

# Social and Emotional Learning Supports

We've all heard the old adage "teachers are molders of young minds." But this is only partially true—teachers are ultimately molders of adults, influencing the social, emotional, and intellectual development of the next generation. The STEMscopes curriculum helps teachers address the social-emotional learning (SEL) needs of students while providing an immersive and vibrant learning experience. Below, we've highlighted curriculum elements that empower teachers to uphold each SEL Standard and shape a generation of scientific thinkers who strive to make the world a better place.

## Self Awareness

In one of our middle school Explain activities, students are divided into two teams to debate whether earth is in the middle of the sixth mass extinction. Students spend a class period researching theories, collecting evidence, and writing their opening statements. During the debate, one student from each team presents an opening statement, while students on the opposing team take notes for the rebuttal. The debate ends with closing remarks from both teams. Students must demonstrate self awareness by monitoring what they say and how they say it during this exciting activity.

- Students discover **strengths and limitations** by affirming their knowledge and discovering gaps in understanding as they exchange ideas.
- Students develop **confidence** as they defend their positions.
- Students adopt a **growth mindset** by approaching the debate as a learning opportunity—it's not about who's right and who's wrong: it's about becoming scientific thinkers capable of disagreeing with grace and collegiality.

## Self Management

During an Investigative Phenomena Engage activity, 3rd grade students work towards the goal of figuring out how or why something happens. The teacher starts the dialogue by posing the question, "What does it take to win a game of tug-of-war?" Students have time to brainstorm ideas individually. They then share their ideas with the whole class before finding a partner to discuss them one-on-one in more detail, giving students the opportunity to practice self management in different conversational settings.

- Students **manage stress** as they feel pressure to develop and present ideas to their peers.
- Students **control their impulse** to interrupt students with whom they disagree.
- Students **aim to achieve the goal** of slowing global warming by creating viable solutions for a major ecological issue.

## Social Awareness

A number of STEMscopes lessons promote social awareness. In the scope, *Human Activity Causes and Solutions*, students learn about the devastating effects of global warming on people around the world. The Social Emotional Learning component in our Teacher Toolbox offers several suggestions for helping students discuss social topics and become more socially aware. We've listed a few below.

- Students with behavioral challenges are paired with mature students whose behavior they are encouraged to observe and imitate. By imitating the behavior of another student, they have an opportunity to experience the world from **their perspective**.
- Teachers discourage competition because it inhibits **sympathy/empathy** by pitting students against each other.
- During the one-on-one dialogue, students are instructed to face each other and maintain eye contact, which encourages them to **observe and react to emotional markers and indicators**.

## Relationship Skills

Explain is a curriculum element that prompts students to record questions as they learn new concepts and share their responses. In the 1st grade scope, *Parts of Animals*, students create analogies comparing the human body to the body of an animal. For example, a student may write, "I can jump like a frog." Students not only write, but also illustrate their analogies and present them to the class. Students hone relationship skills by being openly vulnerable as they grapple with new and challenging content.

- Teachers encourage students **to listen and respect** their peers as they ask questions and wonder aloud.
- Students strive to **communicate their questions clearly and succinctly**.
- The inquiry process helps students feel comfortable **asking for and offering help**.
- Students practice **resisting social pressure** that discourages curiosity and creates a hostile environment where students fear asking "stupid questions."

## Responsible Decision Making

The Communication Development section in the Middle School Toolbox includes several tips for promoting responsible decision making.

- Teachers establish classroom rules that foster **safety and social norms**, such as respecting others' personal space and saying "excuse me" and "thank you."
- Students participate in role playing activities that allow them to practice the use of **appropriate manners and body language**.
- Students uphold high **ethical standards** as they demonstrate respect for peers through behaviors such as active listening and teamwork.