Promoting Emotional Intelligence in preschool education: A review of programs

Pam Gershon and John Pellitteri

This paper compares four selected social-emotional learning (SEL) curricula that have empirical support for preschool students (Preschools PATHS, Incredible Years, Al’s Pals, and Preschool RULER). First, meta-analytic studies of SEL programs in schools and research on emotional intelligence (EI) of preschool children are reviewed as a background for understanding the four programs. Preschool EI research is examined as it relates to outcome variables such as school engagement, social adjustment, emotion regulation and academics. The programs are critiqued and compared on the particular SEL areas of focus, context of delivery, structure of delivery, and intervention strategies. Research on cross cultural adaptation of programs is also examined. Areas for future directions in EI preschool curricula research are identified.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, preschool, social-emotional learning curricula