

# The Travell Counselor's Corner



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## October: Supporting Social & Emotional Learning at Home



Just like learning any new concept or skill, social and emotional learning needs to be taught, practiced, and reinforced. The partnership between home and school is the key to helping children to see its value. Parents, teachers, and staff, all strive to consciously set examples we wish to see practiced by children. **Here are just a few ways we can do so!**

### **Take care of yourself**

Even if it feels like it is the last thing you have time for right now! In order to cultivate the social and emotional skills of our children, we must take care of our own mental, social, and emotional wellness. Young children are sensitive to the stress of the adults who surround them. Much like putting on our own oxygen mask first before helping anyone else, we must take care of ourselves so that we are able to show up for others. Try modeling self-care by finding something you enjoy (hiking, painting, walking, yoga, tossing the football, gardening, meditating, etc.) and make it a priority. When children see adults practicing self-care, they see the importance of caring for themselves as well.

### **Presence is not the same as being present.**

It is so easy to become distracted with our busy schedules and endless to-do lists. It is important to remember that being physically present is not the same as being completely present in the moment. Live in the now. Notice that sweet toothless smile on your little one and hold those hugs just a moment longer. Soak in as much of today as you possibly can – the sights, the sounds, the smells, the emotions, the triumph, and even the sorrow. When you catch yourself wishing days away (which is easy to do when things feel hard), try to pause, breathe, find the moment, and embrace it. And remember, it is the quality of time spent together, not quantity!

### **Celebrate!**

Try to find at least one small thing to celebrate each day. Celebrate health, a new day, the sun shining.. Research has indicated that when we stop to “savor the good stuff,” we develop resilience to the negative events that may be happening in our lives. Appreciating the little things in life means that we focus our attention on what nurtures and sustains us. Let's teach our children to practice gratitude by noticing these everyday things that we so often take for granted.

### **Practice active listening.**

Do not assume that you know exactly what your child is feeling or is afraid of. Ask questions, model eye contact, actively listen and then explain what you can in response to their questions. Validate that you see and acknowledge their feelings, fears, and concerns. We must be mindful in how we respond to fear and try not to redirect or diminish the feeling by saying things like, “there's nothing to be afraid of.” By validating our child's emotions we help them better accept and understand their feelings, develop self compassion, and empathize with others.

### **Help your child express and name emotions.**

If children are struggling to identify their feelings, ask them to express it through drawing, a facial expression, or through a movement in their body. Teaching your child to use “I feel... when...” statements, gives them the opportunity to identify feelings and express them to others effectively. Adults can help when we know where the problem lies. “I feel frustrated because I don't understand what this word problem is asking,” is much easier to support than, “I hate math.” By giving children the tools to communicate, we open so many doors!

**Most importantly, let's practice social emotional learning daily!** SEL can help kids identify & talk about their challenges, build self-esteem, problem solve & improve interpersonal skills. Every little bit helps :)

