

Family Pack Introduction

As parents you will have been thinking about your family and how they might be impacted by the situation and changes taking place around you all. To support you during this time, we will be providing you with information and tips from our Friendly Schools social and emotional learning resources. It is vital to continue to strengthen our partnerships with our school families to continue to provide children with social and emotional learning skills and knowledge on top of their academic learning.

Family Packs

This series of Friendly Schools and Families packs provide information to address social and emotional learning. The sheets also provide tips and activities to help you to talk with your children and to develop skills and knowledge for good social and emotional skills.

Family Activity Sheets

Each Family pack includes a Family Activity Sheet for you to complete together.



Family Pack 1 – Communication

Regularly talking with and listening to your children reinforces that they can talk with you about both the positive and the more challenging parts of their day. Make sure to engage them in genuine conversations about a variety of topics that are fun as well as more serious and thought provoking topics.

Reassure your children that they can talk with you no matter what the topic. Try to arrange times when you can walk or sit side-by-side and chat. This is a more relaxed way to have a conversation and enables your children to feel more comfortable talking with you about difficult topics.

Open the lines of communication

If you talk with your children about daily topics, there will be greater chance they will talk about more difficult issues such as bullying or social issues.

When your children talk to you about day-to-day things, where possible, stop what you are doing and listen. Be supportive and encourage them to talk. You don't have to know everything about their life. However, you do need to try to keep in touch with what is happening on a day-to-day basis. Try to make it clear that your children can talk with you no matter what the topic.

Ask yourself!

- Are these times each day when I am able to share some time with my children?
- Do I really listen to my children and what they have to say?
- Do I show my children that I am really interested to hear their opinions and thoughts?

Tips for communicating with your child

- Be supportive and encourage them to talk.
- Show your children you enjoy talking with them.
- Let your children know you are always interested in what is going on in their lives, not only when they are in trouble or having problems.
- Arrange opportunities to share time with your children when you can talk while doing an activity together, for example, cooking, craft, going to the football, family mealtimes or family meetings.
- Get down to their level and make eye contact. When talking with younger children, get down to their eye level by sitting or bending down.
- Talk shoulder to shoulder. Older children will often talk more freely when you sit or walk shoulder to shoulder. Travelling in the car is a good place for a chat.
- Set an example to your children in the way you speak to your family and other adults. Children learn much from watching people they love and admire.



Family Activity Sheet 1 – Communication

Conversation starters

You can discuss these questions at the dinner table or in another location when the whole family can focus on the conversation. You could make a fun game by printing out the questions, cutting them up so they're on individual strips of paper and have each family member pick out a question or two to discuss. You may need to read the question for younger children.

If you could talk to an animal if which one would you choose to talk to and what would you ask?
If someone gave you \$50 dollars what would you do with it?
What colour makes you feel happy and why?
What is your favourite letter of the alphabet? Why?
If you could design a zoo, and you could only have 5 animals which would you choose?
If you could make up a brand new school subject, what would it be?
When you are sad how do you make yourself feel better?
If you could do one thing, every day, for the rest of your life, what would it be?
If you had a robot for one day what would you ask it to do?
What is your favourite thing about yourself?
If you could talk to an animal which one would you choose to talk to and what would you ask?
If you wrote a book what would it be about?
If you could be invisible for a day what would you do?
If you were sad what could you do to try to cheer yourself up?

Introducing the first Family Pack

Family Pack 1 is all about encouraging communication and how we can help our children to talk about the things that go on in their lives. It is important to have frequent conversations with your children, as the constant stream of information through news, social media, other kids, and school announcements can cause confusion and anxiety. When receiving this overwhelming amount of information, it is natural to feel a range of emotions, such as stress, worry, or low mood.

Kids will express their feelings not only through words but also through their actions and behaviour. Sometimes they may act out their feelings in physical, inappropriate or problematic ways. In the upcoming family sheets, we will be focussing on self-awareness and emotions and give you tips to help you support your children and develop open the lines of communication. Keep in mind that behind every behaviour is a feeling, and all of our feelings and responses are heightened to a degree by constantly changing circumstances Take every opportunity you can to talk to your children and reassure them.

What is Social and Emotional Learning?

Social and emotional learning begins at birth and is first experienced in the family home. As parents you are the first teachers of your child's social skills and first providers of emotional support. Throughout their lives your children learn from you as a teacher and role-model for the social and emotional learning they need to thrive in the world.

The Australian Curriculum outlines these social and emotional learnings as Personal and Social Capabilities which are to be taught in every school across Australia. As parents you play an important role in continuing this learning at home. Social and emotional learning is the process of developing and practising important social and emotional understandings and skills.

Self-awareness skills - The ability to accurately recognise our own emotions and thoughts and their influence on behaviour. Including:

- Being able to identify and name emotions and how they are linked to our thoughts and behaviours.
- Recognising our strengths, abilities and limitations.
- Having a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.

Self-management skills - The ability to regulate our own emotions, thoughts, and behaviours effectively in different situations. Including:

- Managing stress and controlling emotions and impulses.
- Motivating ourselves and having perseverance to work through difficult situations.
- Setting and working toward achieving personal and academic goals.

Social awareness skills - The ability to take the perspective of and empathise with others. Including:

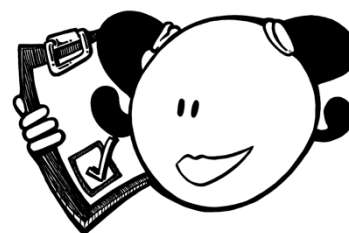
- Being aware of and respectful of the feelings of others.
- Accepting and valuing people who are from diverse backgrounds and cultures.
- Understanding social and ethical norms for behaviour.

Relationship skills - The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. Including:

- Making friends and maintaining healthy relationships.
- Communicating positively, cooperating and negotiating to participate effectively in groups.
- Dealing effectively with relationship issues, negative social influences and conflicts.
- Seeking help if we are not able to solve a social problem ourselves.

Social decision-making skills - The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behaviour and social interactions. Including:

- Considering the positive or negative consequences of choices when making decisions.
- Making positive choices, while considering how these choices may affect ourselves and others.
- Considering personal, family and social norms and ethical standards when making decisions.



Social and emotional learning is addressed throughout the curriculum at school and in every stage of a student's schooling. Social and emotional capability is seen as critical to the education of your child. Evidence shows that those children who have well developed social and emotional skills find it easier to manage themselves, relate to others, develop resilience and self-worth, resolve conflict, engage in teamwork and feel positive about the world around them. The development of social and emotional capability is a key foundation for learning, leadership and citizenship.

The most effective approach, defined by the Australian Friendly Schools research, occurs when schools and families form strong partnerships to teach and support children to build their social and emotional capability.