

# FAMILY CONNECTIONS

*Empowering Families with Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Tools*

## Supporting Social and Emotional Skills at Home

As a parent or guardian, you are your child's first teacher. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) starts at home and continues in partnership with your child's school. The five competencies on the wheel to the right are the focus of SEL and are key to your child's success personally, academically, and one day professionally. Starting this month with self-awareness, this newsletter will share tips and tools for fostering each of these competencies at home.



## What is Self-Awareness?

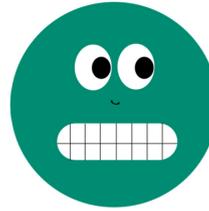
Self-awareness is the ability to recognize one's emotions and values as well as one's strengths and challenges. Before we can ask children to manage their emotions, they must first be aware of what emotions are and how to recognize them in themselves.

## Tips for Building Self-Awareness

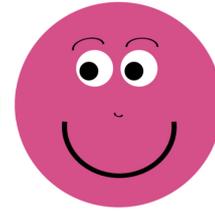
- Normalize emotions as simply reactions to life experiences, not as "good" or "bad"
- Validate your child's feelings... "It's natural to feel anxious about a test"
- Share a time when you felt a similar emotion
- Model building your own self-awareness

## Building Emotional Vocabulary

Self-awareness starts with helping your child build vocabulary around emotions. If you ask a younger child to name different emotions, they'll probably say happy, sad, mad, and scared. However, there are more than 600 words in the English language to describe feelings! It's crucial to find ways to build emotional vocabulary, even in the high school years. This can be through labeling observed feelings, conversations, journaling, drawing, and discussing how characters feel in books and movies.



Nervous,  
Worried



Excited,  
Proud



Disappointed,  
Lonely



Furious,  
Jealous



Surprised,  
Shocked



Elated,  
Joyful

## Try This: Building Self-Awareness during Testing

It is very normal for your child to feel anxious during testing season. Rather than encouraging children to ignore their anxiety, it is important to help them recognize the feeling when it arises. Here are some tips to achieve this:

- Talk with your child about how different emotions feel in the body—for example, tight muscles, sweaty palms, butterflies in the stomach, etc.
- Give your child opportunities to communicate honestly about his/her feelings around testing. Rather than approving or disapproving, simply listen and acknowledge that these feelings are normal.
- Reflect with your child on previous experiences when they felt anxious and recognize how this emotion does not have to stop them from being successful on the test.

## Resources

For more information about self-awareness at your child's specific age, visit <http://www.parenttoolkit.com/explore-your-toolkit>

## Contact

Interested in learning more about how to bring SEL to your child's school? Contact us at: <http://myframeworks.org/contact-us/>

