



Smartkids Thao Dien Talk

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Why social and emotional learning is important

Social and emotional learning is about learning how to manage feelings, manage friendships, and solve problems. These are essential life skills that support wellbeing and positive mental health. Social and emotional skills promote children's ability to cope with difficulties and to help prevent mental health problems. Children who have developed social and emotional skills find it easier to manage themselves, relate to others, resolve conflict, and feel positive about themselves and the world around them.

In addition, there is broad agreement and research evidence that shows that learning social and emotional skills can improve academic learning and enhance children's motivation to cooperate and achieve.

Because it emphasises teaching children the skills for positive relationships, social and emotional learning is nowadays a key strategy for schools in their efforts to reduce bullying and improve caring, respect and responsibility at school. When children are taught specific strategies for recognising and responding to emotions, thinking through challenging situations and communicating effectively, they are less likely to act out frustrations at school and elsewhere.

It is important to recognize that social and emotional skills develop over time, and that they may develop differently for different children. Parents, carers and educators work together to help children develop these skills can make a positive difference for children's mental health.

Adapted from: "learning thinking", Bangkok, Thailand

How do we support social and emotional skills in SmartKids?

By supporting self confidence: We let children do a lot by themselves, we give them roles and tasks, everyone gets a turn, we appreciate effort and persistence.

By appreciating individual and group differences:

We talk openly and positively about differences and encourage mutual respect for each other.

By teaching empathy:

We model caring and compassion through our own behavior and we encourage the children to think about the emotions and feelings of others.

By communicating effectively:

We encourage the children to use verbal and non-verbal communication skills, to use eye contact and good tone of voice.

Supporting Social and emotional skills at SmartKids (continued from page 1)

By fostering emotional awareness:

Learning to manage emotions, first requires being aware of them. Teaching staff can encourage children to notice body signals and to name and describe the associated feelings. We also ask children about the thoughts they have in response to learning activities and events.

By requiring cooperation from the children:

Tasks that require children to work in pairs or small groups are a good way of building and reinforcing important relationship skills. We do this daily through all kinds of activities.

By normalizing social and emotional learning

We make talking about feelings, managing friendships, handling conflicts and thinking through problems, part of everyday conversation in our classrooms and around the centre. This sets an expectation that social and emotional learning is a normal and valued part within SmartKids.

Time flies, and before you know, you are making plans for the summer again.

Some parents are already looking into other schools because it's time for their children to leave SmartKids.

If you are not sure if your child is ready for "Big School", please ask your child's teacher for advice. We are more than happy to discuss your child's readiness for a primary school. From the 12th to the 16th of March we will have our parent-teacher meetings again. Please discuss your child's development with his/her teacher, and ask for advice about going to the "Big Kids" group or a primary school.

SmartKids has a very good contact with all the International Schools in District 2. We know what will be expected from your child in these schools. Once we know to which school your child will go, we prepare your child and a visit with peers and the (SmartKids) teacher will follow.

