

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFERENCES (SPLDS) PART 1



Does Academic Excellence Anchor the Success of All Students?

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Daniel Goleman (1995) wrote in his book entitled 'Emotional Intelligence', 'IQ is only a minor predictor of success in life, while emotional and social skills are far better predictors of success and well-being than academic intelligence.'

Intelligence (commonly measured by IQ scores) should not be the sole factor influencing a child's future success or overall positive adjustment in life. The secret potion therefore cannot be explained solely through biological factors. It is in fact, through the provision of a nurture enriched home environment and the cultivation of positive habits such as resilience, perseverance and optimism

that would have a deeper impact on a child's successful academic functioning.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in children displaying distress and a lack of motivation to learn. For children with Specific Learning Differences (SpLD), the disappointments that they experience in the classroom are often manifested in their behaviour. They can display an extreme range of behaviours from being outwardly disruptive or reacting impulsively to instructions or tasks, to inwardly daydreaming or procrastinating instead of being attentive. However, with the right encouragement and support, these seemingly troubled students have shown resilience and the resolution to persevere with difficult tasks.



A PARADIGM SHIFT

Possible traits of children with SpLD:

- ◆ Lack of confidence
- ◆ Discrepancy between verbal and written work
- ◆ Acting-out behaviour such as task avoidance
- ◆ Poor organisation of work and other aspects of life
- ◆ Poor motivation in learning
- ◆ Withdrawal/shyness
- ◆ Discrepancy between out-of-school talents and classroom performance
- ◆ Particularly vulnerable to stress which may be associated with deadlines or examinations

Social and emotional competence measures the ability to understand process, manage, and express the social and emotional aspects of our lives. The aspects of social and emotional competence consist of five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective and behavioural competencies namely:

1. Self-management
2. Self-awareness
3. Responsible decision-making
4. Relationship skills
5. Social awareness

Research has shown that positive social and emotional well-being reduces violence, enhances adaptive capacities, such as the ability to bounce back from failure, and provide the foundation for learning and healthy development. Research has also shown that many of the problems in schools, such as poor academic results and weak social interaction with peers and teachers are the result of social and emotional weaknesses. How children feel about themselves and others, shape their ability to learn. The purpose of building social and emotional competence is therefore, critical and enables children to be life-long learners and effective citizens.