

Our Time

Conversation starters, activities and games to support social and emotional learning at home



Introduction

This resource aims to provide simple and quick activities that students can do with their families to practice and reflect on their social, emotional and relationships skills.

It helps to extend and reinforce the competencies students are learning as part of the Resilience, Rights, and Respectful Relationships program.



What is social and emotional learning?

Apart from teaching academic skills, schools also focus on building students' resilience, wellbeing and positive social attitudes. Social and emotional learning teaches students how to manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, show empathy for others, maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions.

Students with well-developed social and emotional skills have a high level of self-worth and know how they can use their strengths to achieve their goals. They can evaluate choices and make responsible decisions. On a social level, they can play and solve problems collaboratively. They are able to form healthy relationships and can relate to others in a caring and respectful way.

How can families support students' social and emotional learning?

Social and emotional learning starts at home. Parents and families help to develop their children's personal and social skills, attitudes and behaviours in different ways:

- **Conversations with children:** Talking to children about how they are feeling and helping them to reflect on their emotions, coping strategies and the issues they may face.
- **Role modelling:** Children develop their social skills and attitudes by watching and experiencing how other people manage their emotions and relationships.
- **Positive reinforcement:** Recognising when a child demonstrates positive social, emotional and relationship skills will help instil good habits and behaviours.
- **Providing a loving and calm environment:** Establishing rules and routines to provide structure and predictability. Showing affection and care towards children and spending quality time together.

What is Respectful Relationships?

Respectful Relationships became a core component of the Victorian Curriculum in 2016. The initiative focuses on teaching social, emotional and relationship skills to students as well as assists schools to create caring and equitable learning environments.

Respectful Relationships aims to prevent gender-based and family violence in future generations by helping students develop positive relationships, resist harmful social pressures, resolve interpersonal conflict and seek and provide help when needed. This is done by promoting equity and respect through direct instruction but also through the systems and practices across the school.

What is taught in the RRRR curriculum?

Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships (RRRR) is a world-class teaching and learning program developed by experts at Deakin and Melbourne Graduate School of Education. These age appropriate resources include lesson plans and activities to help students learn and practice social skills and apply them in positive ways to learning, life and relationships.

The materials cover eight topics of social and emotional learning across all levels of primary and secondary school.



Topic 1: Emotional Literacy

Emotional literacy is the ability to understand ourselves and other people. It focuses on recognising, expressing and managing emotions. Emotional literacy is key to building empathy and self-awareness.



Topic 2: Personal Strengths

This topic focuses on building students' ability to recognise and understand positive qualities in themselves and others. This builds self-confidence and the capacity to face and manage challenges.



Topic 3: Positive Coping

Learning activities in this topic provide opportunities for students to discuss and learn different types of coping strategies. This increases students' ability to manage stress, control impulses and persevere in overcoming obstacles.



Topic 4: Problem Solving:

Activities in this topic assist students to develop their critical and creative thinking skills and apply these to scenarios exploring personal, social and ethical problems. This builds students capacity to make responsible decisions that consider ethical standards and the likely consequences of various courses of action.



Topic 5: Stress management

Activities in this topic focus on teaching positive calming strategies to deal with stress. This helps students to cope with future challenges.



Topic 6: Help-seeking

Through scenario based activities students learn to recognise situations in which to seek help, identify trusted sources of help and practice seeking and providing help. This helps to normalise and de-stigmatise help-seeking behaviour.



Topic 7: Gender and Identity

This topic teaches students about human rights and responsibilities. It helps to develop students' understanding around the influence of harmful gender norms on attitudes and behaviour. Gender norms and stereotypes can be harmful when they lead to discrimination or when they limit people's life choices. Classroom activities help children resist harmful social pressures and develop rich identities that are not constrained by stereotypes.



Topic 8: Positive Gender Relationships.

In this topic students develop skills needed to solve problems, set boundaries within relationships and play an active role in preventing violence. Activities within this topic range from understanding fair play in the early years all the way to helping young people understand the importance of consent in relationships and equipping them with the skills needed to respond assertively to protect their personal boundaries and standards.

OUR TIME 1: Social and emotional learning activities and conversation starters for kids and their families

Topic 1: Emotional Literacy



Goal: Understanding our emotions.

Activity 1: As a family, name the different emotions that characters in your favourite TV show or story book are feeling. How many can you name? Ask: *How can we work out what emotions other people are feeling?*

Topic 2: Personal Strengths



Goal: To recognise our strengths by talking about things we are good at.

