**Supporting Social Emotional Learning through Family/Group Experiences**

**Volunteering**

Research has shown that volunteering has been proven to build empathy, promote social skills, and even build a person’s self-esteem, all of which are important aspects of social emotional learning. Volunteering also provides children with real-world experience of helping to meet someone’s need. The following are some reminders of family volunteer opportunities.

* **Feed My Starving Children** <https://www.fmsc.org/>

This organization has sites across the United States and three locations in Illinois. Families or groups can sign up online for a day and time to volunteer. The work involves assembling and packing food packs for shipping to areas in need around the world.

* **Feeding Illinois** <https://www.feedingillinois.org/food-banks/>

This website has a list of food banks in Illinois. A food bank is a non-profit organization that collects stores, and distributes food to various local food programs and agencies, like food pantries and soup kitchens, which then provide food directly to individuals and families in need (from google Ai). Once you have located a food bank in your area you can sign up at the website to volunteer. Please note, this list is NOT all-inclusive. There may be many more food banks in your area. It is recommended that you do a google search or GPS search for additional food bank locations in your area.

* **the honeycomb project** https://www.thehoneycombproject.org/

This website is a gateway to tons of volunteer experiences designed for families. The organization was started for that reason. Learn more about their story at <https://www.thehoneycombproject.org/about-us> At the time of this writing, the opportunities are primarily in the Chicagoland area.

**Other Resources**

* **Virtual Tour**s

Many businesses/organizations and government entities offer virtual field trips. Is your child interested in space? Visit <https://www.nasa.gov/nasa-at-home-virtual-tours-and-apps/> Or for all things animals and planet earth learn what National Geographic has to offer at <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/society/experiential-learning/>

* **Field Trip Directory** <https://fieldtripdirectory.com/>

While this site is primarily for school groups, caregivers, I am sure you can gleam some ideas! You can apply various filters to narrow your search for some great SEL learning opportunities!

* **Museums and Cultural Institutions** <https://whichmuseum.com/place/illinois-8936>

Find a location and then use the new Bright Promises tool to apply SEL lens to any museum or cultural institution you visit!