Building Connections: Supporting Social and Emotional Development

The connection that teachers build with students can be a powerful factor in students’ success. In addition to key messages of safety and caring, teachers can:

- create opportunities for positive interactions with students having difficulty in the classroom
- use these one-to-one interactions to strengthen connection
- use this connection to foster social and emotional development
- leverage the connections to help engage students and to assist in times of distress

The following teacher-created lists focus on creative ways to build connection with students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the classroom</th>
<th>On the playground or in the school yard</th>
<th>For outside-of-school activities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Fostering Social and Emotional Development: Inside the Classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Humor</th>
<th>Meditating</th>
<th>Sharing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visualization</td>
<td>Resting</td>
<td>Jokes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Stories</td>
<td>Charades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>Tent Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Class Pets</td>
<td>Cooperative Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light</td>
<td>Class Plants</td>
<td>Anagrams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touch</td>
<td>Stuffed Animals</td>
<td>Word Scrambles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Comfy Furniture</td>
<td>Crosswords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sounds</td>
<td>Posting Work</td>
<td>Birthday Parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fidget Toys</td>
<td>Helper</td>
<td>Circle Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaks</td>
<td>Wickey Sticks</td>
<td>Brain Gym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking</td>
<td>Errands to the Office</td>
<td>Welcome Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythm</td>
<td>Volunteer in Classes</td>
<td>Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walks</td>
<td>One on One Time</td>
<td>Crafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Outs Together</td>
<td>Private Talks</td>
<td>Magazine Box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Herbal Teas</td>
<td>Pebble Mats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Resource/Action</th>
<th>Tool/Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Hot Chocolate</td>
<td>Harmony Balls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Read to Students Daily</td>
<td>Yoga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td>Silent Reading</td>
<td>Massage Pads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wii on Smart Board</td>
<td>Listening Centers</td>
<td>Bubble Wrap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journaling</td>
<td>Movies that Foster Discussion</td>
<td>Cuddly Blankets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>Chess</td>
<td>Lego</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress Up Box</td>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>Wobbleboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iPod Use</td>
<td>Wow Board</td>
<td>Treat Bucket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Ideas:</td>
<td>Your Ideas:</td>
<td>Your Ideas:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fostering Emotional Development: Inside the School Building**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Resource/Action</th>
<th>Tool/Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Close Proximity</td>
<td>Say, “Good Morning”</td>
<td>Acknowledge Student’s Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use Hallways</td>
<td>Create a “Break Out” Room</td>
<td>Access School Secretary as a “Go To” Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create Quiet Spaces … and Teach Others to Respect Quiet Space</td>
<td>Go Get a Drink</td>
<td>Join in a Game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer Snacks</td>
<td>Check in “Have you eaten breakfast?”</td>
<td>Use Humour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk</td>
<td>Go to the Library</td>
<td>Give Choices about What Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach Skill of Asking for a Break</td>
<td>Breakfast in Class</td>
<td>Feed the Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laugh</td>
<td>Smile</td>
<td>Touch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen</td>
<td>Play with the Student</td>
<td>Build a Customized Emotional Toolkit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find the Student’s Passions (e.g., cooking, plants, etc.) and build into School Activities</td>
<td>Use Roots of Empathy Program</td>
<td>Find Jobs within the School (e.g. Set up art supplies, cafeteria tables, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find Leadership Jobs</td>
<td>Make Positive Posters (Affirmations)</td>
<td>Show the Student’s Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Intramurals</td>
<td>Facilitate Participation in School Activities</td>
<td>Ask, “What do you need?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Stress Balls</td>
<td>Provide Writing Material</td>
<td>Provide Art (Expressive) Material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk with the Student in the School When the Student is in Distress</td>
<td>Pair with another Student (Buddy Activities)</td>
<td>Allow a Run in the School Gym to Assist to De-Stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find a Mentor in the School</td>
<td>Quiet Spots to Sit</td>
<td>Cozy Spots In The Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawing Clubs</td>
<td>Sports Clubs</td>
<td>Intramurals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aromatherapy</td>
<td>Gardening</td>
<td>School Fish Tanks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Administrator to Talk To</td>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Helpers Team</td>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Exercise Areas/ Clubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computers</td>
<td>Office Helpers</td>
<td>Knitting Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunchroom Helpers</td>
<td>Thought Of The Day For The School</td>
<td>Doodle Boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chess Club</td>
<td>Puzzles</td>
<td>Fun Movies/Winter Lunch Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affirmations</td>
<td>Class Clerical Support Groups</td>
<td>Weight Rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing Groups</td>
<td>Secretary Support</td>
<td>Computer Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>Welcoming Committee</td>
<td>Recycle</td>
<td>Sensory Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing in Gym</td>
<td>Decorating School</td>
<td>Cooking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk Of Stars</td>
<td>Posters</td>
<td>Random Acts of Kindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Model Patience</td>
<td>Create Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One on One Gym Time</td>
<td>Build Relationship</td>
<td>Use Class Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use Reframing (Looking at this in another way, shifting perception)</td>
<td>Listen, Allow Venting, Validate Feelings</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Wide “Positive Behaviour Programs”</td>
<td>Structured Extra Curricular “Fun” Activities</td>
<td>Create opportunities to Share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- With Other Students</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- With Other classes</td>
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<td>- With Other Adults</td>
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<td>- At Assemblies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create Supportive Peer Caring</td>
<td>Acknowledge Feelings, Needs</td>
<td>Give Time and Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Without Deserting the</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Student</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your Ideas:</td>
<td>Your Ideas:</td>
<td>Your Ideas:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fostering Emotional Development: On the Playground or School Yard</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Walk at the Same Pace on the Playground</strong></td>
<td><strong>Create a Rhythm</strong></td>
<td><strong>Run</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Match Level of Play</strong></td>
<td><strong>Keep Proximity To Child</strong></td>
<td><strong>Redirect with Task or Activity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Find a Quiet Place (Remove Audience)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Remind Throw a Ball</strong></td>
<td><strong>Push a Swing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teach Social skills</strong></td>
<td><strong>Be Present for Transportation Times</strong></td>
<td><strong>Wave “Goodbye”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Walks</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ball Games</strong></td>
<td><strong>Painted Games on Asphalt</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creative Playground</strong></td>
<td><strong>Drumming</strong></td>
<td><strong>Hide and Seek</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zipper</strong></td>
<td><strong>Kick the Can</strong></td>
<td><strong>Jump Rope Club</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tag</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tetherball</strong></td>
<td><strong>Simon Says</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Follow the Leader</strong></td>
<td><strong>Snow Angels</strong></td>
<td><strong>Obstacle Course</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cloud Watching</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mud Pies</strong></td>
<td><strong>Joking with the Kids</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brain Gym</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sand Castles</strong></td>
<td><strong>Team Building Tasks</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parachute</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rock Collecting</strong></td>
<td><strong>Painting</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trust Games</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sidewalk Chalk</strong></td>
<td><strong>Walking Club</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Running Club</strong></td>
<td><strong>Painting Rocks</strong></td>
<td><strong>Quiet Sitting Space</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching About Nature</strong></td>
<td><strong>Feeding the Birds</strong></td>
<td><strong>Low Organized Games</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Watch Ants</strong></td>
<td><strong>Kite Flying</strong></td>
<td><strong>Picking Up Garbage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weaving In Frost Fence</strong></td>
<td><strong>Making Snowmen</strong></td>
<td><strong>Playing In Leaves</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Picnics</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tug of War</strong></td>
<td><strong>Yoga</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daisy Chains</strong></td>
<td><strong>Walking with Teacher</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dance Routines</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pilates</strong></td>
<td><strong>Plays</strong></td>
<td><strong>Braiding Hair</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Blowing Bubbles</strong></td>
<td><strong>Storytelling</strong></td>
<td><strong>Bike Riding</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guide the Student to De-Escalate</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mirror Intensity But Not Emotion</strong></td>
<td><strong>Validate Emotional experience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Play with Student in Playground Activities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Play with Child with Other Students</strong></td>
<td><strong>Instruct in Rules of Games</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Give Practice time for Skills</strong></td>
<td><strong>Listen</strong></td>
<td><strong>Your Ideas:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Fostering Emotional Development: Outside-of-School Possibilities**

