



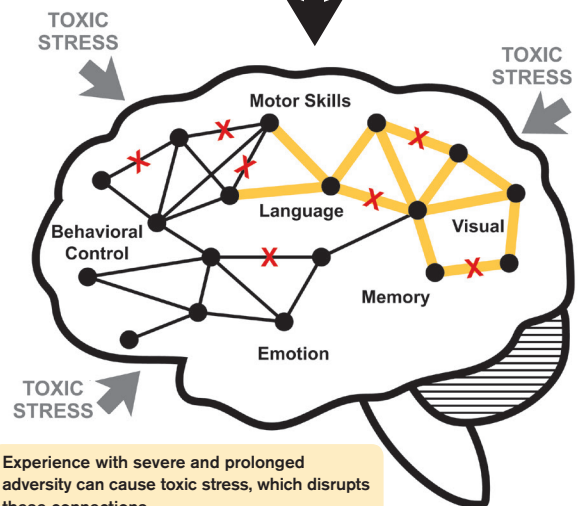
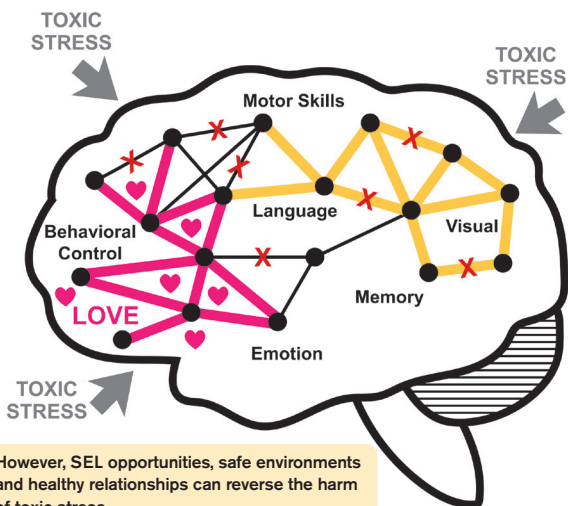
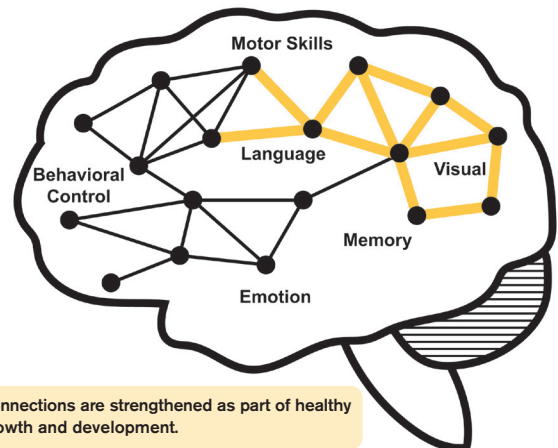
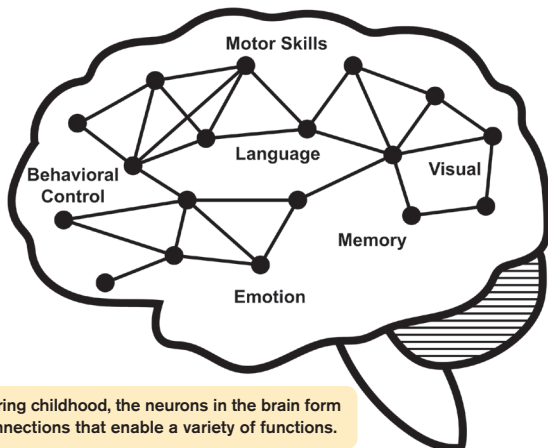
IRC's Approach to Social-Emotional Learning

What is Social-Emotional Learning?

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is the process of acquiring and effectively applying the knowledge, attitudes and skills that help an individual succeed in life. These skills enable individuals (children, youth and adults) to manage information without being distracted, use their working memory, control their impulses and emotions, get along with others, solve problems and persevere.

Why are SEL Skills Important?

SEL provides children and adults with the tools to be well and succeed in life. SEL is particularly important for children in crisis contexts who have faced severe adversity, including poverty, displacement and violence. These experiences can lead to a toxic stress response, which disrupts healthy brain development and has short and long term impacts on children's mental and physical health, behavior, relationships and ability to learn. SEL has been shown to mitigate the effects of adversity by providing children with the skills to focus, regulate their emotional responses, positively interact with others and cope with stress and challenges.



How do We Teach SEL Most Effectively?

Research shows that SEL is most effective in the presence of caring and supportive relationships, and through one or all of the following:

- 1. **Explicit SEL instruction**—direct instruction on SEL that is explicit, focused and sequenced;
- 2. **Infusing SEL across academic areas**—reinforcing SEL throughout all subject areas;
- 3. **Recreation and creative activities**—practicing SEL skills taught in explicit instruction;
- 4. **Community and parent involvement**—encouraging parent and community understanding of SEL and reinforcing of skills at home.

SEL should be S.A.F.E.

- Sequenced**—following a logical sequence that builds SEL skills in a progressive manner;
- Active**—engaging in student-centered, fun and project or activity-based learning that enables students to practice the skills;
- Focused**—allowing for specific and sufficient time spent on SEL skill-building;
- Explicit**—informing students of learning objectives and skills they will build.

SEL Competencies



Brain Building

The foundational cognitive skills and mental process that enable us to focus attention, remember instructions, control impulses and juggle multiple tasks.

Example Skills	Activities
Working memory	Building a list by each student adding an item (“I like... and she likes... and he likes...”)
Focusing attention	Playing “telephone”
Cognitive flexibility	Matching or sorting games
Impulse control	Simon Says



Emotion Regulation

The set of skills that allows us to understand our own emotions and manage our feelings in a positive manner.

Example Skills	Activities
Identifying own emotions	Match physical cues with emotions
Predicting own emotions	Describe scenarios and students act out or say what they would feel
Expressing emotions	Roleplays using “I feel” statements
Calming down strong feelings	Practice strategies (belly breathing, counting, etc.)



Positive Social Skills

The set of skills which allow us to relate to one another in a positive way, through understanding others' feelings and behavior and responding in a way that promotes positive social interaction.

Example Skills	Activities
Identifying others' emotions	Watch videos or look at pictures of faces and select the emotion
Responding to others' emotions	Roleplay empathetic responses
Making friends	Create "friendship" recipe drawings
Cooperation	Play games that require cooperation



Conflict Resolution

The set of skills which helps us address problems and conflicts between individuals in a positive manner as they arise.

Example Skills	Activities
Identifying conflicts	Conflict roleplays where the class has to identify the conflict
Generating solutions	Brainstorm solutions to a problem in a story
Resolving conflicts	Act out resolving conflicts
Using conflict resolution vocabulary	Provide students with 10 vocabulary words. They create a roleplay or story using them



Perseverance

The set of skills that allows us to push through challenges and continue to work towards a realistic goal.

Example Skills	Activities
Setting goals	Create a goal and goal achievement plan
Making plans	Develop daily or weekly plans
Overcoming obstacles	Tell a story with a challenge and students write an ending in which they overcome the challenge
Positive self-identity	Draw self with positive traits



Mindfulness

Mindfulness is cross-cutting throughout IRC's approach to SEL, addressing skills in all five competencies. *Mindfulness* is defined as: **the state of being aware and focused on the present moment; accepting the present while being open and curious about what is happening around and inside us.** Students learn the benefits of mindfulness for reducing feelings of anxiety and stress, focusing their attention and learning to persevere through hardship.