Social and Emotional Learning Practices

SEPTEMBER 2015

A Self-Reflection Tool for Afterschool Staff

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Contents

Introduction

Both the formal and informal education communities are increasingly focused on fostering opportunities for social and emotional learning (SEL) and the link between SEL and youth outcomes. SEL is the process through which youth develop the skills necessary to recognize and manage emotions, build relationships, solve interpersonal problems, and make effective and ethical decisions. There is a growing evidence that the social and emotional competencies youth develop while in afterschool programs can contribute to their success in school and life (Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010; Farrington et al., 2012; Pierce, Auger, & Vandell, 2013). As a result, afterschool program staff must understand the most effective strategies to promote the development of social and emotional competencies in youth. They must understand, too, how to build and improve their own social and emotional competencies. This tool focuses on five social and emotional competencies, including self-awareness, self-management/emotion regulation, social awareness, relationship/social skills, and responsible decision making (see Appendix B for definitions of the five competencies). In order to model and encourage positive youth interactions, program staff themselves need the social and emotional skills required to communicate effectively with young people. Program staff who are socially and emotionally competent develop supportive relationships with youth, create activities that build on the strengths of young people, and help them develop the basic social and emotional skills necessary to participate in programs (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

This self-reflection tool is designed to help afterschool program staff reflect upon their own social and emotional competencies and their ability to support young people's SEL through program practices.

This tool is based on [Self-Assessing Social and Emotional Instruction and Competencies: A Tool for Teachers](). Staff at the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL Center) at American Institutes for Research (AIR) began development of that tool in 2011, with the goal of characterizing and operationalizing teacher social and emotional competencies. Staff at the GTL Center conducted an extensive literature review of the teacher competencies and developed a broad definition of the five teacher social and emotional competencies (see Appendix B for the definitions). In addition, AIR staff interviewed leading experts in the field to obtain their thoughts regarding the definition and operationalization of teacher social and emotional competencies. The GTL Center's tool has been reviewed by teacher social and emotional competency experts and state department of education staff whose focus is on SEL. That tool was developed to help teachers and school staff self-reflect on their social and emotional competencies and to identify professional learning experiences and was not empirically tested within a teacher evaluation system. This tool, designed for afterschool staff, has similar goals focused on building program staff capacity and social and emotional competence. It, too, is not designed for evaluation but rather for reflection and staff development.

How to Use This Tool

There are two types of practices that help program staff to support the social and emotional competencies of youth participants:

1. **Social practices.** These are practices related to the interactions between program staff and young people during program activities (e.g., creating a warm environment, use of language, offering choice and leadership).

2. **Program implementation practices.** These are practices related to the delivery of content and the development of specific skills in the program (e.g., hands-on and cooperative learning, expectations, reflection, and content delivery).

This tool is divided into the following four sections:

Section 1. Social Practices Reflection

Section 2. Program Implementation Practices Reflection

Section 3. Reflection on Social and Emotional Competencies

Section 4. Culminating Activities and Action Planning

Sections 1 and 2. Program staff reflect on their social and program implementation practices. Ratings are based on *how often* and *how well* program staff implement each practice on a scale of 1 to 4, from "I do not implement this practice" to "I implement this practice extremely well."

1 = I do not implement this practice. I am not implementing this practice.

2 = I struggle to implement this practice. I sometimes attempt to implement this practice, and, when I do, I have a difficult time implementing it.

3 = I implement this practice reasonably well. I attempt to implement this practice and do a reasonable job. I think with more practice and/or some support, I could implement this practice well.

4 = I implement this practice extremely well. I consider this practice to be among my regular practices. I use this practice all of the time, and it is highly successful with participants.

Section 3. Program staff consider their own social and emotional competencies and how those competencies influence their abilities to implement: (1) social practices and (2) instructional practices. Program staff rate their social and emotional competencies on a 4-point scale, from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree.

Section 4. Program staff compute their total scores and reflect on their self-ratings with guidance from questions and points provided for further consideration.[1]

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[1] For additional resources and next steps, please see Beyond the Bell website (www.beyondthebell.org).

SECTION 1.
Social Practices Reflection

Think about how often you implement practices that influence participants' SEL and skill building. Think about how often you implement practices that focus on positive social interactions. Using a scale of 1 to 4, rate how often and how well you use these practices.

1 = I do not implement this practice.

