

Social-Emotional Checklist of Early Care and Education Practices For Teachers

As you review the practices in your classroom don't forget about a very important area of child development: learning social and emotional skills (or how to get along with others and how to understand and express feelings in an appropriate way). Social and emotional skills are the foundation of all learning in the early years and teachers that focus on helping children develop these skills are truly getting them ready for school!

The checklist below will help you review your classroom through a social-emotional lens. Step out of your teaching role for a moment and think about your classroom from a child's perspective. Imagine yourself as a small child...would you have enjoyed spending your days there as a child? Close your eyes for a few minutes and just listen.



Spend some time reflecting on how your classroom <u>feels</u>. Do you notice these things?	Notes
Is your classroom a pleasant place with sounds of laughter and happy voices...teachers and children?	
Do teachers and children smile frequently at each other?	
Do teachers speak to children on the child's level and look them in the eyes?	
Do teachers use a tone of voice that is playful, affectionate and positive?	
Do children show interest and enthusiasm about activities?	
Do teachers respond to children's feelings?	
Do children seem to understand the schedule and routines of the day? Do they know what happens next and what is expected of them? <i>(*young toddlers are just beginning to learn this)</i>	
Do children move between activities smoothly and without chaos? <i>(*young toddlers are just beginning to learn this)</i>	
Are children engaged in activities or with teachers...not wandering around the room seeming lost and/or unhappy?	
Do teachers seem to have a positive relationship with each other?	

Focus on the interactions of the teachers and children in the classroom. Do you notice these things?	Notes
Are teachers are warm and nurturing?	
Do teachers display affection toward the children through hugs, smiles, gentle touch, etc?	
Do teachers help children recognize and respond to the feelings of others?	
Do teachers encourage good listening and communication skills?	
Do teachers anticipate problems and steps in to help when needed?	
Do teachers help children learn problem-solving skills (<i>*young toddlers are just beginning to learn this</i>)?	
Do teachers help children learn ways to calm and control themselves?	
Do teachers encourage children to share and take turns (<i>* young toddlers are just beginning to learn this</i>)?	
Do teachers encourage and nurture special friendships that develop between children?	
Do teachers respect and support a child's need for a security object (pacifier, blanket, special doll), which helps children calm themselves and feel safe and secure away from home?	
Do teachers encourage individuality and allow children to be creative in their play?	
Do teachers encourage children, once they begin to use language, to talk about their feelings?	
Do teachers teach child the names for emotions they are feeling?	
Do teachers encourage exploration and show interest in children's discoveries?	
Do teachers engage in pretend play with the children?	
<p>Is the teachers' talk to children mainly positive, not negative (encouragement and recognition of accomplishments instead of corrections and directions)?</p> <p><i>Take a moment and listen to the next four things you or another teacher says...at least 3 should be positive and encouraging!</i></p>	

Look around the classroom. Can you observe these things?	Notes
Is the overall physical environment is pleasant and soothing, not over-stimulating?	
Is there enough space for children to play (with pathways between play spaces)?	
Are the furnishings child-sized and designed to encourage children to be independent?	
Are there enough toys, books, and materials for the number of children in the room?	
Are materials neatly arranged and labeled?	
Are there materials that promote children playing together such as dramatic play props, dolls, puppets, or group art projects?	
Are there places for children to be alone or with a special friend?	
Is the space for each child's special possessions?	
Are there displays of the children's art work and other creations?	
Are family photos or other connections to the children's homes evident?	
Does the environment provide visual clues to guide the children throughout the day (picture schedules, picture rules, etc)?	

Additional questions to ask yourself and your co-teachers:

1. How do you help a new child transition into your classroom? *(For example: Do you gather information from families to make the transition easier for the child? Do you seek to make your caregiving routines (feeding, diapering/toileting, napping, etc.) like the routines at home, as much as possible?)*

2. How do you teach social and emotional skills to the children? List examples of how you actively teach these skills.

3. What do you do when a child misbehaves? List positive, respectful approaches you use to helping children learn to manage their own behavior...not punishment?

4. How much time each day do children in your class spend in uninterrupted free play? *(Did you know? Research supports that children need at least 30 minutes of uninterrupted play each day where they select their own activities.)*

5. How do you encourage family participation? Do you view parents as partners? Are parents welcome to visit your classroom at any time?

6. What are your classroom rules? *(FYI: Classrooms should have 3 or 4 positively-stated rules to guide the child's behavior and let them know what they should do.)*

7. What do you like about working with children? What do you like about working here? *(FYI: When children lose their teachers they lose an significant relationship so it's important that children spend their days with a teacher who is committed to and enjoys her work.)*

8. How do you promote school readiness? *(FYI: Research supports that teaching social-emotional skills is the most effective way to help children prepare for school.)*