



OECD Study on Social and Emotional Skills (OECD-SSES)

What's it all about?

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Study on Social and Emotional Skills is an international skills evaluation of individuals aged 10 and 15. The study was developed using information from two other OECD studies: the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). While these two studies had a stronger focus on cognitive skills, they did gather international evidence on the significance of social and emotional skills. A second phase of PIAAC will be conducted between 2021 and 2022 and will include new measures of SES in adults.

The Study on Social and Emotional Skills aims to identify the current state of students' social and emotional skills and characteristics of environments (i.e., home, school, and community) that promote or delay the development of these skills. The study began in 2016 and intends to release findings by October 2020. Colombia, South Korea, Finland, the United States, Turkey, Russia, Canada, Portugal, and China are involved in this study because of their diversity in populations and settings.

The social and emotional skills evaluated in this study were drawn from the Big Five Model, an existing competency framework used to categorize and conceptualize SES. This model organizes specific social and emotional skills into five areas and also identifies compound skills, which cut across two or more areas. Through rigorous testing and trials, OECD researchers selected skills for this study that were reliable, valid, applicable across different cultures, and relevant to policy development.

This summary is part of our curated digital platform on social and emotional skills (SES) assessment and contains key details on one of the external SES assessment tools and applied studies we reviewed. The platform is part of The Conference Board of Canada's multi-year research project for the Future Skills Centre on SES. [For more information, check out our landing page here.](#)

How does it work?

The OECD study uses assessment scales and self-reporting questionnaires administered to students, parents, and teachers to measure students' social and emotional skills. Both the scales and questionnaires ask about the student's behaviours, thoughts, and feelings. The information collected aims not only to assess SES but to identify other factors (including socio-economic background, home environment, and relationships with peers) that can contribute to or delay SES development.

Drawing on three sources (students, parents, and teachers) helps researchers to gain a greater understanding of students' skills and how they are used and to account for how students might behave differently in different contexts (such as home versus school) to control for inconsistencies or biases in self-reporting.



Intended users

Canada was one of the countries selected for this OECD study, making it particularly relevant for Canadian communities, families, educators, and policy-makers seeking to better understand the current state of social and emotional skills in Canadian students and identify factors that promote or limit the development of these skills.

Communities, families, educators

Findings from this study can be used to identify which factors promote social and emotional skills development in students, why they are important, and how they can be added to homes, schools, or communities.

Policy-makers

Information from this study can help policy-makers understand the relationship between environments (home, school, community), social and emotional skills, and life outcomes. This will allow them to evaluate and adjust policies to support the development of these skills and improve student prospects.



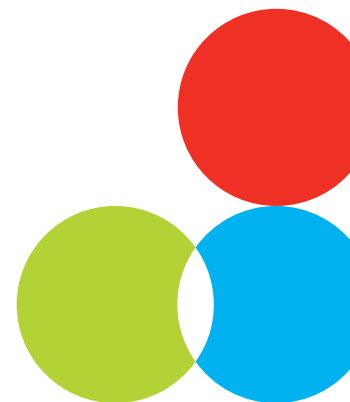
Read the study:

Miloš Kankaraš and Javier Suarez-Alvarez, *Assessment Framework of the OECD Study on Social and Emotional Skills*, OECD Education Working Papers, No. 207 (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2019).

Social and emotional skills measured

This test measures the following skills, as defined by the framework authors:

- **Conscientiousness:** Those who are conscientious, self-disciplined, and persistent can stay on task and tend to be high achievers, especially when it comes to education and work outcomes.
- **Emotional stability:** Being able to regulate one's emotions is essential for multiple life outcomes and seems to be an especially important predictor of enhanced mental and physical health.
- **Extraversion:** Engaging with others is critical for leadership and tends to lead to better employment outcomes. Extroverts also build social support networks more quickly, which is good for mental health.
- **Agreeableness:** People who are open to collaboration can be sympathetic to others and altruistic. Agreeableness translates into better quality relationships, more pro-social behaviours, and fewer behavioural issues.
- **Openness to experience:** This concerns an individual's preference for variety and novelty, either in the form of original intellectual stimuli (e.g., new ideas, new theories) or novel experiential stimuli (e.g., aesthetic and cultural interests).



FSC partners

Funded by the
Government of Canada's
Future Skills Program

Canada

Ryerson
University

The Conference
Board of Canada

blueprint