

Conversation Starters for Social Emotional Learning

Self-Awareness: Talk to your Little about identifying their feelings. For younger Littles, use a feeling chart. For older kids, say “Are you angry or are you: frustrated, disappointed, hurt? Talk about the differences between those feelings.

Social Awareness: Your Little tells you about a new kid in school that: speaks a different language/wears different kinds of clothes/is a different religion, etc. Ask your Little questions about this new student and then get them to see the commonalities they share – same school, same age, annoying little sister, like sports, don’t like the vegetables in the cafeteria, etc. If they know what the student’s heritage is or other specifics, do some research with them about it to give them a better understanding.

Self-Management: You pick up your Little and they are upset because they don’t get to go to their friend’s birthday party this weekend because they have to go to their Grandma’s house in South Carolina for a family reunion. Ask them how they are feeling. Help them find the appropriate words to describe their feelings. Ask them how they can act on those feelings. What can they do to make the situation better?

Responsible Decision Making: Younger Little: They have \$25 in birthday money and are trying to decide how to spend it. Help them list their options e.g. buy a toy or go to a movie and buy a smaller toy or save up for something bigger that they want. Then help them list the pros and cons of each choice and make their decision. Older Little: Friend is having a party at their house this weekend. Little knows that friend’s parents won’t be at home and there may be alcohol at the party. Help them see what their options are: don’t go/go but don’t drink/ go and do drink/ tell parents. Then help them list the pros and cons of each choice and make their decision.

Relationship Skills: Your Little tells you that some of their friends at school are bullying a new student and they feel bad about it but don’t know what to do. Talk about how they would feel if they were the target of the bullies. Brainstorm ways they can be a friend to the new student.

Examples of Questions and Conversation Starters:

Tell me about your responsibilities in and out of school.

Could you tell me about a time when you felt angry or disappointed and you dealt with the situation really well?

Tell me about a time you wanted something and had to wait a long time for it.

Tell me about a time you set a goal for yourself and stuck to it.

Describe a time you had difficulty learning something in one of your classes. How did you overcome the problem?

Think about a time when you did not handle a problem well. What do you wish you had done better?

If you had more time in your schedule, what would you like to do with it?

Think about your safety here at afterschool. What kinds of things might happen that could make you or other students feel unsafe?

Think about a change you went through recently either at home or school. How did you adapt to that change?

Could you tell me about a time when you saw someone in a bad situation. How did you feel, and what did you do?

Honesty and trustworthiness are important. Can you tell me about a time when you made a decision to be honest and trustworthy? How did you feel?

What types of group activities do you enjoy doing?

There are people of many races, religions, ethnicities, and you will likely have the opportunity in your life to work with many different kinds of people. What might you learn from working with people who are different from you?

Think of a time when you felt someone was being treated unjustly. How did you handle it?

What is the best way to communicate your concerns so other people can listen and understand your perspective?