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## 10+ Social Emotional Activities for Home



March 13, 2020 by pathway2success — Leave a Comment

# 10+ SEL Activities

## For Parents and Families at Home






[www.thepathway2success.com](http://www.thepathway2success.com)



Hi there!

I am a *middleschool* special education *teacher* with a *passion* for helping kids and teachers find their own *pathway 2 SUCCESS!*

Social emotional learning isn't just something that should be practiced and taught at school. SEL skills are life skills, of course! These include skills like empathy, self-control, and decision-making.

Before I even get started, while I was writing this post, I decided to also create a set of SEL printables you can send home with parents and families right away. Of course, if you're a parent looking for extra activities, I would encourage you to use them on your own, too! They include four choice boards covering skills like responsibility, friendships, strengths, and managing emotions. You can download your [free printable SEL activities here](#).

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It's important to mention that you don't have to be an expert with social emotional skills to teach and practice them with kids. Even small activities, like reading books and playing games, can strengthen social skills and teach kids important skills along the way. This matters.

Whenever you are doing a new activity, it's important to let kids know what skills they are working on. This makes every SEL activity more purposeful and targeted. For example, if you are playing board games, just briefly remind kids that they are working on important social skills like taking turns and showing fairness. This can lead to a good conversation about what those skills mean and why they matter.

Here are some SEL activities you can encourage parents to try, or do with your own children!

### Empathy in Action

**Skills targeted:** Empathy, Perspective-Taking

**How to try it:** Spend some time watching a show or movie. At any given time, pause and discuss how the characters are feeling. You might ask: "How are they feeling?" and "How would you feel if that happened to you?" Use this conversation to build on considering how others feel, discussing social cues, and caring about their emotions.

### Acts of Kindness Challenge

## GRAB MY BUTTON



**Skills targeted:** Kindness, Empathy

**How to try it:** Use this [free printable random acts of kindness challenge](#) to encourage kids to be kind to others. For each kind act they do, have them color in the picture. Another option is to have them give an example of each kind act before they color it in.

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### Just Chat!

**Skills targeted:** Self-Awareness, Conversation Skills, Relationships

**How to try it:** Start by asking kids questions about anything from their favorite foods and activities to what three items they might bring on a deserted island with them. Many questions can help work on conversation skills, turn-taking, and self-awareness. You can start with this [free printable list of conversation questions](#) or consider these [social emotional learning task cards](#) to chat and focus on the skills more explicitly.

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## Mindful Breathing

Skills targeted: Mindfulness, Coping Skills, Managing Emotions

How to try it: Let kids know that they will be practicing mindful breathing. Explain that mindful breathing is just focusing on breathing in and out to help calm our minds and bodies. There are many different mindful breathing exercises to try out. One of my favorites is "Cool off the pizza." In this activity, have kids pretend they have a hot slice of pizza in front of them. Slowly breathe in to smell the pizza and breathe out to cool it down. Another one of my favorites is bubble breathing. If you have bubbles on hand it is even better, but you can also pretend! Practice breathing in and out as you blow bubbles. Learn more about other [ideas to practice mindful breathing](#).



### Mindful Scavenger Hunt

**Skill targeted:** Mindfulness, Attention

**How to try it:** Explain that **mindfulness** is learning to focus on the present. This can help our minds and bodies feel calm and in control. On your own, create a list of 10 or 12 items you want kids to find. Note that this can be done inside or outside. For example, if outside, you might want them to find a plant, a pine cone, something blue, and something bumpy. If inside, you might want them to find something yellow, something in the shape of a square, and something that makes noise. You can create your own scavenger hunts (or skip the prep with the **ones I've made**), so it's entirely up to you and what you have! Give kids time to find these items and have them write them down on a piece of paper to document them.



### Kindness Share

**Skills targeted:** Kindness, Confidence

**How to try it:** Discuss what it means to be kind and give compliments. come up with some examples together. Then, have each person (kids and adults) write their name on a piece of paper. Pass that paper to your right. When you get someone else's paper, write something kind and thoughtful about that person.



