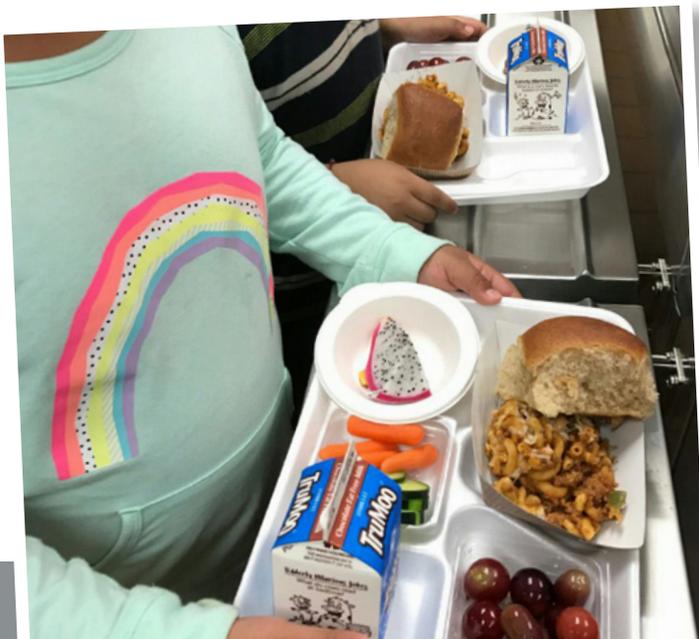




MAKING THE CONNECTION

Social Emotional Learning and Nutrition

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is a continuous learning process that plays a role in every aspect of a healthy, happy life. It is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2019). More often than not, our lessons and activities already have social emotional learning built into them. Instead of thinking of SEL as a secondary topic, find intention behind the activities you're already implementing and integrate opportunities for children to develop these competencies.



Self-Awareness

The ability to identify one's strengths and limitations and to maintain a well-grounded sense of confidence, efficacy, and emotional awareness.

Self-Management

The ability to effectively manage stress and impulses through self-discipline and goal-setting.

Social Awareness

The ability to understand various perspectives of others and one's interaction with diverse communities.

Relationship Skills

The ability to communicate, cooperate, and negotiate in socially acceptable methods with others in social situations.

Responsible Decision Making

The ability to utilize ethical standards and social cues while making thoughtful decisions about behavior and social interactions.

ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS 

Nutrition Strategy	Example	Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Competency Impacts
Healthy Celebrations and Rewards	Use holidays, birthdays, and other celebrations as opportunities to begin a conversation around culinary variances across different cultures. Encourage students to bring in foods that represent their heritage or family traditions. If you yourself are rewarding the class as a whole, bring in a healthy snack with a corresponding lesson around it's cultural roots and engage students in dialogue among their peers.	Social Awareness Self-Awareness Responsible Decision Making Relationship Skills
Smarter Lunchrooms and Nutrition Environment	Emphasize the cafeteria as a space for social interaction and healthy ways to recharge. Utilize salad bars and other meal choices as ways to promote goal setting for trying new foods and conscious decision making.	Responsible Decision Making Relationship Skills Self-Management
Healthy Food Taste Testing	Host a taste test to encourage children to try new healthy foods. Healthy food taste tests can serve as perfect opportunities to talk about our own personal likes and dislikes and also provides a great space to discuss culinary roots across different cultures.	Relationship Skills Social Awareness Self-Awareness Responsible Decision Making
Nutrition Education	Explore the Mind-Body Connection and how food makes us feel when we eat healthy foods versus when we don't. Help students reflect on their perspectives around nutrition to develop the skills needed to manage impulse control, prevent extremes and set goals.	Self-Management Responsible Decision Making
School Gardens	Get creative and hold a yoga session or build a sensory meditation walk in your school garden! Discuss the interconnectedness of body, mind, nature, and food as it pertains to growing food in the same place as practicing mindfulness and self-reflection.	Self-Awareness Social Awareness Responsible Decision Making
Healthy Fundraising	Engage the entire community in a healthy fundraiser that includes an active social event. Try hosting a healthy cooking class for families and community members. Have each participant pay a small fee for an opportunity to learn and cook a new healthy recipe together while also building new relationships within the community.	Relationship Skills Social- Awareness
Healthy Cooking Clubs and Classes	Have students work together in groups to support them in developing skills such as teamwork and problem-solving during cooking lessons. Teach about cooking as a method of stress management, social engagement, or cultural understanding.	Social Awareness Relationship Skills Self-Management
Healthy Snacking	During snack time, teach a mini-lesson on responsible decision making when it comes to healthy snacks. Open a discussion with students about how they feel both physically and emotionally when they become both hungry or full.	Self-Awareness Responsible Decision Making
Water Access	Create a method for tracking students' water intake. Explore goal setting for water consumption and self-awareness for when our body needs water.	Self-Awareness Responsible Decision Making Self-Management

Tips

- Try taking your snack time outside! Nothing clears the mind like a nice picnic. Incorporating snack time into your school day allows for children to refuel their bodies while also providing as a break from standard lessons.
- Involving children in grocery shopping and cooking meals can inspire knowledge of valuable life skills through cooking and nutrition while providing opportunities to spend time together at the same time!
- Talk to parents and family members about the connection between nutrition and social emotional learning, and share tips that they can use at home to reinforce these skills.



CONVERSATION STARTERS

- Have a conversation with your students about how they feel after eating certain foods. This is what we call the “mind-body connection”. Encourage them to pay attention to changes in energy and mood depending on what they eat for a snack or any other meal.
- Talk to students and their families about the importance of eating a healthy breakfast and ask students to share examples of some of their favorite breakfast foods. Not so healthy items seeming to be more popular? Brainstorm healthy, yummy alternatives or host a breakfast taste test with the community.



Helpful resources

The CASEL Guide to Schoolwide Social Emotional Learning: <https://schoolguide.casel.org>

Video: SEL 101 for Parents: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2d0da6BZWA>

SEL 101 for Parents (Spanish): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xz_aCbDI9uk&t=4s

Aperture Education Webinars on Demand: <http://info.apertureed.com/archived-webinars>



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