

# Coaching & Mentoring CONNECTIONS

ISSUE 7 • December 2025

*Our goal is to provide you with practical, inspiring resources to support your work and professional growth in the early learning and child care field.*

Welcome to the December edition of the ECCDC Coaching and Mentoring newsletter. Winston Churchill (n.d.) once said “*Success is not final; failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts.*” In early learning and child care we have been shifting our lens on how we view failure from a negative thing to a learning experience and supporting children’s Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is one way that children can learn to embrace opportunities for growth. In recent years there has been a lot of talk about a growth mindset relating to adults. Carol Dweck’s research highlights that a growth mindset is innate in children, which we see as young children try again and again to problem solve, which may not be a benefit of SEL that easily springs to mind. In this edition of the coaching and mentoring connections newsletter we will be exploring how educators can support the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) of young children within their early learning and child care programing and how educators can take a whole program approach to SEL.

## Spotlight on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)



Along with families, early childhood educators play a significant role in supporting the social and emotional development of young children, setting the foundation for their social and emotional development. In the past, school readiness was thought of in terms of children knowing their ABCs, 1-2-3s, colours, and so on, but now we are reframing school readiness and thinking of school readiness in terms of whole child readiness for school including social-emotional, attentional, and cognitive skills. By having SEL interwoven - rather than seeing it as an extra - within an early learning and child care program it can go a long way to getting children 'ready' for school and future life.

There is much research into the impact of SEL programs and many evidence-based programs are available. One recognized framework which is in use in elementary schools is CASEL. To find out more about the CASEL framework [click here](#).



SEL 101: Core competencies and skills.

## Supporting Social Emotional Learning in Early Learning and Child Care by Emma Coffey, Summer Intern with the ECCDC

### What is Social and Emotional Learning?

SEL helps children develop essential life skills like empathy, kindness, emotional regulation, and responsible decision-making. Embedding Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) into daily routines lays a foundation for well-being and lifelong success (Alberta.ca, n.d.; Schultz et al., 2011).

### Tips and Strategies for Educators

#### Explicit instruction in SEL skills

- Integrate SEL skills such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision-making, etc. into the daily curriculum.

#### Model positive behaviours

- Demonstrate empathy, active listening, and effective communication in your interactions with children.
- Show how to manage emotions and solve conflicts calmly (Falco, 2023).

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## Create a supportive environment

- Foster a classroom environment that is inclusive, respectful, and encouraging.
- Encourage positive peer interactions and group activities that encourage collaboration and mutual respect.

## The use of visual aids and tools

- Include charts, emotion/feeling cards, and books that illustrate different emotions and appropriate responses.
- Display posters that outline steps for problem-solving and emotion management (Ouillette, 2024).

## Integrate SEL into everyday activities

- Include SEL principles in everyday classroom activities, routines, and lessons.
- Use teachable moments to support SEL skills throughout the day.

## Provide practice opportunities

- Give children opportunities to practice SEL skills through role-playing, group discussions, and collaborative games.
- Encourage children to reflect on their experiences and share their feelings with each other.

## Resources for Families

### Books and literature

- Provide families with a list of books that focus on SEL themes such as empathy, kindness, and emotional regulation.
- Additionally, share simple activities that families can do at home to reinforce SEL skills.

### Communication tips

- Offer approaches on how families can talk to their children about emotions and social interactions.
- Encourage families to model SEL skills like active listening and empathy at home.

## Engaging Families in SEL

### Family-Educator meetings/check-ins

- Use family-educator meetings/check-ins to discuss the importance of SEL and how it is being implemented within the classroom.
- Keeping families in the loop: Provide families with specific examples of their child's progress and areas for growth in SEL.



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## Family workshops

- Organize workshops or informational sessions for families to learn about SEL and its advantages.
- Offer practical strategies that families can use at home to help support their child's social and emotional development.

## Regular Communication

Maintain regular communication with families through emails, apps, social media or program websites to share SEL tips, success stories, and upcoming events.

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## References

Falco, L. (2023, February 17). *Social-emotional learning*. Learning A-Z.