Activity 1: With a family member, take turns at drawing a portrait of each other. Around the portrait write all the things you think each other is good at.

Topic 3: Positive Coping



Goal: Identify positive ways to cope with negative emotions.

Activity 1: With a family member, come up with five things we can do to feel better when we are sad.

Topic 4: Problem Solving



Goal: Recognising solutions to problems.

Activity 1: With a family member, come up with 3 positive and different ways to solve this problem: *You and your siblings arguing over which show to watch on TV.*

Topic 5: Stress Management



Goal: Identify activities that can help to reduce our stress levels.

Activity 1: Interview different family members. Ask them: *What do they like to do to help them calm down or cheer up?* Draw a picture of each of your family members doing this activity.

Topic 6: Help- seeking



Goal: Identify people who we can go to for help.

Activity 1: Make a "hand" or "star" showing five people you can seek help from. Use it as your family plan by writing it up and placing it somewhere visible to everyone.

Topic 7: Gender and Identity



Goal: Explore differences and similarities within families.

Activity 1: With a family member, draw a picture of your family. Think about three things that make your family unique and write these around the picture.

Topic 8: Positive Gender Relationships



Goal: Explore what respect looks like in action.

Activity 1: With a family member, draw a picture of what being fair looks like at home.

OUR TIME 2: Social and emotional learning activities and conversation starters for kids and their families

Topic 1: Emotional Literacy



Goal: Understanding our emotions.

Activity 1: Play emotional charades with members of your family. Each person acts out an emotion and family members guess the emotion/feeling.

Goal: Understanding situations that can trigger different emotions.

Activity 2: Ask a family member: How would you feel if:

- You were starting a new school or job
- Your friend had told everyone a secret you shared with them
- You had won a prize

Topic 2: Personal Strengths



Goal: Describe how we use our strengths to be a good family member.

Activity 1: With a family member, discuss what each of your character strengths are. Draw a picture of yourselves using one of these strengths at home.

Goal: Describe how we use our strengths in daily life.

Activity 2: With a family member, watch a TV show or read a story book together and identify how a character showed any of these strengths (honesty, fairness, patience). What would the opposite of these look like?

Topic 3: Positive Coping



Goal: Discuss ways we can cheer up and calm down.

Activity 1: Discuss with a family member:

- When I feel lonely, I can...
- When I feel angry, I calm myself down by...
- When I feel sad, I can...
- When I feel bored, I can...

Goal: Talk about fears and how to cope with fear.

Activity 2: Talk about:

- Things that make me afraid are...
- When I feel afraid, what are some things we do to help us manage our fears?

Topic 4: Problem Solving



Goal: Build collaboration and team work at home.

Activity 1: Play with a family member. Using items that are safe and stackable (e.g. paper cups, playing cards), make a tower as tall as you can. Once your tower is complete, remove one item at a time, trying not to make the tower collapse. Or, if you have Jenga, play it together!

Goal: Working together to solve problems.

Activity 2: With a family member, talk about this scenario: *I had a disagreement with my best friend and felt left out.* What are three positive ways one could solve this situation?

Topic 5: Stress Management



Goal: Recognise how stress can feel in the body.

Activity 1: With a family member, tell each other about a situation when you felt stressed. How was this stress felt in the body (e.g. sweaty palms; butterflies in your tummy).

Goal: Discuss coping strategies for stress.

Activity 2: With a family member, write a list of actions you can take to deal with stress, fear or anger. Name this list: *Our Family's Calming Strategies.* Display this list somewhere at home.

Topic 6: Help- seeking



Goal: Working and supporting each other.

Activity 1: Help a family member with a household chore.

Goal: Identify people we can go to for help.

Activity 2: Make a "hand" or "star" showing five people you can seek help from. Use it as your family plan by writing it up and placing it somewhere visible to everyone.

Topic 7: Gender and Identity



Goal: Exploring similarities and differences in ourselves and others.

Activity 1: Ask a family member: *What were your interests when you were my age? How have your interests changed as you've grown older?*

Goal: Resisting stereotypes that limit our rights and choices.

Activity 2: Discuss this scenario: *Aysha loves cricket and John loves to dance, however they often hear comments such as girls can't play sport, or boys don't dance. Which strengths might be useful to help Aysha or John as they follow their interest in cricket and dance?*

Topic 8: Positive Gender Relationships



Goal: Promoting respectful relationships.

