

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' PERSONAL AND SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

Valuing and recognizing personal and social competencies

It is important that students and all school staff are able to appreciate the usefulness and importance of developing personal and social competencies. Giving positive meaning to this learning, in relation to the resulting personal development, makes it easier to grasp the importance of the concepts being worked on at school and of general well-being, which, in turn, fosters motivation and engagement.

Here are a few ways of valuing and recognizing personal and social competencies:

- Take the time to identify, describe and congratulate the good actions observed among students and parents as they occur.
- Use facts to explain to students how the observed behaviour corresponds to the personal and social competencies being developed.
- Plan activities to celebrate and highlight everyone's efforts (student, parents, school, community partners).

Valuing desired actions enables students to have a greater sense of self-awareness, self-efficacy and confidence in their ability to act responsibly. When staff adopts a warm, encouraging tone, students feel better supported and know they can count on them.

Here are a few examples:

- A monitor praises a student for having helped someone who dropped their food tray in the cafeteria.
- A daycare worker praises a student for having shared their game with a child who also wanted to play.
- A teacher highlights students' good teamwork and offers to reward them by giving them the privilege of playing music in class.
- The cafeteria staff thanks students for their patience and respect despite the long lines.
- The special education technician highlights a student's progress who practised breathing techniques when she felt anxious.

- A teacher points out to a student that, even though he ended up crumpling up his drawing, he still made an effort to use the anger management strategies they had identified together. She encourages him to continue his efforts.
- The school organizes a party to celebrate the engagement of the students and school staff. It highlights some of the outstanding achievements and reiterates the values of civility and respect.
- A teacher plans a soccer match during the last period with her students and invites parents to participate. The principal takes five minutes to congratulate the students and encourages parents to keep up their efforts in the development of these competencies. He pays tribute to the efforts of the teachers and students, and mentions the positive changes he sees.

Sources

Steponavičius, M., Gress-Wright, C. and Linzarini, A. *Social and emotional skills: Latest evidence on teachability and impact on life outcomes*. OECD Education Working Papers No. 304. OECD Publishing, 2023. doi.org/10.1787/ba34f086-en.

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