

What Is Social Decision Making/Social Problem Solving (SDM/SPS)?

SDM/SPS is a research-based model and method for teaching children critical thinking and problem-solving skills. It was developed as a collaborative effort between the Rutgers University Department of Psychology and the Social Decision Making Program of University Behavioral HealthCare at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey.

This approach was twice validated as an exemplary program by the U.S. Department of Education, it received the Lela Rowland Award from the National Mental Health Association as an outstanding prevention program, it is recognized by the New Jersey Department of Education as a model of innovative prevention programming for substance abuse, and it was identified as a “Select” model for Social Emotional Learning (SEL) by the Collaborative for Academic Social Emotional Learning (CASEL).

What Skills Do Students Learn?

In the primary grades, children are introduced to the first phase of the Social Decision Making/Social Problem Solving curriculum, which focuses on problem solving and integrating these skills within their academic and everyday life situations.



The teachers and school personnel throughout the building have a shared vocabulary and consistent methods, which help children to know what is expected of them in their daily interaction with teachers and other students. All adults can help reinforce the skills taught during the lessons by using SDM/SPS prompts and cues, such as *Listening Position*, *Keep Calm*, and *Be Your BEST*, with children at home and in situations outside of school. The skills can be practiced and reinforced in daily interactions with children around homework, chores, and in social settings.

Building a Skill

In the SDM/SPS program, children build skills that can help them throughout their lives. Learning a skill takes much longer learning than a concept or a fact. A fact can be learned after one or two exposures to the information; however, a skill requires repeated practice with feedback.

As adults, we sometimes get frustrated when children fail to act or do what we have told them several times. Although the children may know what they should do, they may lack the actual skills to do it. That is why we specifically teach and practice these skills. Adults can help children build skills by:

- Using prompts and cues such as *Listening Position*.
- Modeling the components of good listening: sit or stand straight; face the person speaking.
- Providing practice opportunities using listening games and suggested activities that will be sent home.

Social Decision Making/ Social Problem Solving Components

Readiness

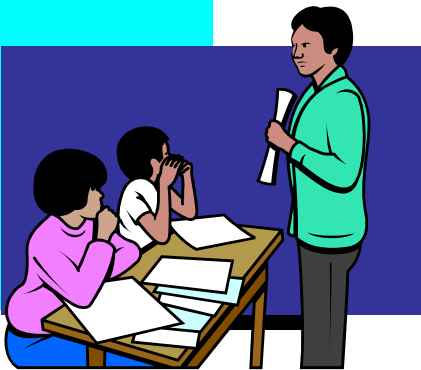
- Self-control skills
- Social-emotional awareness skills

Instruction in Thinking Skills

- An eight-step decision-making and problem-solving framework

Application

- Repeated practice in social-emotional and cognitive skills in academic and social areas.



Socially and Emotionally Intelligent Children

- Have a sense of self-worth
- Act responsibly toward others
- Get along with others and develop long-term relationships
- Express their own perspectives and beliefs, while appreciating the perspectives of others
- Avoid behaviors that lead to negative consequences
- Are motivated to become productive citizens



Teaneck Community Charter School

Parents as Partners

Social Decision Making/ Social Problem Solving

