

Safe Relationships

What Is It?

Life happens in the context of relationships. Humans are wired for social connection, and it's in that connection that we are able to express our best selves, contribute to our communities and achieve successful and satisfying lives.

Why Is It Important?

Learning about our role in the class community helps us to connect to one another and feel safe at school.

VOCABULARY

- Personal Space
- Shared Space
- Expectation
- Community
- Individual
- Routine
- Job
- Morning Meeting
- Listening
- Share
- Closing Circle
- Problem Solver
- Transition
- Leader

Grade Levels at a Glance

**PRE•K
3&4** Students will become familiar with the role of the teacher and instructional aide.

K Students will begin to understand that everyone has an important job in the classroom.

1ST Students will practice listening to their peers and sharing important information.

2ND Students will understand that everyone in the class community is important, and will begin to identify the feelings and perspectives of others.

Reflection

As kids begin the year, they will be entering a new classroom with a new teacher and new classmates. This can be a scary time when kids don't feel like they have the safe relationships they need to feel secure and learn. Recall a time when you were new to a space or a group. What helped you to feel welcome and that you belonged to that space? What will you do to help students feel like they belong at your school as you start the year?

Brain

What Is It?

The brain guides everything that you do: how you move your body, make decisions, experience emotions and deal with stress. When students understand how their brain is connected to their emotions, they are better able to manage those emotions.

Why Is It Important?

Learning the parts of the brain and how the brain influences behavior and emotions empowers students to control their brains and their feelings.

VOCABULARY

- Brain
- Amygdala
- Hippocampus
- Prefrontal Cortex
- Feelings
- Emotions
- Remember
- Memory
- Choice
- Being Present

Grade Levels at a Glance

PRE•K 3&4 Students will learn about the three main parts of the brain and how the brain helps them learn, think, and make choices.

K Students will begin to understand the connections between their brain and their feelings.

1ST Students will understand that they have a brain that allows them to think, feel, and make decisions.

2ND Students will understand their brain helps to focus their attention and that clear thinking requires a calm brain.

Reflection

As an educator you have the opportunity to share your knowledge of the brain with your students. This knowledge will influence their self-awareness and self-esteem. Think back to the last time you felt overwhelmed. Knowing what you now know about how your amygdala works, would you have handled the situation differently? Would it have been easier for you as a student if you had understood how your brain works?

Breath

What Is It?

The positive impact of focused breathing on overall well-being has been well researched. Children and the adults in their lives can easily learn how to use their breath to calm, center and refocus.

Why Is It Important?

By learning breathing strategies for self-regulation, children can make appropriate decisions and respond to stressful situations in a more mindful way.

VOCABULARY

- Breathing
- Calm
- Belly Breathing
- Amygdala
- Prefrontal Cortex
- Emotions
- "Settle Your Glitter"
- Peaceful
- Focused Breathing
- Pulse
- Chime
- "Stack Your Coins"
- "Soft Eyes"
- Pay Attention
- Focus

Grade Levels at a Glance

**PRE•K
3&4** Students will learn that focused breathing influences how their body feels.

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K Students will understand that breathing on purpose can help us feel better.

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1ST Students will understand that breath is a helpful tool to calm their bodies and their minds and learn language associated with self-regulation.

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2ND Students will identify when and where to incorporate breathing strategies and begin using focused breathing routinely in their day.

Reflection

How often do you feel yourself losing patience? In hard moments, we might lose our cool. What do you use to get yourself back to your "best self" and how do you model this self-regulation for your students? Focused breathing is a practice used for calming, centering, and refocusing. Take a few moments to quiet your body and notice the details of your breath. This will alleviate some of the stress you might feel and remain calm, not only in the classroom but in all areas of your life.

Feelings

What Is It?

The ability to identify personal feelings, recognize the feelings of others and understand that feelings are not permanent, but change throughout the day.

Why Is It Important?

One of the most important jobs of a teacher is to teach children to manage their feelings appropriately. The ability to manage emotions is a necessary lifelong skill for all social interactions.

VOCABULARY

- Feelings
- Emotions
- Behaviors
- Thermometer
- Frustrated
- Disappointed
- Compassionate
- Peaceful
- Frightened
- Affectionate
- Enthusiastic
- Sad
- Angry
- Mad
- Proud
- Joyful
- Happy
- Shy
- Jealous
- Upset
- Nervous

Grade Levels at a Glance

PRE•K 3&4 Students will learn how to label feelings and understand that their feelings come and go.

K Students will learn that everyone has different feelings and understand that there are connections between specific feelings and behaviors.

1ST Students will understand that feelings can change in their intensity.

2ND Students will understand that different situations or events may trigger different emotions.

Reflection

Can you imagine a day when you get some bad news about a family member's health and you are worried and scared. Imagine sharing that news with coworkers and they repeatedly say "It'll be fine! Don't worry." Then picture a coworker coming to you and saying "Wow that is really scary, you must be feeling worried." Which response would be more helpful for you?