**Note:** Connecting with students outside of the school day and the school environment requires professional judgment. Maintaining healthy professional boundaries is part of the important modeling for healthy relating in a Canadian context. With that said, the following teacher-generated ideas can be powerful in building connection with students who resist connection within the classroom or school context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connect With Guardians / Parents</th>
<th>Food Sharing, Snacks</th>
<th>Music Shared Appreciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- email</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- call</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- home visits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Find an interest student is into</th>
<th>Call student at home</th>
<th>Drop off homework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use daybook</th>
<th>Give a stuffed toy</th>
<th>Use silence … just sit with the student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pursue grants to summer camps</th>
<th>Provide connections to resources outside of school, make referrals</th>
<th>See to basic need (e.g. CUPS … coats for kids, etc.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talk to student about outside of school activities</th>
<th>Facilitate activities outside of school</th>
<th>Explore students’ outside interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journaling</th>
<th>Vision boards</th>
<th>Watching extra-curricular activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Keep in contact over the holidays (e.g., e-mail)</th>
<th>Send birthday cards / letters</th>
<th>Continue to maintain professional boundaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visit students in external programs</th>
<th>Introduce ideas “What to Do” outside of school</th>
<th>Take training together</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book club</th>
<th>Gardening</th>
<th>Horses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Go and watch one of the student’s events (e.g., soccer game)</th>
<th>Class pet that goes home</th>
<th>Do recreational activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Say “Hi!” when meeting in the local community (e.g., at store)</th>
<th>Provide resources for activities</th>
<th>Invite families into school communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do intramurals</th>
<th>Community Drama Clubs</th>
<th>Caring for Neighbor’s Pets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Walking Pets</th>
<th>Playing Catch</th>
<th>Hanging Out With Friends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phone Calls</th>
<th>Group for Students That Like To Fix Cars</th>
<th>Researching Other Cultures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working with Dogs</th>
<th>Working With Horses</th>
<th>Hiking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Swimming</th>
<th>Craft Classes</th>
<th>Skiing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art Classes</th>
<th>Music Lessons</th>
<th>Landscaping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Helping Elderly Members of The Community</th>
<th>Winter Activities</th>
<th>Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sewing</th>
<th>Paintball</th>
<th>Movies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laser Tag</td>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Volunteering</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video Games</td>
<td>Clubs</td>
<td>Meditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook/MSN/D2L/Computers</td>
<td>Free Community Programs</td>
<td>Going To Camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Fitness Program</td>
<td>Support Phone Lines</td>
<td>Biking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Biking</td>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>Watching Sports Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping the Homeless</td>
<td>Humane Society</td>
<td>Skate Boarding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Programs</td>
<td>Your Ideas:</td>
<td>Your Ideas:</td>
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