## Organize It

**Skills targeted:** Planning, Organization

**How to try it:** Discuss what it means to be organized and how we know when something is organized and tidy. Gather a set of supplies for each child or team. Set the timer to a certain amount (five minutes, for example) and see if the child can return those items to the correct spot.

## Mindfulness 5-4-3-2-1

**Skills targeted:** Mindfulness, Coping Skills, Self-Regulation

**How to try it:** Explain that kids will be practicing mindfulness, which is a skill that helps us stay calm and in control. Have kids look around their room to find 5 things they can see, 4 things they can touch, 3 things they can hear, 2 things they can smell, and 1 thing they can taste. This is a grounding exercise that can help manage tough emotions and provide a mental reset when needed. After giving it a try, you can move to another room and try the same. More [free mindfulness activities and ideas can be found here](#).



## Optical Illusions

**Skills targeted:** Perspective-Taking

**How to try it:** Find any optical illusions online or use this [free printable worksheet](#). Have kids review the optical illusions. First, have them think about what they see and write it down. Then, share. Kids should quickly notice that what they see isn't always what others might see. Explain how optical illusions are like situations; sometimes you and someone else can see the same situation in different ways. As a follow-up, kids can find their own optical illusions online.

## SEL Read Alouds

**Skills targeted:** All SEL skills (varies depending on book)

**How to try it:** Choose any read aloud. As you read through the book, stop and discuss the social emotional skills embedded in the book. One skill that carries across all picture books, for example, is empathy. You can talk about how the character might feel, what they might be thinking, and how you can tell. Depending on which book you choose, many different social emotional skills can be discussed from confidence to decision-making and beyond. Grab this [free printable SEL Read Aloud List](#) to help you get started.



## Board Games

**Skills targeted:** Turn-Taking, Sportsmanship

**How to try it:** Use any board games you have on hand, such as Monopoly or Candy Land. These games can help support a number of skills, including taking turns, having conversations, and showing good sportsmanship. Check here for some other [ideas for social emotional games](#) you can use.

## Mindful Coloring

**Skills targeted:** Mindfulness, Coping Skills

**How to try it:** Set the tone with some calming music. Have kids color or doodle quietly as they breathe in and out. Note that you can use any coloring pages or books on hand, or grab these [free printable mindful coloring](#) pages to start.



### Charades

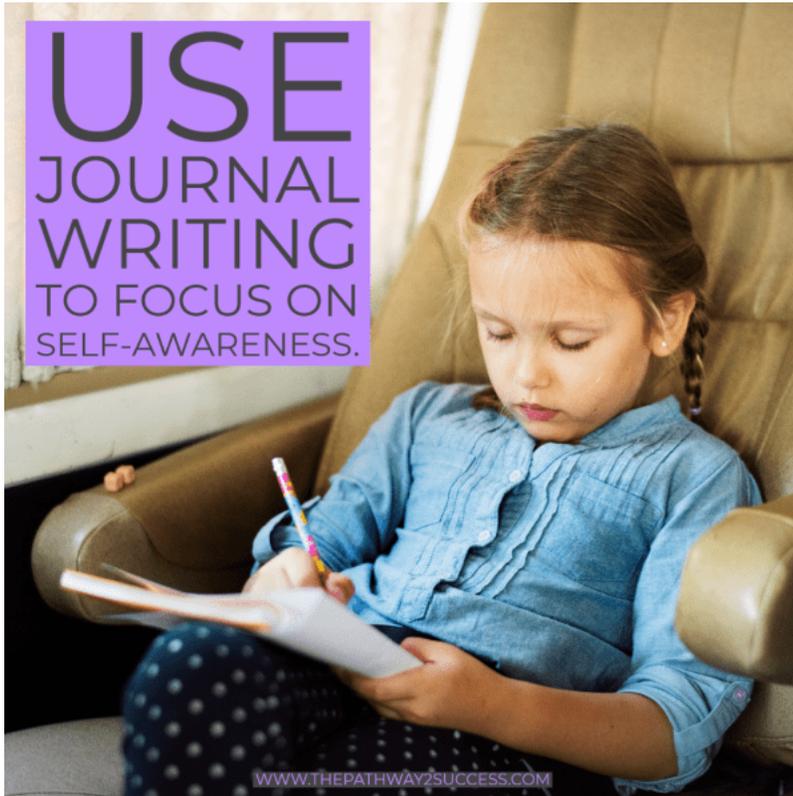
**Skills targeted:** Social Cues, Emotions