2 = I struggle to implement this practice.

3 = I implement this practice reasonably well.

4 = I implement this practice extremely well.

1. Youth-Centered Problem Solving

SEL Practices	Self-rating	Comments
a. I work with my participants to co-develop program guidelines and norms, at the beginning of the program, that everyone agrees on.		
b. I invite youth to suggest consequences that are logical when a rule is broken.		
c. I make sure participants make the connection between their choices and potential consequences.		
d. I am consistent in implementing program rules and consequences.		
e. I try to understand the social and environmental factors that may be causing behavior problems in my program.		
f. I hold discussions with participants so that we can solve problems that occur in the program.		
g. I ask participants to reflect on our jointly developed program norms and guidelines when there is a problem or conflict.		
h. I teach participants strategies to handle the emotions that affect their ability to focus in the program (e.g., stress, frustration).		
i. I model strategies that will help participants to monitor and regulate their emotions.		

2. Program Staff Language

SEL Practices	Self-rating	Comments
a. I promote positive behaviors by encouraging participants when they display good social skills (e.g., acknowledge positive actions or steps to improve).		
b. I promote positive skill development by encouraging participants when they display engagement with program activities (e.g., acknowledge positive actions or steps to improve).		
c. I let participants know, with specific affirmation not generic praise, how their efforts lead to positive results.		

3. Responsibility and Choice

SEL Practices	Self-rating	Comments
a. I invite participants to help plan program activities in developmentally appropriate ways.		
b. I invite participants to plan how the program will operate in developmentally appropriate ways.		
c. I give participants meaningful choices on what they can work on and how they can engage with program activities.		
d. I arrange experiences that allow participants to become responsible (e.g., program aides or jobs, leading an activity, specific roles in group work) in developmentally appropriate ways.		

4. Warmth and Support

SEL Practices	Self-rating	Comments
a. I demonstrate to each participant that I appreciate him or her as an individual (e.g., appropriate eye contact, greeting each child by name).		
b. I use the interests and experiences of participants when running an activity.		
c. I display to participants that I care about how and what they learn and their interests.		
d. I let participants know that it is okay to be wrong or think outside of the box (e.g., modeling, praising attempts with "good thinking").		
e. I check in with participants about concerns they might have (e.g., personal, social, and related to specific skill being developed in the program).		
f. I follow up with participants when they have a problem or concern.		
g. I create structures in the program where participants feel included and appreciated (e.g., opportunities to share with group, small-group work, reflection).		

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SECTION 2.
Program Implementation Practices Reflection

Think about how often you implement a variety of practices that influence participants' social, emotional, and academic skills. Using a scale of 1 to 4, rate how often and how well you use these practices.

1 = I do not implement this practice.

2 = I struggle to implement this practice.

3 = I implement this practice reasonably well.

4 = I implement this practice extremely well.

5. Cooperative Learning/Group Learning

SEL Practices	Self-rating	Comments
a. I encourage participants to work with other youth when they have trouble with assignment program activity.		
b. I create program experiences in which participants must apply positive social skills to be successful.		
c. I hold individuals and the group accountable for skill development during small-group work.		
d. I provide opportunities for participants to share what they are doing and to receive feedback from each other.		
e. I provide space to allow participants to reflect on how well they work together during group work.		

6. Group Discussions

SEL Practices	Self-rating	Comments
a. I help participants identify how to listen (e.g., tracking the speaker, making mental connections).		
b. I help participants learn how to respond to and learn from their peers' contributions during a discussion.		
c. I help participants learn how to effectively communicate their points of view (e.g., elaborate on their thinking).		
d. I hold in-depth discussions about the program content with participants.		
e. I ask participants to listen to and think about their peers' opinions and whether they agree with their peers.		

7.   Self-Reflection and Self-Assessment

SEL Practices	Self-rating	Comments
a. I discuss the goals for each activity with participants.		
b. I have participants reflect on their personal goals and make connections to the activity goals.		
c. I create opportunities for participants to monitor and reflect on their progress toward their goals.		
d. I help participants develop strategies to make sure they meet their goals.		
e. I provide participants with opportunities to reflect on their thinking and skill development processes (e.g., using graphic organizers or journals).		
f. I ask participants to think together to provide feedback on the effectiveness of activities (e.g., debriefing tool, feedback form, simple survey).		

