

Evidence consistently shows that when Educators apply PSED approaches they can improve children's outcomes.

Although there is positive evidence for PSED approaches, individual approaches in this area are not all equally well evidenced yet.

Educators are recommended to apply approaches together, because they appear mutually reinforcing and most research has looked at impacts from use of combined approaches.

Scan the QR code for detailed examples and videos of the approaches in action.

eef.li/psed



1 Teaching awareness of emotions and feelings



This approach involves teaching a child to notice and connect their reactions, feelings and emotions and label them correctly.

Existing evidence shows this approach is beneficial for children as young as two and particularly those experiencing more stress or less support at home. It is possible younger children may also benefit.

Suggestions for applying this approach:

- **Label emotions and feelings:** Teach key vocabulary and when to use it to build a shared language to talk about feelings with others.
- **Discuss emotions and feelings:** Use key vocabulary to discuss emotive experiences, consequences and different responses.
- **Explain emotions and feelings:** Provide a statement which gives clarification or justification for a particular action or belief.
- **Scaffold children's reflections:** Use questions and prompts to guide a child's recall and reflections about an emotive event.

2 Teaching and modelling managing emotions and feelings



This approach involves the child and educator working together, using co-regulation and other strategies, to manage emotions in ways that minimise any negative impact on others.

There is evidence to suggest that proactively and explicitly teaching children strategies for managing their emotions is an effective approach for improving their PSED outcomes, particularly for children experiencing poverty.

Educators modelling how to use the strategies and as well as having conversations with children about them are an important part of children learning to apply them successfully.

Suggestions for applying this approach:

- **Scaffold children's reflection:** Provide prompts to aid recall and reflections on emotive events.
- **Provide techniques to manage strong feelings:** Show actions to change a physical response that the child can implement by themselves to manage their strong feelings.
- **Remind children when to employ the techniques:** Use physical, visual, and verbal prompts to help a child to recall and make choices about which technique to employ.
- **Scaffold opportunities to manage strong feelings:** Model, rehearse and discuss different responses to strong feelings using stories, puppets, and role-play.

3 Teaching and modelling social communication



This approach involves teaching children to notice body language and spoken words in order to understand how to listen and respond in socially appropriate ways.

There is some evidence that teaching and modelling social communication can improve children's PSED outcomes, but often this approach has been researched alongside others.

Showing children good examples of social communication (e.g. eye contact, pointing, waving) and following this with conversations, can help them to understand and follow the rules of social communication.

Suggestions for applying this approach:

- **Model non-verbal communication, body positioning & gestures:** Show how actions can enhance or inhibit effective social communication.
- **Promote waiting, joint attention and engagement:** Use body language, tone of voice, signs, and symbols to signal the need to take turns, attend and focus.
- **Demonstrate rules of communication:** Establish a code of conduct for engagement prior to starting a conversation or game.
- **Remind children of the rules of social communication:** Provide prompts to aid recall of the rules relevant for different contexts and types of interaction.

4 Teaching relationship skills



This approach involves children experiencing positive relationships and teaching children to understand features of good relationships.

There is some evidence that a child can build relationships and improve their relationship skills when positive interactions are modelled by educators and other children. This could be during group activities and collaborative play.

Most research has studied this approach in combination with others, such as managing emotions and feelings.

There's evidence to suggest involving parents in your setting's approach to building relationship skills could enhance outcomes.

Suggestions for applying this approach:

- **Reflect on the impact of words and actions on others:** Draw attention to words and actions that impact on others and the consequences.
- **Provide opportunities to develop connections and relationships with others:** Promote opportunities to initiate and build peer-to-peer interactions.
- **Explore unique qualities and preferences:** Develop a sense of identity and belonging, build trust and promote agency within the group.
- **Scaffold when and how to ask for help during collaborative play:** Organise resources, give visual support and use rewards to motivate the child to seek and give help. Draw attention to the benefits of working together and disadvantages when cooperative play breaks down.

5 Teaching how to sustain positive relationships



This approach involves teaching a child to adapt, be assertive or change their behaviour to promote effective collaboration in different situations.

There is evidence that teaching children how to sustain positive relationships can have a positive impact on children's social skills and understanding of emotions.

Educators can support by ensuring children have opportunities to reach a shared goal and solve problems together both with their peers and with adults.

Oral language skills are an important part of sustaining relationships. Educators can introduce useful vocabulary or scaffolding scripts to support children with maintaining relationships.

Suggestions for applying this approach:

- **Provide strategies to minimise and resolve conflict:** Prompt a child's recall and reflections during times of conflict. Show how strategies can be used to change their own (or another's) response.
- **Provide opportunities for decision making:** Provide support for children to make decisions and justify their own actions and responses. Show how words and actions can influence outcomes.
- **Provide opportunities for collaboration:** Facilitate peer to peer interaction, conversation, and cooperation to achieve intended outcomes.
- **Develop a sense of belonging, care, and responsibility:** Provide opportunities to participate, support each other and notice when children are showing care or taking responsibility.

6



Promoting self-care

Approaches to promoting self-care

Promoting self-care is a key part of educators' practice. However, initial evidence searches have not identified relevant studies that meet EEF's evidence standards. EEF will therefore be carrying out a more systematic search for relevant evidence. If this does not identify any relevant studies, EEF will consider how to target future research to fill this gap and provide information on how best to implement practices to promote self-care.

7



Teaching children to self-regulate

Approaches to teaching children to self-regulate

Supporting children to self-regulate is a key part of educators' practice. EEF will scope the full breadth of studies that have looked at how educators can support children's development of self-regulation before settling on, if or which, aspects of self-regulation may fit within the theme of PSED.