“Soft Skills”

What are “Soft Skills” Anyway?

- Affection (friendliness)
- Attention
- Cooperates with others
- Creativity
- Curiosity
- Engages in imaginary play
- Follows instructions/directions
- Hopefulness
- Independence in self-help skills
- Initiates and persists
- Impulse control
- Motivation
- Organizational skills
- Participation
- Patience
- Perseverance
- Self-expression
- Self-confidence
- Self-regulation
- Shows concern (sympathy & empathy)

What We All Need to Know About “Soft Skills”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fact and Figures</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“A 2017 metastudy of over 97,000 K–12 students...found that SEL practices boost academic success, decrease disruptive behavior, and reduce emotional distress in the long term.”</td>
<td>Shevrin Venet, 2018, para. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Finally, the benefits of solving the soft skills gap through collaboration between the business and education sectors exemplify the concept of creating shared value. As described in the Harvard Business Review, “Shared value is created when companies recognize that there are tremendous opportunities for innovation and growth in treating social problems as business objectives.”</td>
<td>U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation: Center for Education and Workforce, 2017, p. 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

© 2018 Kristie Pretti-Frontczak and Ashley Lyons. All rights reserved. kristiepf.com
“Indeed, SEL skills may be just as important as academic or purely cognitive skills for understanding how people succeed in school, college, and careers. In addition, preliminary evidence suggests that SEL skills could be central to understanding and remediating stubbornly persistent gaps in achievement defined by income and racial/ethnic differences.”

Jones & Doolittle, 2017, p. 5

“There is tentative evidence from published studies that non-cognitive skills associate with modest improvements in academic achievement, psychosocial, and language and cognitive outcomes with effects in the range of 0.2-0.4 SD”.

Smithers, et al., 2017, abstract

“Students who entered kindergarten behind in social-emotional skills (the “Not Ready” group) were: up to 80 percent more likely to have been retained; up to 80 percent more likely to require special education services; and up to seven times more likely to be suspended or expelled at least once.”

Loewenberg, 2016, para. 4

“Achievement is driven by intellectual ability as well as by the self-regulation, positive attitudes, motivation, and conscientiousness that are required to complete educational milestones. Substantial differences in noncognitive skills have been found between those who graduate from high school on time and those who complete a general equivalency diploma, as reflected in subsequent adult and economic outcomes.”

Jones, Greenberg, & Crowley, 2015, para. 4

“From this neurobiological perspective, the association between self-regulation and school readiness is clear. Children are ready to start school when they have reached a point in development at which they are sufficiently able to manage stimulation and attention in ways that begin to allow for the regulation of emotion and attention that enables sustained engagement with learning activities.”

Blair & Raver, 2015, p. 715

“Executive function abilities are central to performance on many of the types of learning activities in which children are engaged in kindergarten and the early elementary grades. This is clearly seen in both mathematics and reading.”

Blair & Raver, 2015, p. 717
“A focus on self-regulation development helps to unite multiple influences within a coherent framework that can serve as a basis for action and the structuring of educational experiences from prekindergarten through the early elementary grades to support and foster progress in school for diverse groups of children.”

Blair & Raver, 2015, p. 726

| “Despite the widespread belief that individual grit, extraordinary self-reliance, or some in-born, heroic strength of character can triumph over calamity, science now tells us that it is the **reliable presence of at least one supportive relationship and multiple opportunities for developing effective coping skills that are essential building blocks for the capacity to do well in the face of significant adversity.**” |

| “Over the last year, [Henry M. Levin and Clove Belfield] examined the economic returns from investments in six prominent social and emotional interventions—from learning and literacy programs to combat aggression and violence; to efforts to promote positive thinking, actions, and self-concepts; to practices that improve problem-solving abilities, capacities to manage emotions, and the very skills that lead to greater student motivation and engagement in their learning.

Their findings are striking: Each of the socially and emotionally focused programs—4R’s, Positive Action, Life Skills Training, Second Step, Responsive Classroom, and Social and Emotional Training (Sweden)—showed significant benefits that exceeded costs. **In fact, the average among the six interventions showed that for every dollar invested, there is a return of more than 11 dollars.**” |
| Shriver & Bridgeland, 2015, para. 6-7 |

| “Leveraging 20 years of data, researchers...found that early social competence was a consistent, significant predictor of outcomes in education, employment, criminal justice, substance use, and mental health. **In fact, for every one-point increase in a child's social competence score, he or she was:**

- Twice as likely to attain a college degree
- 54 percent more likely to earn a high school diploma
- 46 percent more likely to have a full-time job in early adulthood” |
| Ng’andu, 2015, para. 3-4 |
Conversely, a one-point decrease in social competence was linked with a 67 percent higher chance of being arrested by early adulthood and a 64 percent higher chance of spending time in juvenile detention.”

“[R]esearchers strongly suggest that the learning process is 50 percent social-emotional and 50 percent cognitive.”

“…nearly all teachers (93 percent) believe SEL is very or fairly important for the in-school student experience.”

“In addition, the awareness, appraisal, understanding, and regulation of emotion have been identified as critical to the creation of a classroom climate that encourages effective instructional engagement and long-term academic gains in both reading and math (Meyer & Turner, 2006; Perry, Donohue, & Weinstein, 2007).”

“Research shows that SEL has positive effects on academic performance, benefits physical health, improves citizenship, is demanded by employers, is essential for lifelong success, and reduces the risk of maladjustment, failed relationships, interpersonal violence, substance abuse, and unhappiness (Elias et al., 1997; Zins, Weissberg et al., 2004).”

### References


Zakrzewski, V. (2014). How to integrate social-emotional learning into Common Core. Retrieved from the Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkley Web Site: http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_integrate_social_emotional_learning_into_common_core


© 2018 Kristie Pretti-Frontczak and Ashley Lyons. All rights reserved. kristiepf.com