

Social and Emotional Learning Challenge

About the SEL Challenge

The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning ([CASEL](#) ^[1]) defines social and emotional learning (SEL) as “the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.”

In the SEL Challenge, we focused on describing the practices that experts use to help vulnerable adolescents grow social and emotional skills in out-of-school time programs.

The Social and Emotional Learning Challenge was designed to:

- Identify promising practices for building SEL skills with vulnerable adolescents and
- Develop a method for taking these practices to scale in thousands of out-of-school time (OST) settings.

The identified promising practices, known as standards for SEL practice, led to the creation of the scaling method now referred to as the SEL Strengths Builder. The Challenge was a partnership between expert practitioners (youth workers, social workers, teachers) delivering exemplary programs in eight unique communities, a team of researchers, and a national funder.

The findings are published in the Field Guide,

Preparing Youth to Thrive: Promising Practices for Social & Emotional Learning,

currently available for download at the [SELPractices.org](#) ^[2]. A Technical Report describing the SEL Challenge method and additional findings is also available for download at [SELPractices.org](#) ^[2].

HOW DO I STAY CONNECTED?

- [Visit SELpractices.org](#) ^[2]
- [Join the mailing list](#) ^[3]
- Follow #SELchallenge on social media

- Email us at SEL@cypq.org [4]

HOW CAN I USE THE LESSONS FROM THE SEL CHALLENGE?

1) The Field Guide, *Preparing Youth to Thrive: Promising Practice for Social and Emotional Learning* is available for free download at SELpractices.org [2] and print copies are available for purchase at store.cypq.org [5].

2) Use the **SEL Strengths Builder Method** to reflect on how well your program supports the growth and development of youth's social and emotional skills. The Strengths Builder content is available at SELpractices.org [2].

3) If you would like to learn more about the methodology and findings of the SEL Challenge, read the **SEL Challenge Technical Report** available for download at SELpractices.org [2]. SEL Challenge Box Sets, which include both hard copy materials sent to the user and a set of online and phone supports to improve or strengthen your program's focus on social and emotional learning, are available to order at store.cypq.org [5].

4) Host an SEL training designed to support program staff and leaders in the exploration and implementation of SEL best practices. Current offerings include:

- a. Push SEL Practice: This training is ideal as an introduction to SEL for program staff and leaders. It can be a first step to launching an SEL initiative and is designed to have participants assess their implementation of the SEL practices.
- b. Curriculum Coaching Session: This workshop provides an opportunity for participants to reflect on their program's curriculum features and gain insights to improve the design for the maximum benefit of staff and youth.
- c. SEL Methods trainings focus on ways to improve the quality of your SEL supports. Current offerings include Empathy and Emotion Management; Teamwork and Responsibility; and Initiative and Problem Solving.

[Let us know you're interested by filling out the form here.](#) [6]

5) As a result of the SEL Challenge, we have updated our measures to reflect a broader spectrum of social and emotional learning practices. To learn more about our Social Emotional Learning Program Quality Assessment (SEL PQA) and our behavior measure, the Staff Rating of Youth Behavior (SRYB), please [visit this page](#). [7] If you would like to learn more about these measures and ways to include them in an existing or new continuous quality improvement process, please contact your program manager or email sel@cypq.org [8].

Our SEL Challenge partner, Susan Crown Exchange ([SCE](#) [9]), is a social investment organization that connects talent and innovation with market forces to drive social change.