

Lower School Social-Emotional Resources and Recommendations for Families 2023

The past two years have been full of unprecedented social-emotional challenges for our children. While our children have been incredibly resilient, many children have regressed a bit with social-emotional skills. It's important to continue to emphasize practicing social-emotional skills with your children this summer. Here are some ways to go about this:

- Read books and watch media that bring up opportunities for conversation about emotions and social skills. Pause the book/movie/show to discuss the characters' actions and emotions. Talk about why the character made the decision that they made, other ways they could have reacted, the pros and cons of those other options, and what you would have done if you were in their shoes.
 - Our Lower School summer reading list includes many books that will open up these conversations.
 - Big Life Journal has [a roundup of Growth Mindset movies](#) that encourage resilience, perseverance, and growth mindset.
- Before a playdate or a trip to the pool or the playground, talk about some social scenarios that may occur. Role-play positive ways to handle conflict and rehearse phrases your child can use to engage in social problem solving.
- Take advantage of teachable moments. Taking into consideration feedback from your child's teacher and your observation, determine which social-emotional skill(s) your child should work on this summer. When you observe your child struggling, support them with developing this skill through modeling, verbal coaching, and practicing. Of course, when you observe your child making progress with this skill, be sure to give them specific positive feedback!
- Engage in social-emotional reflection as a family at the end of the day. In a journal or in conversation (or both!), reflect on questions such as the following ([5 minute Journal Prompts](#)) and share your responses with one another.
- Use language that will be familiar to your children from our social-emotional lessons at Doane.
 - Expressing Feelings: Let's use an "I Feel" statement to express how you feel.
 - Regulating Emotions: Can we practice one of our deep breathing exercises (e.g., hug breath, superhero breath, belly breath, rainbow breath)?
 - Managing Challenging Emotions: Let's use the Loving Kindness Mantra ["May I be

safe, May I be healthy, May I be happy, May I be at ease in this moment...May you be safe, May you be healthy, May you be happy, May you be at ease.]”

- Social Cognitive/Social-Emotional Skills and Response Inhibition:
 - **Pause and THINK:** Is what you are about to say True, Helpful, Important, Necessary, and Kind? (We sometimes shorten to True, Necessary, and Kind).
 - Turn on your social filter.
 - How can you make an apology of action?
- Teach and reinforce social-emotional skills with a social-emotional book/workbook geared to any areas where your child may be struggling. For additional resources please see [Self-Regulation Skills Strategies for Parents](#) or the [Emotion Regulation Skills: Parent Workshop](#).
- If you think therapy may be beneficial for your child, consult with Dr. Flagg and/or your child's pediatrician ([Tips for Identifying a Therapist](#))

Finally, we know that summer offers more opportunities for screentime than the school year. For tips on how to create a family media agreement and more advice about how to support your child's development as a “digital native,” please consult our Lower School Tech Tip Sheet.