8.   Balanced Program Practices

SEL Practices	Self-rating	Comments
a. I use an appropriate balance between providing participants with opportunities to directly develop new skills as well as actively engage in the material.		
b. I have participants work on some extended projects or activities that take more than one session to complete.		
c. I require participants to extend their thinking when they provide basic answers (e.g., ask multiple follow-up questions).		
d. I use multiple strategies to keep participants engaged in program activities		
e. My activities result in tangible products or performances (e.g., robots, jewelry, theatrical performances, dance demonstrations) that are meant to be shared with multiple audiences (e.g., other youth, family members, community members, school and program staff).		

9. Encouraging Grit and Persistence

SEL Practices	Self-rating	Comments
a. I give participants more challenging activities to try when they have mastered something in the program.		
b. I ensure that participants feel responsible for accomplishing or failing to accomplish their work.		
c. I have high expectations for participants and encourage them to rise to those expectations by supporting them socially and emotionally.		
d. I give participants activities that can be done in more than one way and ask them to explain how and why they do something.		

10. Competence Building—Modeling, Practicing, Feedback, and Coaching

SEL Practices	Self-rating	Comments
a. I model and practice new skills with participants before asking them to perform independently.		
b. I demonstrate a concept using a variety of tools (e.g., modeling, demonstrations, minilessons, or texts).		
c. I work individually with participants to help them identify ways to improve.		
d. I use multiple strategies with participants until they have figured out how to master a challenge (i.e., graphic organizers, leveled text, checklist, verbal cues).		
e. I give participants frequent specific feedback (on skill development and socially) to let them know how they are doing in the program.		
f. I have participants correct their mistakes (content based or social) based on feedback from me or their peers.		

SECTION 3.
Reflection on Social and Emotional Competencies

Now think about your own social and emotional competencies and how those competencies influence your ability to implement the *social and program implementation practices* outlined in the previous sections. Use the scoring guide below to rate how your SEL skills influence your *practices* with your participants. Consider each statement, and score yourself according to where each statement holds true for you.

1 = Strongly disagree. I have a difficult time with this practice. I know I do some of the things mentioned, but I do not necessarily find them relevant to my instruction.

2 = Disagree. I demonstrate some of these skills with participants. I think with more practice and/or more support, I could demonstrate these skills more to improve implementation of this practice.

3 = Agree. I am strong in this area. I know I do a good job modeling these skills for participants. I use these skills most of the time when I implement the instructional practices.

4 = Strongly agree. I am very strong in this area. I am able to use these skills when I am implementing the instructional practices.

Self-Awareness

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am aware of the practices that I need to improve in order to grow professionally.	1	2	3	4
I can effectively implement social and program implementation practices with participants.	1	2	3	4
I am usually aware of how my emotions, culturally grounded beliefs, and background are precursors to my emotional reactions, and I understand how they impact my practices with participants.	1	2	3	4
I understand how student responses (positive and negative) affect my emotions and my behaviors in the program.	1	2	3	4
I am aware of how my cultural beliefs and background affect my practices with participants.	1	2	3	4

Self-Management/Emotion Regulation

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I continuously refine my personal goals about how I will best implement program activities.	1	2	3	4
I effectively use multiple strategies (e.g., breathing techniques and mindfulness) when I have a strong emotional reaction in the program (e.g., stress, anger).	1	2	3	4
Through the effective management of my emotions (e.g., use of stress reduction techniques), I am better able to develop a positive program environment that is free from bias and prejudice.	1	2	3	4
I model behaviors (e.g., form guidelines, set boundaries) to help participants learn to regulate emotions during the program.	1	2	3	4

Social Awareness

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
To effectively implement positive practices, I usually understand the perspectives of participants and can pay attention to their emotional cues during program interactions.	1	2	3	4
I try to understand why participants are or are not actively participating, and I am usually successful at providing participants with the necessary skills to participate in the program.	1	2	3	4
I successfully support positive emotions and respond to negative emotions in the program.	1	2	3	4
I address the commonalities and differences (e.g., racial, ethnic, cultural) that exist among participants.	1	2	3	4

Relationship/Social Skills

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I clearly communicate behavioral and skill-development expectations in a manner that addresses participants' individual needs and strengths.	1	2	3	4
I am comfortable helping participants resolve interpersonal conflicts that come up during the program, and I have experienced success with this.	1	2	3	4
I use the social and program implementation practices to help form meaningful relationships with participants and cultivate their SEL skills, and I am usually successful at building meaningful relationships.	1	2	3	4
I use the social and program implementation practices to help cultivate participants' SEL skills, and I am usually successful at building their SEL skills.	1	2	3	4