<https://www.learninga-z.com/site/resources/breakroom-blog/fostering-social-emotional-learning>

Government of Alberta, (n.d.). *Social-emotional learning*. Alberta.ca. (n.d.).

<https://www.alberta.ca/social-emotional-learning>

Ouillette, R. (2024, July). *Strengthening executive function builds social-emotional competence in Young Learners*.

Community Playthings. <https://www.communityplaythings.com/resources/articles/strengthening-executive-function-builds-social-emotional-competence-in-young-learners>

Schultz, B.L., Richardson, R.C., Barber, C.R., & Wilcox, D. (2011). *A preschool pilot study of connecting with others: Lessons for teaching social and emotional competence*.

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## ECCDC Blog

If you would like to find out more about supporting social-emotional learning, check out these ECCDC resources.



[Click here](#) to read ***Navigating Challenging Behaviour with Empathy: Supporting Children's Social and Emotional Development***

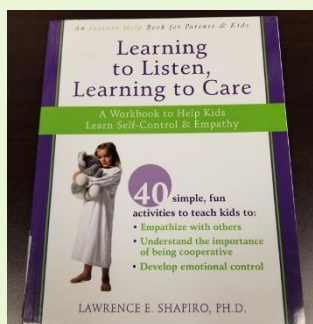
[Click here](#) to read ***Exploring Emotions with Children: Supporting Children in Recognizing, Regulating and Communicating Their Feelings***

[Click here](#) to read ***Calming the Chaos - Strategies to Invite a Sense of Calm and Peace Within Your Early Learning Program***

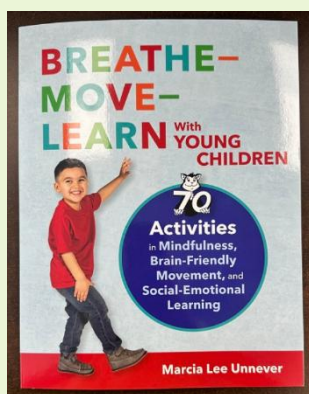
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## SEL Books and Resources

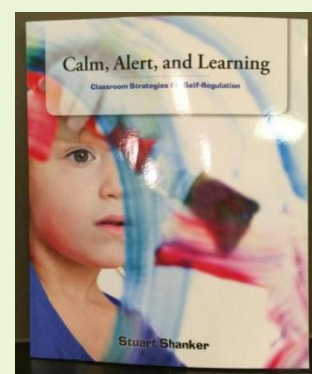
The ECCDC has many books and resources available to borrow from the ECCDC resource lending library. [Click here](#) to search the catalogue for resources to borrow or to purchase from ECCDC's E-Store, [click here](#).



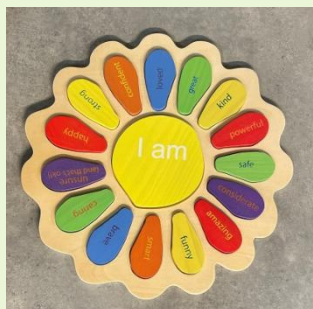
Learning to Listen,  
Learning to Care - A  
Workbook to Help Kids  
Learn Self-Control &  
Empathy



Breathe-Move-Learn with  
Young Children: 70  
Activities in Mindfulness,  
Brain-Friendly Movement,  
and Social-Emotional  
Learning



Calm, Alert and  
Learning - Classroom  
Strategies for Self-  
Regulation



Game In A Bag - I Am  
Me Puzzle



Getting Along With  
Others: Encouraging  
Social Skills with Young  
Children



Getting Along with  
Others: Enhancing Self-  
Esteem & Confidence  
for Schoolagers (Gr. K-  
2)



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## Resource Delivery Service

If you're an ECCDC member located in Niagara, you can take advantage of our free resource delivery service. We'll bring materials right to your program! To learn more or to arrange a delivery, please contact the ECCDC at 905.646.7311 ext. 304 or [email](#) us.



## Professional Development and Networking Opportunities

Esteem has sessions, series, and communities of practice being offered from fall 2025 to fall 2026! [Click here](#) to view esteem. To visit ECCDC's registration page, [click here](#). Below are some sessions being offered by ECCDC's Coaching & Mentoring team.

