Scales and The Behavioral and Emotional Rating Scale (BERS).



THREE WAYS TO GET STARTED

SEL PD

Designate at least one staff member to prioritize and provide teachers with continual SEL training, professional development, and support to advance their SEL skills and apply them consistently.

MENTORS

Create or revise your mentorship program to include goals, objectives, and activities focused on promoting SEL development.

ASSESSMENT

In addition to incorporating research-based SEL curricula and instruction, explore and select a high-quality SEL assessment tool to evaluate and monitor students' progress.



We can help!

**HCDE RESEARCH
AND EVALUATION
INSTITUTE**

*Contact us for any planning,
implementation, or evaluation needs.*

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