Activity 1: Discuss this scenario with a family member: *You and your sibling are having an argument on who gets to play with the game console or toy. What are some respectful and fair ways of working out who will go first?*

Goal: Teamwork and family relationships.

Activity 2: Create a list of five family agreements that outline how your family wants to look after and treat its members. Name this list *Our Family's Agreements* and display it somewhere at home.

OUR TIME 3: Social and emotional learning activities and conversation starters for kids and their families

Topic 1: Emotional Literacy



Goal: Develop language to identify and describe emotions.

Activity 1: Name and describe the emotions of a character in your favourite TV show. Take turns in doing this with a family member.

Goal: Name positive and negative emotions.

Activity 2: Name three positive and three negative emotions you experienced today. Ask someone in your household to name three positive and three negative emotions they experienced. Ask: *How did it look, sound and feel?*

Topic 2: Personal Strengths



Goal: Recognise our personal strengths.

Activity 1: Personal strengths are our positive qualities. Ask a family member: *What are your personal strengths? What do you think are my personal strengths?* Swap!

Goal: Identify how you can use personal strengths in daily life.

Activity 2: Kindness is a personal strength. Being kind means you do things for others without expecting anything in return. Do something helpful for a family member. Share your acts of kindness with your family.

Topic 3: Positive Coping



Goal: Try a self-calming technique to calm down when we feel hurt or angry.

Activity 1: Try the *Robot to Rag-doll* technique with a family member. Scrunch up tight and hard like a robot, then slowly let go to turn yourself into a floppy rag-doll.

Goal: Reflecting on the impact our actions can have on others. Learning how to make a meaningful apology.

Activity 2: Talk to a family member and ask them: *What is an apology? What does it feel like when someone apologises to you? What are the ingredients of a good apology?*

Topic 4: Problem Solving



Goal: Identify and evaluate strategies to solve problems.

Activity 1: Talk to a family member and ask: *Tell me about a small problem you faced? How did you solve the problem? If you were faced with the problem again would you solve it differently?*

Goal: To differentiate between levels of problems.

Activity 2: With a family member decide how big the following problems are. Rank them from 1 (little problem) to 3 (big problem):

- You lose your mobile phone.
- You have no one to play with.
- Siblings having a fight.

Topic 5: Stress Management



Goal: Identify a range of strategies that can be used to deal with strong emotions.

Activity 1: With a family member, come up with a list of positive strategies people in your household can use to relax or calm down.

Goal: Put a stress management strategy to practice.

Activity 2: Do something active with a family member today. Turn off screens, get out and play, listen to music, draw together or have a dance!

Topic 6: Help- seeking



Goal: Identify people who we can go to for help.

Activity 1: Make a “hand” or “star” showing five people you can seek help from. Use it as your family plan by writing it up and placing it somewhere visible to everyone.

Goal: Practicing our help-seeking and giving skills.

Activity 2: Discuss with family member. *Imagine a friend comes to you for advice. They tell you somebody has been mean today at school or work. What advice would you give to your friend and why?*

Topic 7: Gender and Identity



Goal: Resisting stereotypes that limit our rights and choices.

Activity 1: When you're watching TV with a family member, keep a tally of the characters. *How many are female? How many are male? How are they portrayed? Can you recognise some common stereotypes?*

Goal: Promoting gender equality and human rights.

Activity 2: With a family member. Google two amazing male scientists and two amazing female scientists in history. *What were their accomplishments? How was their experience in science similar or different?*

Topic 8: Positive Gender Relationships



Goal: Understand what we mean by respect.

Activity 1: Discuss with a family member: *What does respect mean to you? What does respect look like or sound like?*

Goal: Understanding rights and responsibilities

Activity 2: Discuss with a family member: *The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child lists children's right to be able to learn and grow up to be the best they can be. Why is this important? How can we ensure this right is protected for children?*

OUR TIME 4: Social and emotional learning activities and conversation starters for kids and their families

Topic 1: Emotional Literacy



Goal: Understanding our emotions.

Activity 1: Go around the dinner table and have each person share three emotions that they felt that day and why.

Goal: Understanding others' emotions.

Activity 2: Tell a person in your family about your day. The listener tries to guess what emotions you would have felt during your day.

Topic 2: Personal Strengths



Goal: Demonstrating character strengths.

Activity 1: Today, do something to make life easier for someone else at home.

Goal: Demonstrating character strengths.

Activity 2: With a family member, make a plan to support a charity, cause or campaign you really care about.

HINT: You might like to:

- Donate old clothes, books and/or toys.
- Make gifts for elderly people at the nursing home.
- Donate old towels to the local dog shelter.

