

SEL: Social and Emotional Learning

SEL involves the teaching of the whole child. Social and emotional learning honors the fact that the education of children involves multiple factors: Social, Emotional and Cognitive. These three areas are essential in order to empower parents and teachers with tools to help children succeed in school, work and relationships.

- **Social** Skills: social problem solving, teamwork, self-advocacy
- **Emotional** Skills: recognize emotions in self and others, regulate emotions, empathy
- **Cognitive** Skills: focus, pay attention, set goals, plan and organize, complete tasks, persevere in facing challenges and learning.

Trying to teach cognitive and academic skills without also addressing social-emotional or psychological skills is like trying to drive a car without an engine. The car may look good on the outside, but it has no power to move.

Mental health disorders such as anxiety, depression and behavior problems are common in young people and Covid-19 has likely caused problems to get worse (Clarke, 2021).

If emotional and behavioral problems are not addressed, they can persist into adulthood and make it hard for Idaho children to be ready for college or careers. Studies show that there is an **\$11 return for every \$1 spent** on these programs that emphasize both psychological and academic development. Cost savings are due to lower rates of dropout, criminality, teen pregnancy and mental health disorders as well as higher educational attainment and wages (Belfield, et. al., 2015).

Research shows that Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) interventions:

- Improve the development of behavioral and emotional skills
- Reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety in young people
- Support the building of key life skills such as stress management, assertive communication, resilience and self-awareness to help children adapt to and thrive in our complex world
- Strengthen relationship and problem-solving skills
- Help protect children from negative mental health, educational, social and health outcomes

References:

Clarke, Sorgenfrei, Mulcahy, Davie, Friedrich, & McBride (2021). *Adolescent mental health: A systematic review on effectiveness of school-based interventions.* Early Intervention Foundation.

Belfield, Bowden, Klapp, Levin, Shand & Zander. (2015). *The economic value of social and emotional learning.* Center for Benefit-Cost Studies in Education: Teachers College, Columbia University.