**How to try it:** Discuss that our body language and facial expressions can often hint at what we're doing and how we're feeling. Have each person or child come up with an activity, such as making a sandwich, and then act it out. See if others can guess the activity. Note that you can also do this with emotions, by having kids act out different emotions and seeing if others can correctly guess.

### Journal Writing

**Skills targeted:** Emotions, Self-Regulation, Self-Awareness

**How to try it:** Explain that writing in a journal can help express our feelings and thoughts. Set the timer for 5 or 10 minutes, and have each person just write what is on their mind. Give time for kids to share their thoughts afterward if they want. Another option is to use open-ended prompts for kids to write about. You can learn more about [mindful journaling](#) here as well.



### Inspirational Quotes

**Skills targeted:** Kindness, Perseverance, and many more

**How to try it:** Find a couple examples of your favorite inspirational quotes. This will vary depending on the age level of the children. For example, you might read, “No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.” Discuss the quote and what it means. Then, give a topic and have kids find or create their own quotes on that topic. Have them write them down and share them. You can even have kids design their own posters for the quote.

### Practice Positive Affirmations

**Skills targeted:** Positive Thinking, Confidence, Self-Love

**How to try it:** Explain that positive affirmations are kind and supportive words we say to ourselves to lift us up. For example, before a big test, we might say, “I can do this!” Ask kids to think of their own positive words they might say. Use this [free printable positive affirmations list](#) to have kids find their favorite positive self-talk statements. Practice saying them, writing them down, and creating cards for each of their favorites.



### I-Spy

**Skills targeted:** Attention, Mindfulness

**How to try it:** This is probably a game you've played before, but it's important to mention because SEL skills can be easily integrated! Start by saying, "I spy with my little eye....". For example, you might spy something green. Have kids stay just where they are and look around for the item. Instead of just guessing, it's helpful to have them ask questions that really cause them to think. For example, they might say, "is it something you can play with?" and "is it something you can write on?" After giving some time for questions, allow the child to guess what it is. Whoever guesses it right can be the next to spy something.

# 12 Home Activities that Build Social Emotional Skills

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- Play board games and sports** 
- Go on a mindful walk outside** 
- Write in a journal or diary** 
- Practice coping skills, like mindful breathing** 
- Read picture books** 
- Practice mindful coloring** 
- Talk about characters' feelings in a movie** 
- Start an acts of kindness challenge** 
- Organize an area of the house together** 
- Write a self-compliment list** 
- Use conversation starters to share ideas** 
- Play games like "I Spy" and "Simon Says"** 

Clipart by Kate Hadfield & Sarah Pecorino

Need more ideas? I've put together a massive list of [100+ FREE social emotional learning activities, printables, ideas, and more](#). Use it for yourself or share it to help someone else in need.

# 10+ SEL Activities For Parents and Families at Home



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**10 Phrases Kids & Teens Need to Hear More Often**

- 1 "I believe in you."
- 2 "What's on your mind?"
- 3 "I made a mistake. I'm sorry."
- 4 "Can you tell me more about that?"
- 5 "I'm here for you when you need me."
- 6 "I'm proud of how you handled that."
- 7 "This is tough, but you can do tough things."
- 8 "How are you feeling?"
- 9 "It's okay to feel that way."
- 10 "No."



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