Responsible Decision Making

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I am effective at considering multiple forms of evidence, such as balancing the needs and the behaviors of my entire group.	1	2	3	4
I regularly include participants and/or collaborate with other program staff to solve problems that arise in the program.	1	2	3	4
During the program, I balance awareness of participants' emotional needs and academic needs.	1	2	3	4

SECTION 4.
Culminating Activities and Action Planning

1. **In the table below, indicate the score you received for each social and emotional competency on the blank line in column two. Next, calculate your percentage for each set of practices by dividing your score by the total possible score and placing it in column three. This will give you a sense of your overall rating for each set of practices.**

Instructional Practice	Your score	Your percentage
1. Youth-Centered Problem Solving	_____/36	
2. Program Staff Language	_____/12	
3. Responsibility and Choice	_____/16	
4. Warmth and Support	_____/28	
5. Cooperative Learning/Group Learning	_____/20	
6. Group Discussions	_____/20	
7. Self-Reflection and Self-Assessment	_____/24	
8. Balanced Program Practices	_____/20	
9. Encouraging Grit and Persistence	_____/16	
10. Competence Building—Modeling, Practicing, Feedback, and Coaching	_____/20	

2. **Reflect on your scores.**

1. On which SEL practice did you score the highest? Why?	
2. On which SEL practice did you score the lowest? Why?	
3. What evidence do you have to support the self-rating you selected for your highest SEL practice? Your lowest SEL practice?	
4. How do these behaviors and practices look in your group/program?	
5. How do you think your participants would rate you?	
6. How does your program culture affect your self-rating?	
7. What professional learning experiences could facilitate improvement in your lowest SEL practices?	
8. What can you do to ensure that you are implementing these practices fully?	

3. **In the table below, indicate the score you received for each social and emotional competency on the blank line in column two. Next, calculate your percentage for each set of practices by dividing your score by the total possible score and placing it in column three. This will give you a sense of your overall rating for each set of practices.**

Social and Emotional Competency	Your score	Your percentage
1. Self-Awareness	_____/16	
2. Self-Management/Emotion Regulation	_____/16	
3. Social Awareness	_____/16	
4. Relationship/Social Skills	_____/16	
5. Responsible Decision Making	_____/12	

4. **Reflect on your scores.**

1. On which social and emotional competency did you score the highest?	
2. On which social and emotional competency did you score the lowest?	
3. What evidence do you have to support the self-rating you selected? What skills do you possess that support the self-rating you received?	
4. What professional learning experiences could facilitate improvement in areas in which you scored lowest?	

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Appendix A.
Ten Practices That Promote Social and Emotional Learning

Social Practices

1. Youth-Centered Problem Solving

Youth-centered problem solving refers to the types of group management strategies that program staff use in their activities. To be effective at youth-centered problem solving, program staff need to use strategies that are developmentally appropriate for their participants and that motivate youth to want to use positive behavior in the program. Such problem solving occurs when participants have opportunities to be self-directive and have some say in what happens in the program. Program staff should not attempt to overmanage their participants, nor should they use punitive measures to get participants to behave. Furthermore, participants and program staff should develop shared norms and values in the activity. This strategy allows participants to connect the rules to the overarching vision of how the activity is run and increases participants' buy-in.

Similarly, program staff should enact proactive group management strategies (compared with reactive strategies). This approach is evident when program staff use management strategies consistently and those strategies are related to the norms and visions of the program. If a participant happens to break a rule, the consequences should be logical in relation to the rule that was broken. For example, if a participant pushes another participant in line, that participant should have to line up last for the rest of the week rather than lose free play time for the week, a consequence that is not related to the incident. Through the development of these consistent and logical rules and consequences, jointly developed by program staff and participants, participants begin to learn how to regulate their own behavior and solve difficult situations that arise in the program. Programs and scholars that discuss youth-centered problem solving in afterschool and expanded learning settings include: McElvain, Moroney, Devaney, and Singer (2014); The Extension Center for Youth Development at the University of Minnesota; The Forum for Youth Investment; and The Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality. Programs and scholars that discuss youth-centered problem solving in school settings include Caring School Communities; Raising Healthy Children; Responsive Classroom; Christenson and Havsy (2004); Hawkins, Smith, and Catalano (2004); Johnson and Johnson (2004); and McCombs (2004).