## Additional Resources to support Social and Emotional Learning



RAK has free resources that preschool, schools, families, and workplaces can access. – [click here](#)



Harmony PreK - 6th grade – [click here](#)  
Harmony out of school time – [click here](#)



Everything ECE Podcast: Social Emotional Learning Starts with Us with Prerna Richards [click here](#)

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Community Playthings Article Strengthening Executive Function Builds Social-Emotional Competence in Young Learners

## Focus on the Coaching and Mentoring team

Who says play is just for children? In our recent customized session for Fort Erie Community Preschool - Crescent Park, educators had the chance to “Mess About” with the materials themselves. Experimenting, exploring, and rediscovering the joy of hands-on learning. This playful process opened up new ideas for how environments and materials can be intentionally designed to inspire curiosity, collaboration, and creativity.



We began our morning by exploring the basics of environments, reflecting on how space, materials, and intentional design support both children and educators. In the afternoon, we put those ideas into practice. Educators rolled up their sleeves, moving materials around, experimenting with layouts, reimagining spaces, and collaborating with one another.

The ECCDC Coaching and Mentoring team offers customized professional development and environmental supports to early learning and child care programs across Ontario. With a fun, hands-on, and collaborative approach, our team supports programs with professional learning, environmental design, curriculum, and pedagogical guidance.

Find out more about our Coaching and Mentoring supports by [clicking here](#) then clicking on the coaching and mentoring tab.



## Of Interest



- Devereux Center for Resilient Children Blog: Understanding Temperament in Infants and Toddlers: [click here](#)
- The Play Based Learning Podcast; Bridging Play-Based Learning with Anti-Bias: [click here](#)
- Ontario Collaboration for Better Child Care Roadmap to Universal Child Care in Ontario 2nd edition: [click here](#)

## Coming Soon

Please join us for the December ECCDC podcast when Sarah McVanel, of Greatness Magnified, will be rejoining us for conversations around practices for staying grounded in remembering our greatness.

The ECCDC podcast is available on [Spotify](#) and [Apple](#) Podcasts! Stay tuned - you won't want to miss these insightful conversations. [Click here](#) to listen to other ECCDC Podcasts

## Educator Well Being through Yoga or Stretching

This month's Mindful experience to support educator well-being is focused on the practice of yoga or stretching. This activity isn't just about enhancing physical flexibility or strength; it's a holistic approach to harmonizing the body and mind, encouraging a state of relaxation and mindfulness.

### The Benefits of Yoga and Stretching

Yoga combines physical postures, controlled breathing, and meditation, offering a complete mind-body workout. Regular practice can reduce stress, improve balance and flexibility, enhance strength, and promote mental clarity. Stretching, on the other hand, helps release muscle tension, improves posture, and can be a great way to unwind after long periods of sitting or standing.



### Starting Your Practice

**Choose Your Style:** There are various yoga styles to explore, from gentle Hatha yoga, perfect for beginners, to more dynamic Vinyasa or Ashtanga. For stretching, you might focus on basic stretches or explore flexibility-enhancing routines.

**Create a Comfortable Space:** Find a quiet area where you can practice without interruption. A yoga mat and comfortable clothing can enhance your experience.

**Incorporate Mindful Breathing:** Whether practicing yoga or stretching, pay attention to your breath. Let your breath guide your movement, helping to create a meditative and introspective state.

**Listen to Your Body:** Always respect your body's limits. Yoga and stretching should never cause pain. It's about finding balance and comfort in each pose or stretch.

### Making It Accessible

If attending a yoga class isn't feasible, there are plenty of online resources, apps, and videos to guide you through sequences at home. The key is to make it accessible and enjoyable for yourself.



# Coaching & Mentoring CONNECTIONS

## **Yoga and Stretching as Mindful Practices**

Both yoga and stretching can be powerful mindful practices. They encourage you to be present in the moment, focusing on how each movement feels in your body. This awareness brings a sense of calm and centeredness that can benefit your entire day.

Incorporating yoga or stretching into your Mindful routine offers a perfect blend of physical activity and mental relaxation, setting a peaceful and balanced tone for the week ahead.