Topic 3: Positive Coping



Goal: Thinking positively.

Activity 1: Leave a positive note for someone at home to find.

Goal: Practicing positive coping strategies.

Activity 2: Choose an activity to do with a family member.

- Draw a picture together
- Listen to soothing music
- Give each other a hug
- Do a favourite hobby

Reflect on how it made you feel to do this together.

Topic 4: Problem Solving



Goal: Solving personal problems.

Activity 1: Discuss this scenario with a family member: *Your very important homework task was due tomorrow and you have forgotten to bring it home to work on. As a family, how would you solve this problem?*

Goal: Solving occurring problems.

Activity 2: Discuss a commonly occurring problem within your family and make a list of ways to deal with this problem.

Topic 5: Stress Management



Goal: Identify ways to cope with stress.

Activity 1: With a family member, share a time you felt stressed and explain how you managed this. Then swap!

Goal: Practicing ways to cope positively with stress.

Activity 2: Create a stress-free space or a space within your home that your family can use to wind down.

Topic 6: Help- seeking



Goal: Identify ways we can help others.

Activity 1: With a family member, draw a star and on each tip name five people you have helped or supported this week, and how.

Goal: Identifying people we can go to for help.

Activity 2: Make a "hand" or "star" showing five people you can seek help from. Use it as your family plan by writing it up and placing it somewhere visible to everyone.

Topic 7: Gender and Identity



Goal: Growing awareness about rights and responsibilities.

Activity 1: Discuss the roles and responsibilities of each family member. Share what you notice about each person's roles and responsibilities.

Goal: Growing awareness about rights and responsibilities.

Activity 2: Ask an elderly person you know what their roles and responsibilities were when they were young. Share similarities and differences between now and then. Where do these differences and similarities come from?

Topic 8: Positive Gender Relationships



Goal: Being safe online.

Activity 1: Share with a family member your favourite Apps and frequently visited sites. Discuss how you can keep yourself safe on these Apps.

Goal: Understanding other people's roles.

Activity 2: For a day, swap roles and responsibilities with a family member. *HINT: You might complete mum's roles, she might complete your brother's and he might complete dad's. This would mean dad completes yours.* Reflect on what you have learned.

Social and Emotional Learning – Reflection Tool

FAMILY MEMBER

What Activity did you complete?

OUR TIME: 1 2 3 4

TOPIC: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 ACTIVITY: 1 2

Did you enjoy the activity?



YES



IT WAS OK



NO

How did you feel doing the activity?



HAPPY



SAD



BORED



EXCITED

Is there anything you learned by doing this activity?

STUDENT

What Activity did you complete?

OUR TIME: 1 2 3 4

TOPIC: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 ACTIVITY: 1 2

Did you enjoy the activity?



YES



IT WAS OK



NO

How did you feel doing the activity?



HAPPY



SAD



BORED



EXCITED

Is there anything you learned by doing this activity?

Further Resources

Respectful Relationships – Department of Education and Training

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/respectfulrelationships.aspx>

Resilience, rights and respectful relationships – Teaching and Learning Materials

<https://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/ResourcePackage/ByPin?pin=2JZX4R>

BeYou – National Mental Health Initiative in Schools

<https://beyou.edu.au/fact-sheets>

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) –

Trusted source of knowledge about high-quality, evidence-based social and emotional learning.

www.casel.org

Victorian Curriculum – Respectful Relationships – find out how Respectful Relationships fits under the Victorian Curriculum

<https://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/personal-and-social-capability/introduction/rationale-and-aims>

Alannah and Madeleine Foundation – various programs, including E-smart to keep children safe from violence and bullying.

www.amf.org.au

www.esmart.org.au

The Line – How to guide teenagers in developing respectful intimate relationships

<https://www.theline.org.au/ParentsAndCarers>

Confident Parents, Confident Kids – website by American SEL expert Jennifer Miller.

www.confidentparentsconfidentkids.org

List of top 10 books on Parenting recommended by CASEL

<https://casel.org/in-the-home-3/books/>

Books for children that support social, emotional and relationships skills – Check out these book lists in different websites – ask your local library if they have any of these books.

https://www.letterboxlibrary.com/acatalog/Book_Themes.html

<https://www.weareteachers.com/15-must-have-picture-books-for-teaching-social-emotional-skills/>

Commonsense Media – Expert reviews, objective advice and helpful tools to help you navigate the digital world with your kids.

www.common sense media.org

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