2. Program Staff Language

Program staff language refers to how the program staff talk to participants. Program staff should encourage participant effort and work, restating what the participant did and what that participant needs to do in order to improve. For example, program staff language should not be simply praise (e.g., "You did a great job.") but should encourage participants (e.g., "I see you worked hard on your mathematics paper. When you really think about your work and when you explain your

thinking, you get more correct answers."). In addition, program staff language should encourage participants to monitor and regulate their own behavior, not just tell participants how to behave (e.g., "What strategies have we learned when we come across a problem that we are not sure how to do?"). Programs and scholars that discuss program staff language in afterschool and expanded learning settings include: McElvain, Moroney, Devaney, and Singer (2014); Larson and Angus (2011); Salusky et al. (2014); and The Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality. Programs and scholars that discuss program staff language in school settings include Responsive Classroom and Elias (2004).

3. Responsibility and Choice

Responsibility and choice refer to the degree to which program staff allow participants to make responsible decisions about their work in their activity. The program staff members create a program environment where democratic norms are put into place and where participants provide meaningful input into the development of the norms and procedures for the group as well as the content or how the content is learned. Democratic norms do not mean that everything the participants say gets done, but program staff provide structures so that the participants have a voice in the program. Program staff give participants controlled and meaningful choices. In other words, program staff should not give participants a "free for all" but should provide specific choices participants can select from during lessons and activities, in which participants are held accountable for their decisions.

Other ways to get participants to feel responsible in the group are peer tutoring, cross-age tutoring, or participating in a service-learning or community service program. When participants extend their learning to help others, they often feel more responsible in the classroom. Programs and scholars that discuss responsibility and choice in afterschool and expanded learning settings include: McElvain, Moroney, Devaney, and Singer (2014); Larson and Angus (2011); Salusky et al. (2014); and The Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality. Programs and scholars that discuss responsibility and choice in school settings include Caring School Communities, Responsive Classroom, Tribes Learning Community, and Hawkins et al. (2004).

4. Warmth and Support

Warmth and support refers to the support that participants receive from program staff and from their peers. Program staff create a program environment where the participants know that staff care about them. Program staff can demonstrate that they care about their participants by asking participants questions, following up with participants when participants have a problem or concern, providing their own anecdotes or stories, and acting in ways in which participants know that taking risks and asking questions are safe to do in the program. In addition, program staff need to create structures in the program where participants feel included and appreciated by peers and staff. Program staff can help youth feel included through group meetings, small moments throughout the session, or projects in which participants get a chance to share what they learn. Programs and scholars that discuss the importance of warmth and support in afterschool and expanded learning settings include: McElvain, Moroney, Devaney, and Singer (2014) and The Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality. Programs and scholars that discuss warmth and support in school settings include Caring School Communities, Responsive Classrooms, Tribes Learning Community, Christenson and Havsy (2004), Hawkins et al. (2004), and McCombs (2004).

Program Implementation Practices

5. Cooperative Learning/Group Learning

Cooperative learning refers to a specific practice in which program staff have participants work together toward a collective goal. Program staff ask participants to do more than group work; participants are actively working with their peers regarding content in a meaningful way. To implement cooperative learning effectively, program staff include five basic elements: (1) positive interdependence, (2) individual accountability, (3) promoting one another's successes, (4) applying interpersonal and social skills, and (5) group processing—the group discusses progress toward achieving a goal. When implementing cooperative learning, program staff should have an element that requires collective accountability as well as individual accountability to ensure that everyone participates in the learning task. For these two types of accountability to have an impact on participant learning as well as on social and emotional skills, participants need to collaboratively process how they work together and monitor their progress toward their goal. Programs and scholars that discuss cooperative learning in school settings include Caring School Communities; Raising Healthy Children; Steps to Respect; Tribes Learning Community; Elias et al. (1997); Hawkins et al. (2004); Johnson and Johnson (2004); and Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, and Walberg (2004).

