

Promoting Emotional Intelligence

Building Self-Awareness, Empathy, and Stronger School Communities

Emotional intelligence plays a critical role in helping students navigate challenges both inside and outside the classroom. By intentionally fostering emotional intelligence, educators can create learning environments where students feel supported, connected, and prepared for future success.

What is Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and appropriately express emotions while also being aware of and responsive to the emotions of others.

Students with strong emotional intelligence are often better equipped to:

- Handle stress and frustration
- Communicate effectively
- Resolve conflicts peacefully
- Build positive relationships
- Demonstrate empathy and respect
- Make thoughtful decisions

Practical Strategies for Educators

When students struggle to identify or regulate their emotions, challenges can emerge in the form of classroom disruptions, peer conflicts, disengagement, or behavioral concerns.

Educators can help students build their emotional intelligence and learn practical skills to regulate their emotions.

1. Model emotional intelligence.

Students learn by observing the adults around them. Educators can model emotional intelligence by:

- Remaining calm during difficult situations
- Using respectful communication
- Acknowledging emotions openly and appropriately
- Demonstrating healthy problem-solving strategies

Example: *"I'm feeling frustrated right now, so I'm going to take a moment to think before responding."*



2. Build emotional vocabulary.

Many students struggle to express how they are feeling because they lack the language to do so. Expanding students' emotional vocabulary can help them communicate more effectively. Consider incorporating:

- Daily emotion check-ins
- Mood meters or feeling scales
- Journaling activities
- Classroom discussions about emotions in stories, current events, or real-life situations

Example: *"Can you tell me if you're feeling disappointed, embarrassed, frustrated, or hurt?"*

3. Create opportunities for reflection.

Reflection helps students develop self-awareness, a key component of emotional intelligence. Try asking questions such as:

- How did I respond to this situation?
- What emotion was I feeling?
- What went well?
- What would I do differently next time?

Example: *"How did your mood affect the way you interacted with others today?"*

4. Teach conflict resolution skills.

Conflict is an inevitable part of being in a school setting. Instead of simply responding to conflicts when they occur, schools can proactively teach students healthy ways to address disagreements. Key skills include:

- Active listening
- Perspective-taking
- Using "I" statements
- Identifying solutions that work for everyone involved
- Managing emotional reactions during disagreements

Example: *"When you disagree with a classmate, try saying, 'I understand your point, but here's how I see it.' instead of getting upset."*



5. Foster a safe and supportive learning environment.

Students are more likely to develop emotional intelligence when they feel valued, respected, and safe. Educators can support this by:

- Establishing consistent expectations
- Celebrating student strengths
- Encouraging respectful dialogue
- Providing opportunities for student voice and choice
- Building strong relationships with students

Example: *"Let's make sure everyone's ideas are heard today, even if we have different opinions."*

By intentionally teaching emotional awareness, empathy, communication, and self-regulation, educators can help students build skills that will benefit them far beyond the classroom. Investing in emotional intelligence today helps prepare students for success in their school, workplace, and overall life.



Additional Resources

To view the resources used for this guide and more information, click on the links below:

<https://www.appliedcoaching.org/post/the-mood-meter-for-self-awareness>

<https://www.classroomchampions.org/blog/emotional-intelligence-questions>