



## **Parenting for Competence and Parenting With Competence: Essential Connections Between Parenting and Social and Emotional Learning**

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The purpose of this investigation was to examine connections between the field of school-based social and emotional learning (SEL) and SEL in parenting. Although there are a number of evidence-based parenting programs that use SEL strategies and show positive relations with parent and child outcomes, this research base is largely separate from the burgeoning school-based research. There may be ways, however, that these sets of research may inform each other while attuning to the unique aspects of each context (see Figure 1). This study examined how one major school-based SEL research framework may apply to parents use of SEL:

- (1) To develop their children’s social-emotional competence, and
- (2) To apply and enhance their own social-emotional competence in their everyday parenting practices.

### **METHODS**

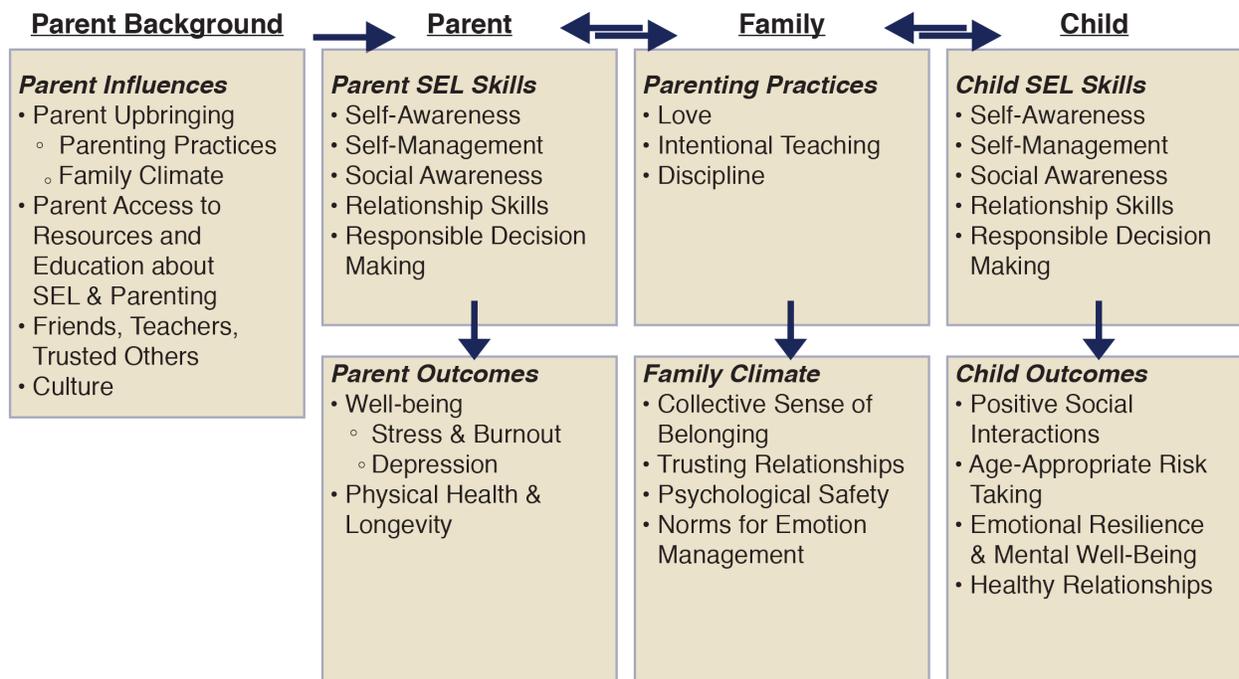
We surveyed over 90 SEL professionals, who were also parents, to determine how they see the overlap between school-based SEL and SEL in their parenting. First, we asked questions such as, “Think about the kind of adult you want your children to grow up to be. Please list 5 words that describe this kind of adult.” Then we asked questions including, “Think about the kind of parent that you would like to be. Please list 5 words to describe that ideal.” Responses were read, listed and grouped, maintaining parent-used terminology. Frequencies and alignments with the CASEL competencies were examined.

### **FINDINGS**

- ▶ SEL competencies were tightly aligned with the hopes that participants had for their children and their own parenting practices.
- ▶ Although these parents were SEL professionals, they rarely labeled their parenting practices using professional school-based SEL terminology (see Table 1).
- ▶ SEL professionals, regardless of their access to scholarly resources and experts, reported turning to a friend, spouse, or their parent for parenting advice.
- ▶ Parenting hopes and challenges reflected a need to understand SEL development across children’s developmental periods, and a strong emphasis on responsible decision making.

### **NEXT STEPS**

SEL is important for parenting, but differences in terms may create unnecessary barriers to linking with SEL scholarship. As we make strides to build stronger connections between school-based SEL and parenting, there are unique aspects of parenting to consider. These include the need to support a wide range of parenting practices across family cultures (rather than promoting one vision of “best” practices as is often the case in school settings) and considering parents’ major emphasis cultivating responsible decision making skills.



**FIGURE 1.** Conceptual model of the connections between parenting & social-emotional learning.

**TABLE 1**

*Alignment Among CASEL’s Five Social and Emotional Competencies and Words Parents Use Most Commonly to Describe Their Ideals for Their Children and Their Parenting*

Most common words parents used to describe ideals for their children	CASEL social & emotional competencies	Most common words parents used to describe ideals for their parenting
Happy, Fulfilled	<b>Self-Awareness</b>	Happy
Confident, Independent, Resilient	<b>Self-Management</b>	Patient, Consistent
Empathetic	<b>Social Awareness</b>	Encouraging, Understanding
Caring, Kind, Loving, Compassionate	<b>Relationship Skills</b>	Loving, Supportive, Nurturing, Fun, Kind, Caring, Compassionate
Responsible	<b>Responsible Decision-Making</b>	Provider, High Expectations, Honest

This research brief summarizes the following peer-reviewed publication:

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