6. Group Discussions

Group discussions refer to conversations participants and program staff have regarding content. During group discussions, program staff ask more open-ended questions and ask participants to elaborate on their own thinking and on the thinking of their peers. When group discussions are done well, participants and program staff are constantly building upon each other's thoughts, and most of the dialogue is participant driven. To have effective group discussions, program staff should develop participants' communication skills. More specifically, program staff members ensure that participants learn how to extend their own thinking and expand on the thinking of their peers. Participants need to be able to listen attentively and pick out the main ideas of what other participants are saying. Program staff also must make sure that participants have enough content knowledge in order to do this, in addition to having the skills necessary to hold a substantive discussion. Programs and scholars that discuss group discussions in school settings include Caring School Communities, Raising Healthy Children, Tribes Learning Community, Elias (2004), and Elias et al. (1997).

7. Self-Reflection and Self-Assessment

Self-reflection and self-assessment are facilitation strategies whereby program staff ask participants to actively think about their own work. For participants to self-reflect on their work, program staff should ask them to assess their own work. This means that program staff help youth understand how to assess the work they have done on a project to see if they have met the basic goals or guidelines for the task. The process should not stop there, however; participants also need to think about how to improve their work on the basis of their self-assessment. To assist participants with this process, program staff need to develop goals and priorities with participants. If participants do not know what they are working toward, how to accomplish those

goals, or when those goals have been accomplished, participants will be less invested in the program. Along with goal setting, participants need to learn how to monitor the progress toward meeting their goals. In addition, when participants self-reflect, they also need to learn when and how to seek help and where to search for resources. Programs and scholars that discuss self-reflection and self-assessment in afterschool and expanded learning settings include: McElvain, Moroney, Devaney, and Singer (2014) and The Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality. Programs and scholars that discuss self-reflection and self-assessment in school settings include Caring School Communities, Steps to Respect, Tribes Learning Community, Elias (2004), and Elias et al. (1997).

8. **Balanced Program Practices**

Balanced instruction refers to program staff using an appropriate balance between active instruction and direct instruction, as well as the appropriate balance between individual and collaborative learning. Through balanced instruction, program staff provide participants with opportunities to directly learn about the material as well as engage with the material. Balance, however, does not mean an equal split between the types of instruction. Most programs and social and emotional learning scholars promote active forms of instruction in which participants interact with the content in multiple ways, including games, play, projects, and other types. Although active forms of instruction are typically engaging for participants, these activities should not be just for fun; program staff should use strategies that represent one of the best ways for participants to learn and engage with the content.

An example of an active form of instruction is project-based learning. In project-based learning, participants are actively involved in solving a problem, which could be completed collaboratively or independently. Even during independent projects, participants typically have to rely on other participants to find information. During the project, participants should plan, monitor, and reflect on their progress toward completion. Programs and scholars that discuss balanced instruction in school settings include Caring School Communities; Christenson and Havsy (2004); Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger (2011); Elias (2004); Elias et al. (1997); Hawkins et al. (2004); and Zins et al. (2004).

9. **Encouraging Grit and Persistence**

Encouraging grit and persistence refers to how program staff implement meaningful and challenging work and how their expectations focus on the belief that all participants can and will succeed. Participants should sense that their skill development is extremely important, that program staff want them to succeed, and that they have to exert effort in challenging work in order to succeed. However, this rigor should not cause program staff to be too strict with their participants. To be successful with this practice, program staff must know what their participants are capable of doing and how they will emotionally respond to challenging work. Programs and scholars that discuss grit and persistence in afterschool and expanded learning settings include: Dweck (2006) and Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, and Kelly (2007). Programs and scholars that discuss this concept in school settings include Caring School Communities, Tribes Learning Community, Cristenson and Havsy (2004), McCombs (2004), and Zins et al. (2004).

10. Competence Building—Modeling, Practicing, Feedback, Coaching

Competence building occurs when program staff help develop social and emotional competencies systematically through the typical program implementation cycle: goals and objectives of the lesson, introduction to new material and modeling, group and individual practice, and conclusion and reflection. Each part of the cycle helps reinforce particular social and emotional competencies. Throughout the lesson, the program staff should model prosocial behavior (i.e., positive relationship skills) to the participants. When participants are involved in group work, program staff encourage positive social behaviors and coach participants on how to use positive social behavior when they practice their prosocial skills in a group setting. The program staff also provide feedback to participants on how they are interacting with their peers and how they are learning content. If problems arise between participants in guided practice or if problems arise with content, program staff guide the participants through problem-solving and conflict-resolution strategies. Programs and scholars that discuss competence building in afterschool and expanded learning settings include: McElvain, Moroney, Devaney, and Singer (2014); and The Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality. Programs and scholars that discuss competence building in school settings include Responsive Classroom, Raising Healthy Children, Steps to Respect, Christenson and Havsy (2004), Elias (2004), Elias et al. (1997), McCombs (2004), and Zins et al. (2004).

