

# Counseling Corner

*Whiteford Elementary School*



## Incorporating SEL Skills at Home During Summer Break

Summer break doesn't mean that your child has to stop growing their social emotional skills! In fact, there are so many activities children can partake in throughout the summer that can help them grow and strengthen these skills when they aren't as focused on academic work. SEL encompasses 5 core competencies (self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making) that provide ample opportunities for learners to practice any time of the year!

## Ideas to Integrate SEL into Your Summer Learning Routine

### Create Positive Affirmation Art

Starting the day with a positive affirmation can make such a difference in children's lives. Create positive affirmation art, either in the form of sidewalk art, creating a colorful poster, or making positive affirmation cards to read aloud each morning!

*I can do this*

### Complete Monthly Challenges

Many kids love the idea of a challenge. Giving children a challenge to complete in a given time frame allows them to focus their attention on something specific and helps grow a certain set of skills at once! Some FREE challenges include a [coping skills challenge](#) and a [kindness challenge](#). Click the links to learn more!

### Use Outdoor Time to Your Advantage

Spending time outside can be beneficial for a variety of reasons! Practice grounding, mindfulness, and attention by going on a nature hunt. You can also encourage unstructured play to enhance your learner's confidence, creativity, independence, and problem-solving skills!

### Explore Calm Down Kits

Children need adult support to learn to control their feelings. They also need space and time to learn what works for them and what doesn't. Summer break is the perfect time to allow children to explore this. Create a calm down corner full of cozy pillows, blankets, and stuffed animals, and incorporate a kit that contains items that can help children calm down. You may consider adding books, stress balls, Play-Doh, sand timers, or sensory bottles to the kit. Have a discussion with your student about which tools work best!

### Read, Read, Read!

Practice reading while simultaneously developing social emotional skills! All you have to do is read a story and discuss the relevant SEL skill. Some fan favorites include "I Like Me!" by Nancy Carlson, "In My Heart: A Book of Feelings" by Jo Witek, "Interrupting Chicken" by David Ezra Stein, and "The Invisible String" by Trudy Ludwig. You can also simply Google "children's stories to develop SEL skills" for many, many more options!

### Incorporate Movement Breaks

Movement can help build important SEL skills, like teamwork, good sportsmanship, and perseverance. You can incorporate any type of physical activity, such as sports, walks, bike rides, or yoga, into your daily routine! As an additional benefit, relaxing movement breaks, like yoga, help children develop self-control and focus, as well.

### Utilize a Journal

Expressing emotions through the use of a journal is a wonderful way to get children thinking about how they're feeling and why. Visit my Schoology page's "Resources" section to find a list of journal prompts. There are several social emotional learning journals available for purchase online, as well!

### Write Stories

Provide an SEL topic and ask your learner to write their own story! Examples include kindness in friendships, honesty, making positive choices, self-esteem, and growth mindset. This can help build their relationship skills!

