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# Facilitating Children's Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in After-School Settings

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**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:**

Dr. Keonya Booker is an Assistant Professor of Psychological Foundations in the Department of Teacher Education at the College of Charleston. She teaches courses in human development and classroom management for pre-service teachers. Dr. Booker's research agenda involves studying the relationship between school belongingness and academic achievement in African American students. Her published work can be found in *The Urban Review*, *Youth & Society*, and the *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*.

**TITLE:**

Facilitating Children's Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in After-School Settings

**RELEVANCE:**

As a session on social and emotional wellbeing of children, this proposal relates to the "Heart" strand of the conference theme.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION:**

As educators, we must establish a safe space for children to develop positive social skills. A warm, yet firm, environment will increase feelings of belongingness, positive behavior, and academic performance. For after-school staff, bridging the gap between the classroom and home environment is a critical component of their charge. In this poster session, I will discuss sociocultural variables and specific models for increasing students' social and emotional learning in extended day settings.

**SUMMARY:**

The Social and Emotional Learning framework maintains a positive learning environment plus active skills modeling results in positive child outcomes. A useful model for examining the impact of extended day partnerships is the ACT Framework developed by Boston After-School and Beyond. Achieve, Connect, and Thrive (ACT) are the tenets of this program which is evident in Charleston County School District's, Power Learning Skills (PLS). The Power Learning Skills

include: Self Efficacy (belief in yourself to be successful), Relationship Building Skills, Goal-Directed Behavior, and Awareness of Self and Others.

Important considerations for those implementing an after school or extended day include ensuring the program is sequenced (i.e., does the program use connected and coordinated activities to achieve objectives?). There should also be an active component (i.e., does the program use active forms of learning to help youth learn new skills?). Does the program have at least one component devoted to developing personal or social skills? Finally, is the program explicit in that the curriculum targets specific skills rather than those in general terms?

### **EVIDENCE:**

Longitudinal research findings show students who experience high-quality after school programs are more likely to graduate from high school and attend college (CASEL, 2013; Hawkins, Guo, Hill, & Battin-Pearson, 2000). They are more likely to be employed and experience better emotional and mental health. These students are less likely to have a criminal record, use/sell drugs, or experience substance abuse. Well-designed and implemented SEL programs can have a significant effect on children's attitudes about themselves and others. After-school providers should show respect and caring, engage students in cooperation, model empathy and convey high expectations (Garner, Mahatmya, Brown, & Vesely, 2014).

### **REFERENCES:**

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (2013). *The 2013 CASEL guide: Effective social and emotional learning programs—preschool and elementary school edition*. Chicago, IL: Author.

Garner, P. W., Mahatmya, D., Brown, E. L., & Vesely, C. K. (2014). Promoting desirable outcomes among culturally and ethnically diverse children in social and emotional learning programs. *Educational Psychology Review*, 26, 165-189.

Hawkins JD, Guo J, Hill KG, & Battin-Pearson S (2000). Long term effects of the Seattle Social Development Intervention on school bonding trajectories. In: J Maggs and J Schulenberg (Eds.), *Applied Developmental Science: Special Issue: Prevention as Altering the Course of Development*, 5(4):225-236.

### **FORMAT:**

Poster presentation