

WHAT IS TOOLBOX?

TOOLBOX™ is a research-based, community-tested, social and emotional learning (SEL) program targeting elementary-age youth that fosters the development of resilience, self-mastery, and empathy for others. TOOLBOX honors and strengthens children's innate capacity to manage their own emotional, social, and academic success, by giving them tools that empower them. Schools use TOOLBOX to help students increase agency and self-mastery, improve their relationships with peers and family members, and effectively manage interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts. Institutional adoption leads to less disruptive behavior in class, better school climates, and, ultimately, better academic performance.^{1,2}

The foundation of TOOLBOX is 12 human capacities that reside within us all. The simple metaphor of "Tools" forms the basis of a strengths-based common language, which brings forward a set of skills and practices that help students access their own inner resilience at any time, in any context.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines 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 goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions."³ CASEL has identified five interrelated social and emotional competencies: self-management, self-awareness, social-awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. The skills and practices of TOOLBOX directly build the five competencies defined by CASEL.

TOOLBOX starts with the teacher providing instruction on how to use the Tools. Through modeling and daily classroom practices, the teacher subsequently supports his or her students to begin to use the Tools to build self-knowledge and self-trust. Schools note rapid improvements in communication, civility, and conflict resolution in the classroom, on the playground, and across an entire school community, confirmed by reductions in behavioral referrals. Providing parents and caregivers with the Tools and information on how to incorporate these practices into the home setting allows for continuity and reinforcement of the skills for students.

¹ See WestEd Research brief for additional details. Available at <http://dovetaillearning.org>

² Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). "The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions." *Child Development*, 82, 405–432.

³ Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL). Retrieved from <http://www.casel.com>

