

	Strengths in your current practice	Areas for further development
<p>Some children and young people have not yet developed the social and emotional skills to be able to succeed at all of the challenges that school presents. These children and young people will come across situations which require a greater level of social and emotional skill (Emotional Literacy) than they have yet developed. This can lead to frequent failure and a negative cycle in which new skills are not developed, self-esteem decreases, a negative self-image develops, positive relationships don't get established and leads to vulnerability rather than resilience. All of which is as negative as it sounds.</p> <p>We need to help these children and young people to be able to have frequent experiences of success and this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching the children and young people the social and emotional (Emotional Literacy) skills they have not yet learned. • Scaffolding the child or young person's learning environment with support to prevent them repeatedly failing whilst they are in the process of learning these new skills. 		
<p>The good news is that social and emotional skills can be learned. Teaching the skills not yet learned is the bit that we already have expertise in at all schools. We need to provide high quality practice of the skills not yet learned. Research demonstrates that this practice is most effective when it includes the following elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Targeted at the skills not yet learned 2. Repeated 3. Proactive 4. Real life situations (although sometimes we need to use metaphor rather than a real life example) 5. Includes modelling of the skills alongside questioning (e.g. "What am I doing?" and "Why am I doing it?") 6. With a trusted other (Key Adult) 		
<p>It is often stated that all behaviour is communication. In the case of social and emotional skills the child or young person's behaviour can indicate to us the skills they have not yet learned and that we, therefore, need to teach them.</p> <p>We can usefully reflect on the communication behind a child or young person's behaviour in two ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The 'Communicative Function' of the behaviour and, therefore, the functionally equivalent behaviours to teach. It is useful as part of our assessment to consider what legitimate need the child or young person's behaviour is a best attempt to meet. The need(s) not yet met. 		

<p>2. The functionally related skills to teach i.e. the set of skills required to be able to enact the effective functionally equivalent behaviour. These functionally related social and emotional skills (aka Emotional Literacy or Emotional Intelligence) are grouped into 5 strands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness • Self-regulation • Self-motivation • Social skills • Empathy <p>Cat Walker has developed an extremely useful assessment tool for identifying the social and emotional skills that a child or young person needs to be taught (this Emotional Literacy Skills Assessment Tool can be found as part of the free online staff CPD session re teaching the social and emotional skills not yet learned – see the link at the bottom of this document).</p>		
<p>An additional barrier for children and young people to learn the social and emotional skills they have not yet learned is that these relational skills are learned in relationships. Children and young people who have experienced trauma often try to be independent from others and potentially attempt to be controlling of others’ behaviours in order to get their own needs met and to feel safe.</p> <p>In order to help children and young people who have experienced trauma we need to rebuild a trusting relationship and then teach the social and emotional skills not yet learned through this relationship (see the link at the bottom of this document for more detail on evidence-based ways of rebuilding trust).</p>		
<p>Psychologist Martin Herbert reminds us that, “Children are invariably trying to solve a problem rather than be one. Their solutions are often misguided because their conception of the problem is faulty, or because their skills leave much to be desired (or both).”</p> <p>And as Edmund Blackadder reminds us, “We need a plan so cunning that you could put a tail on it and call it a weasel.”</p> <p>Our cunning plan needs to include actions to teach the social and emotional skills not yet learned.</p>		

For further information on teaching the social and emotional skills not yet learned to children and young people see the free staff online CPD session at <http://www.sigmateachingschool.org.uk/online-training/#tab-id-9>

For further information on rebuilding trust see the free staff online CPD session at <http://www.sigmateachingschool.org.uk/online-training/#tab-id-2>

To learn more evidence-based ways of helping children and young people who have experienced trauma book a place on one of our online PACE+ training courses at <http://www.sigmateachingschool.org.uk/cpd-leadership/>