



Seven Social-Emotional Teaching Strategies

The teaching strategies below give concrete approaches for promoting social-emotional development in your classroom. They are designed to guide developmentally appropriate Transitional Kindergarten (TK) instruction, moving your students along a continuum of learning by bridging the [Preschool Learning Foundations](#) with the [Kindergarten Common Core](#).

Strategy 1: Relationships and Social Interactions with Peers

Strategy 2: Social and Emotional Understanding

Strategy 3: Conflict Negotiation (Problem Solving)

Strategy 4: Child Regulates Emotions and Behaviors

Strategy 5: Engagement and Persistence

Strategy 6: Responsible Conduct

Strategy 7: Integrated Approaches for English Language Development and Family Engagement

STRATEGY 1: RELATIONSHIPS AND SOCIAL INTERACTIONS WITH PEERS

Competency: Child interacts competently and cooperatively with other children and develops friendships with several peers (corresponds with DRDP-SR Measure 8).

	Exploring Competencies	Building Competencies
Embed in Context	Ask a child who has grabbed a toy from another to “use their words” to let a classmate know what they want, offering simple words to help articulate their feelings, such as “My turn, please.”	Read a story about a child whose best friend has moved away, and ask children to share ideas of things they could do to comfort the child. While reading, point to the child’s face in the story or use a picture card to show how the child is feeling “sad,” and encourage your students to draw pictures and/or write words that reflect their feelings.

Model	Tell a child gently and respectfully that you would like them to put their hands on their lap rather than on the child next to them. To support language understanding, model behavior and encourage the student to mimic your behavior, by saying, "I will put my hands on my lap."	Show an interest in your students' lives outside of school, for example having a conversation about what they did over the weekend.
Give Opportunities to Practice	Have your students take turns during sharing time. Support language understanding by scaffolding turn-taking and saying, for example, "Now it's Nico's turn. Now it's Ciara's turn."	Give your students games, such as Chutes and Ladders, that require cooperation.

STRATEGY 2: SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL UNDERSTANDING

Competency: Child shows developing understanding of people's behavior, feelings, thoughts, and individual characteristics (corresponds with DRDP-SR Measure 9).		
	Exploring Competencies	Building Competencies
Embed in Context	Ask children to discuss the emotions a child in a story is experiencing.	Ask the child to explain why another child is feeling distressed.
Model	Comfort a child.	Show interest and understanding for a child's feelings. For example, interact by saying "I see that you are sad; is it because your mom had to drop you off early today?" or, "You look frustrated, is it because your tower fell down?"
Give Opportunities to Practice	Lead a game asking children to label emotions in pictures. Use a familiar song to teach "feeling" words by replacing words with new emotional vocabulary paired with understandable movements and gestures.	Give a chance for Think-Pair-Share during story time, having children pair off to think of something in the story that relates to their lives. For example, ask them to think about a time they felt the way the character in the story felt and share the experience with a friend.

STRATEGY 3: CONFLICT NEGOTIATION

Competency: Child shows increasing understanding of the needs of other children and is increasingly able to consider alternatives and to negotiate constructively (corresponds with DRDP-SR Measure 10).		
	Exploring Competencies	Building Competencies
Embed in Context	Offer a strategy for sharing. Example: "If you divide the cars up you would each have three, and could play with them together on the train track."	Imagine that two children are arguing over paints. Refrain from solving the problem for the children and instead engage them in a conversation that helps them solve it. Try asking, "What strategies could you use to decide how you share the paints?"
Model	Articulate that you are "waiting quietly for everyone to get ready to hear a story" while also using a gesture that is familiar to children.	Example: As you get ready to read a book at circle time, a child interrupts and asks for a different book. Ask the class to vote and select the book with the most votes.
Give Opportunities to Practice	During "free choice" time, the children have an opportunity for dramatic play to negotiate roles, take turns, share materials, and initiate activities.	Ask children to create rules for the playground while writing them down and encouraging the children to negotiate differences in opinions.

STRATEGY 4: SELF-CONTROL OF FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOR

Competency: Child increasingly develops strategies for regulating feelings and behavior based on adult guidance (corresponds with DRDP-SR Measure 12).		
	Exploring Competencies	Building Competencies
Embed in Context	Help a visibly upset child identify the cause of their distress and hold them to make them feel secure until they're calm. Gently touch the hand of a child who appears anxious or reticent about class activities to reassure them.	Ask a group of children to brainstorm strategies for remembering to keep their hands to themselves during circle time.

Model	Articulate a strategy you use to regulate your behavior. Example: "I'm going to hold my hands together to help me remember not to touch any of the paints until it's time."	Identify feelings in a child and articulate a coping strategy. For example, "I can see that Sam is sad, I am going to give Sam our big fuzzy bear because I think it might make them feel better."
Give Opportunities to Practice	In circle time, ask children how they are feeling that day and support new emotional vocabulary by incorporating pictures, labels, and gestures. Give children opportunities to respond with words or gestures. Respond by combining the emotion word and gesture while acknowledging the child's feelings.	Give children games to play that require sharing materials and taking turns. Encourage children to identify their feelings and scaffold their efforts to develop coping strategies. For example, if a child says that they feel lonely, acknowledge the child's feelings by asking, "What can you do to help you to feel better?"

STRATEGY 5: ENGAGEMENT AND PERSISTENCE

Competency: Child persists in understanding and mastering a self-selected activity, even if it is challenging or difficult (corresponds with DRDP-SR Measure 13).		
	Exploring Competencies	Building Competencies
Embed in Context	Ask a child to articulate their goal in an activity and the first step.	Ask children to articulate their plan and the steps they will take for an art project. Example: "What will you do first? What colors will you use?"
Model	Model completing an activity for children, explaining each of the steps you took.	When giving instructions for an activity, demonstrate stringing beads and make an error in your pattern. Point out the mistake and correct it.
Give Opportunities to Practice	Give children activities that require at least two steps (e.g., coloring a picture and writing the first letter of their name).	Give projects that have several steps to completion and require planning, correction, and completion. For example, puzzles, playing a game, an art project, and building structures.

STRATEGY 6: RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT

Competency: Child develops skill in acting as a responsible group member and behaving in a fair and socially acceptable manner, regulating behavior according to classroom rules (corresponds with DRDP-SR Measure 14).

	Exploring Competencies	Building Competencies
Embed in Context	Congratulate the students who listened to your instructions attentively.	Scenario: The children are noisy coming in from the playground. Ask the children to brainstorm strategies to remember to keep their voices quiet when they come in from outdoor play.
Model	Speak in a soft voice.	Ensure that every child has a chance to talk.
Give Opportunities to Practice	Children take turns distributing snacks each day.	There is a pad of paper and pencil in each area with a popular activity; encourage children to create sign-up lists for turn taking.

STRATEGY 7: INTEGRATED APPROACHES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Integrated Approach: English Language Development	Focus on simple strategies that support children’s expressive and receptive language skills. By doing so, you can promote social-emotional competence in a way that directly influences their learning and development. Plan for activities where children express their feelings and introduce sentence starters or “linguistic frames” (e.g., “Today, I feel...”, “I do not like...”, “I need...”) to support children who are learning to communicate in English.
Collaborative Approach: Family Engagement	It is important to build strong relationships with families to ensure that the whole family has a positive experience in the school. When a child feels a connection between their home and school, they are bound to feel more connected and safe in both places. Develop partnerships with families and the community, organize family events, and develop communication strategies that support a strong dialogue around the value of home language and culture for their child’s success in school and in life.