

Hearing loss and social and emotional needs of children

The social, emotional, intellectual and physical aspects of a child's development are all connected. Each influences the other. The relationship between hearing and broader aspects of child development has long been recognised. It is important to support the social emotional development of children who are Deaf or hard of hearing to help them engage in their school experiences.

Key messages

- Social and Emotional Learning is the process of gaining particular skills or capabilities that contribute to wellbeing.
- Children who are Deaf or hard of hearing may experience difficulties with social cues or communicating with others due to their hearing loss. This can affect their social and emotional learning.
- Parents and teachers of children who are Deaf or hard of hearing can improve children's social and emotional skills.

What is Social and Emotional Learning?

Social and emotional learning is the process of gaining particular skills or personal strengths that add to wellbeing (sometimes called mental health) and resilience (the ability to 'bounce back' after we face changes or challenges). In the Australian Curriculum, the term 'Personal and Social Capability' is used interchangeably with the synonym Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). The [Australian Curriculum](#) recognises the need for students to develop their "Personal and Social Capability" to understand and manage themselves and their relationship with others (ACARA, 2013, pg 82).

There are a number of skills or capabilities that help children achieve social and emotional wellbeing.

Self-awareness skills help us to recognise and understand our feelings, while appreciating our strengths and abilities. These skills include:

- being able to identify what we are feeling
- understanding why we might feel a certain way
- recognising and having confidence to use our strengths and abilities

Self-management skills enable us to handle our emotions in appropriate ways.

These skills include:

- managing our emotions so they don't stop us from dealing with situations
- striving to achieve our goals despite difficulties

Social awareness skills help us to be aware and respectful of the feelings and views of other people.

These skills include:

- recognising what others may be feeling
- trying to understand a situation from another's point of view
- accepting and valuing people who are different from ourselves

Social management skills help us to positively deal with relationship problems and conflicts.

These skills include:

- making friends and maintaining healthy relationships
- effectively dealing with conflicts
- seeking help if we are not able to solve problems ourselves
- considering how choices we make may affect ourselves and others

Source:

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

(ACARA). <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/personal-and-social-capability/>

Cross, D & Erceg, E. (2014). Friendly Schools: Evidence for Practice. Hawker Brownlow

Why is social and emotional learning important?

Children with well-developed social and emotional skills find it easier to:

- manage themselves
- relate to others
- develop resilience and a sense of self-worth
- resolve conflict
- engage in teamwork
- feel positive about themselves and the world around them

Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

(ACARA). <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/personal-and-social-capability/>

Research shows that children with social and emotional skills have improved:

- quality of learning
- sense of belonging
- study skills
- school attendance
- attention

“The West Australian Foundation for Deaf Children recognises Telethon Kids Institute, Telethon Speech and Hearing and School of Special Education Needs: Sensory for their work on the Telethon Belong Project and production of these Belong Resources.”

And increased:

- academic competence
- motivation to learn
- commitment to school

Source: Durlak, J. (2011). The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions. Child Development, 82(1), 405–432.

Impact of hearing loss on social and emotional learning

Some children who are Deaf or hard of hearing have difficulties picking up social cues when communicating with other people around them. Social cues are the signals people send through their body language and expressions. Connecting with other people and understanding social cues helps children relate to what another person might think, feel or believe. Further information related to social and emotional learning can be found below:

- [Identity formation and self-image](#)
- [Managing emotions](#)
- [Bullying prevention](#)
- [Effective communication skills](#)
- [Friendships](#)

Your child's social and cooperative skills

Children who are Deaf or hard of hearing may have delayed levels of social skills and cooperative behaviour. It is important to know that these skills can all be learnt. Extra attention may be required to support your child to learn skills that will help them to make connections with others and to interact effectively in cooperative activities and social situations.

This checklist may be helpful in considering which skills need more attention for success socially.

Think about

Can my child:	Yes	Could improve
Greet familiar people in a friendly way?		
Ask to join in with other children's games or conversations?		
Admit when they don't know or hear information?		
Share and take turns?		
Listen to others without interrupting?		
Have a conversation with other children?		
Understand how their hearing loss may impact on them in social situations?		
Show cooperation and turn-taking in games and activities?		
Play a game by the rules?		
Deal with losing in a game?		
Accept criticism or advice?		
Accept responsibility and apologise when necessary?		
Identify how other people feel and express concern and empathy?		
Compromise and accept group decisions?		

Adapted from Friendly Schools – Friendly Schools and Families communication sheets