Key developmental tasks at different phases of development include:

- **Middle childhood (ages 6 to 10):** Self-regulation (self-awareness and self-control); learning-related skills and knowledge; interpersonal skills
- **Early adolescence (ages 11 to 14):** Group-based identity; mindsets
- **Middle adolescence (ages 15 to 18):** Sense of values; individuated identity
- **Young adulthood (ages 19 to 22):** Integrated identity


Instruction that is congruent with the cultural value systems of a diverse student population can improve academic outcomes. Such instruction uses students' cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and frames of reference to make schooling more relevant and effective for them.


A strong, positive sense of ethnic identity has been associated with more active coping strategies, fewer aggressive behaviors, lower incidence of depression, and better academic outcomes.


Factors associated with successful, enduring implementation of evidence-based SEL programs include:

- Program coordination
- Inclusiveness of all school populations
- Ongoing training
- Support from leadership
- High visibility within the school community


The recently signed Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires states to spend 20% of their federal education funding on “well-rounded” educational opportunities and 20% on activities that promote student health and safety.


Children around the world are affected by bias, prejudice, and discrimination based on race. While exclusion based on race has a number of harmful psycho-social effects, strong racial identification can be a protective factor for children of color.


Caregiving approaches based on the promotion of secure attachment, self-regulation, and developmental competencies can mitigate the harmful effects of complex trauma in children.


Research has demonstrated linkages between positive school climate and a range of social, emotional, and physical health outcomes. In adolescence, positive school climate is associated with lower rates of substance abuse, psychological distress, and school absenteeism.

SEL programs yield positive effects not only on SEL competencies, but also on attitudes about the self, others, and school. Further, SEL programs can significantly boost academic achievement.


All 50 states have free-standing standards for social and emotional learning (SEL) at the preschool level. At the K-12 level, only 16 states have free-standing standards, though other states may be in the process of developing them.


Prosocial behavior at an early age is a stronger predictor of academic achievement in adolescence than is early academic achievement.


Afterschool programs that work to build young people’s personal and social skills using sequenced, active, focused, explicit (SAFE) approaches were effective in building intrapersonal, interpersonal, and academic skills.


Effective school-based prevention and youth development programs:

- Teach children to apply social and emotional skills
- Foster respectful and supportive relationships
- Support and reward positive behavior through school-family-community approaches


Middle school students who perceived high levels of emotional support from adult staff in their afterschool program experienced higher relative gains in work habits, task persistence, and social relationships with peers.


High-quality youth development programs promote the development of competencies when they have:

- The goal of promoting positive development
- An atmosphere of hope that is youth-centered and asset-oriented
- Activities that allow young people to explore their interests, practice skills, and gain a sense of recognition