

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFERENCES (SPLDS) PART 2

The Importance of Social and Emotional Competence

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Children who are confronted with a multitude of complicated or distressed feelings cannot and will not learn effectively. Positive social and emotional well-being is especially important for children with SpLDs, such as Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Specific Language Impairment (SLI), who tend to develop low self-esteem, confidence and motivation.

Children with SpLDs are inclined to display psychosocial difficulties and often report feelings of not fitting in with their peers. Psychosocial difficulties relate to the mind's ability to consciously or unconsciously, adapt the body to its social environment where feelings of hostility and hopelessness in the process of socialisation may occur.

Emotional responses from children can occur at any of the following three levels:

Therefore, social and emotional educational efforts with children with SpLDs include not only understanding and dealing with their weaknesses or disabilities but also serves to build psychosocial strengths rather than weaknesses.

The value of holistic education involves the stimulation and training of both a child's cognitive and affective development. Insights from experts have alerted educators to the critical value of holistic education, which involves the stimulation and training of



EMOTIONAL RESPONSES FROM CHILDREN



LEVEL 1

Neurophysiological and biochemical reactions to stimuli including all the bodily processes regulated by the autonomic nervous system heart rate, blood flow, respiration and hormonal secretions.



LEVEL 2

Behavioural where emotions are expressed in a person's action such as crying, sullen gazes, and withdrawal from interactions, defiant and delayed responses.



LEVEL 3

Cognitive and involves language whether spoken, written or by which a person labels her feelings such as "I'm angry".

both a child's cognitive and affective development. By strengthening and increasing social and emotional educational opportunities, we will increase our children's capacity to learn, give them the tools to aspire to personal and professional achievements, and enable them to experience personal satisfaction.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Many mainstream schools today are implementing and infusing social and emotional learning competency building into the curriculum. Many educators are honing their social and emotional skills through workshops and self study, and parents too can bring social and emotional learning into their daily lives.

Boosting social and emotional competence among children with SpLDs will ensure that they develop skills that will enable them to propel safely in both the academic and social domain. Fortunately, social and emotional skills can be learned and enhanced at any age. Like basic functional tasks such as walking, talking or even toilet training, the regulation of emotional response is a developmental achievement which is not inherent at birth and hence, must be learned. These skills can in essence, be best learnt through effective classroom instruction, student engagement of positive activities within or and outside the classroom, and broad parent and community involvement in programme planning implementation and evaluation. Hence, it is never too late to equip our learners with

SpLDs with social and emotional skills so that they can navigate through life more effectively. It is important to recognise ways in which parents and educators, intentionally or not, act to promote the development of the five core competencies by recognising how we model, praise behaviours, and punish children in order to enhance or undermine their self-understanding.

"If your emotional abilities aren't in hand, if you don't have self awareness, if you are not able to manage your distressing emotions, if you can't have empathy and have effective relationships, then no matter how smart you are, you are not going to get very far." Daniel Goleman

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