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Parents key to reinforcing lessons around social emotional growth

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As we embark on a new school year, educators are focused on many areas to help students get off on the right foot and continue moving forward throughout the year. Among these areas is social emotional learning – teaching students to develop competencies in the areas of:

- Self-Awareness
- Responsible Decision Making
- Relationship Skills
- Social Awareness
- Self-Management

It's important that parents and guardians partner with their children's teachers to reinforce the importance of developing these skills. Students who learn these skills have improved academic success and overall well-being.

Let's look at a few ways parents and guardians can help their children develop these important life skills:

- **Focus on Strengths**
Specific observations and compliments when your child does well will resonate more than empty praise. Acknowledging a child's strength can help him/her build self-confidence and persevere when the going gets tough.
- **Ask about Feelings**
Sure, sometimes it can be difficult to get teens to talk but keep trying. Try drawing them out when they're engaged in other activities. Young people who can identify their feelings are developing strong communication skills and building self-control. From there, they learn to manage their emotions and behavior in a variety of situations.
- **Be Vulnerable**
Let your children see when you struggle with a challenge and how you overcome a setback. Our kids know that we're human, and it's important for them to see how we persist when faced with a challenge.
- **Model Empathy**
Through your actions, you help your child understand why it's important to consider others' feelings and needs. By observing others, young people develop social awareness and learn about cooperation and considering another's point of view.

The Glenbard Parent Series 2018-19 speaker series includes a number of sessions that address developing students' social emotional learning skills. We welcome families from across the region to the Glenbard Parent Series' free monthly programs. Check out the program lineup at glenbardgps.org.

Before we know it, our students will be in the workforce. Research provided by Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL), shows that employers require their employees to have strong social emotional skills such as communication, adaptability, decision-making and problem solving. Parents and guardians partnering with educators can help students develop the skills they need for success in life and at work.