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Appendix B.
Program Staff Social
and Emotional Competencies

1. Self-Awareness

Self-awareness refers to the ability to assess one's feelings, interests, values, and strengths accurately and to maintain a well-grounded sense of self-efficacy (Payton et al., 2008). In the program context, program staff are not only required to understand one's own attitudes and opinions but also are expected to recognize the limitations of self and how different self-aspects influence their instruction. Socially and emotionally competent program staff understand that their behaviors are influenced by multiple personal factors, such as their background experiences, personality, emotions, knowledge base, opinions, and attitudes. They also are aware that their participants' behaviors are influenced by equally distinct personal factors and that program staff must bridge differences with their participants to build strong interpersonal relations and engage participants in learning.

2. Self-Management/Emotion Regulation

Emotion regulation is often defined as the ability to manage emotional arousal successfully and possessing the skill to change emotions, including the valence, intensity, or time course of the emotions (Gross, 1998). Socially and emotionally competent program staff can identify their own positive and negative emotions in interactions with participants, parents, and colleagues and should manage their emotions as necessary. In particular, socially and emotionally competent program staff recognize that perspectives differ according to age, gender, and social, ethnic, educational, and economic backgrounds. They recognize and appreciate the commonalities and unique traits that exist among their participants and colleagues. They manage participants' prosocial behaviors and focus on learning. They model behaviors to help participants regulate their own emotions, establishing guidelines and setting boundaries for participants to enable them to do this. Because program staff are expected to regulate their own emotions and emotional displays as well as the emotions of their participants constantly, program staff members with higher emotional regulation capacity may be better equipped to handle the emotion-provoking demands of leading activities than program staff members with a lower capacity for doing so.

3. Social Awareness

Social awareness refers to the awareness of other people, including social perspective taking (see also Zins & Elias, 2006). This construct involves viewing the world from another individual's perspective (Selman, 1971) and making inferences about other people, including their capacities, attitudes, expectations, feelings, and potential reactions. Social awareness refers to one's ability to take the perspective of and empathize with other people and to recognize and appreciate individual and group similarities and differences. In particular, socially and emotionally competent program staff recognize that perspectives differ according to age; gender; and social, ethnic,

educational, and economic backgrounds. They recognize and appreciate the commonalities and unique characteristics that exist among their participants and colleagues.

4. Relationship/Social Skills

Interpersonal skills are another important dimension of social and emotional learning. Positive social interactions flow from strong interpersonal skills. Social skills are a specific class of behaviors that an individual exhibits to complete a social task successfully (Gresham & Elliott, 2008). Social skills are often manifested in prosocial behaviors, cooperation, empathetic responses, social engagement, respect for others, as well as the absence of problematic interactions (Cooper & Farran, 1991; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998). Socially and emotionally competent program staff establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with participants, family members, and colleagues. They are able to prevent, manage, and resolve interpersonal conflict between themselves and participants, family members, and colleagues and deal with conflict among participants, through exhibiting prosocial, cooperative behaviors and respecting and being empathetic to others.

5. Responsible Decision Making

Decision making is a process in which an individual scans an array of options and tries to decide which option is the best way to produce some desired outcome. Program staff often must make split-second, in-the-moment decisions that govern their interactions with participants and reactions to other factors inside and outside of the program. Decision making is a multistep process, which in activities is often enacted in the moment as program staff consider and process clues, draw information from long-term memory, and make a decision that is enacted through words and behavior. One influence of program staff decision-making process is a staff member's ability to "attend to the needs and behaviors of an entire classroom while also trying to remember and implement a lesson plan" (Feldon, 2007, p.123). Socially and emotionally competent program staff use multiple forms of evidence to make decisions about instruction; classroom management; and interactions with participants, participants' families, and colleagues. They objectively consider the well-being, needs, and skill-development goals of individual participants and of their group as a whole, and they balance awareness of participants' emotional and skill-development needs when making both long-term plans and in-the-moment decisions.

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