Think about a time when one of your students had a very big feeling. This may have been a melt-down when mom dropped them off or when they were not allowed to be the line leader. Were they able to express what they were feeling at that moment? If not, in the future, how could you validate and help them identify those feelings?

The Body

What Is It?

Self-awareness begins with learning how the brain and body work together.

Why Is It Important?

Children need to understand how their brain and body are connected. By understanding how we experience emotions in the body, children will deepen their sense of self-awareness. Having this understanding will allow children to self-regulate more easily because they will have an understanding of how to use the body to calm strong feelings.

VOCABULARY

- Personal Space
- Movement
- Balance
- Observe
- Mindful Listening
- Attention
- Sound
- Brain-body Connection
- Feeling
- Strategy
- Cue
- Sensation
- Worry

Grade Levels at a Glance

PRE•K 3&4 Students will learn about personal space and that people often have strong feelings about their own personal space.

K Students will understand how their body and brain keep them safe through practicing mindfulness.

1ST Students will understand the way their brain influences how their body feels and ways to respond when they are having strong feelings.

2ND Students will learn to identify physical cues that indicate strong emotions.

Reflection

Interpersonal stress or pressures can accumulate in our body without us even noticing them. Have you ever found yourself on the verge of tears or found yourself yelling and had no idea where the emotion came from? Maybe you've gotten sick after a stressful week or month. What are some of the physical symptoms you experience when you start to feel overly stressed? Learning to listen to your body's cues can help you anticipate becoming overwhelmed by emotions and stress.

Impulse Control

What Is It?

Impulse control is the ability to control sudden urges to react.

Why Is It Important?

When children begin to understand what an impulse feels like, they can then begin to learn how to manage those impulses when they arise. Teaching children how to control themselves empowers them to navigate difficult situations successfully.

VOCABULARY

- Control
- Self-control
- Conductor
- Baton
- Impulse
- Patience
- Impulse Control
- Mindful
- Awareness

Grade Levels at a Glance

PRE•K 3&4 Students will identify what an impulse feels like and learn strategies to control impulses.

K Students will understand what an impulse feels like and learn self-calming strategies to control impulses.

1ST Students will understand how mindfulness relates to impulse control and tuning out distractions.

2ND Students will discuss the importance of controlling impulses and practice managing them.

Reflection

Impulses are reactions that we don't consciously choose. Even though we learn to manage impulses as we grow up, we have all had the experience of saying or doing something without completely thinking it through. Think back to a time when this happened to you. How did you feel afterwards? The process of teaching children to control impulses can be really frustrating. Remembering our own experiences can help us to have empathy. It's also important to ensure that our expectations line up with each child's actual developmental capacities.

Gratitude

What Is It?

Gratitude is the quality of being thankful and the readiness to show appreciation for kind actions by showing kindness in return.

Why Is It Important?

Through the practice of gratitude, children learn to consider and appreciate goodness in the world and understand that they receive benefits from sources outside of themselves. Gratitude is the building block for developing an optimistic outlook.

VOCABULARY

- Thankful
- Hippocampus
- Grateful
- Thank You
- You're Welcome
- Cozy
- Gratitude
- Kind
- Appreciated

Grade Levels at a Glance

PRE•K 3&4

Students will learn that they can be grateful and thankful for many things and will practice expressing gratitude by using the terms "thank you" and "you're welcome".

K

Students will learn the word gratitude, find things to be grateful for and notice how it makes them feel.

1ST

Students will understand and practice gratitude daily by verbalizing several things for which they are grateful.

2ND

Students will understand and practice gratitude by recognizing things that others do for them and thanking them.

Reflection

Research has shown that writing down things you are grateful for can positively impact your well-being, relationships, and even sleep! As students at your school are learning to practice gratitude, try it out for yourself too. Try writing down at least three specific things you are grateful for 1-3 times this week.

Optimism

What Is It?

Optimism is a mindset that allows us to see options for addressing challenges in life. When you have optimism, you have the ability to see that opportunities exist in any situation.

Why Is It Important?

Having optimism makes it's easier to take risks and view mistakes and challenges as opportunities for growth. Approaching challenges with an optimistic attitude will help children persist, target their efforts and ultimately succeed.

VOCABULARY

- Grumpy
- Mistake
- Oops
- Optimistic
- Optimism
- Ish
- Creative
- Maybe

Grade Levels at a Glance

PRE•K Students will learn that everyone makes mistakes and will practice turning their mistakes on paper into something beautiful.

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K Students will learn how to approach a challenge with optimism.

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1ST Students will learn how to adopt an optimistic perspective when faced with challenging circumstances.

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2ND Students will understand that opportunities exist in every situation.

Reflection

Picture driving down the road and realizing you have a flat tire! Where does your mind go? What are you thinking? In a situation like that it is easy to think, "This is a waste of time. My plans are ruined. Nothing ever goes my way!" What would it look like to think more optimistically in this situation? Being optimistic doesn't necessarily mean you are happy all the time or unrealistic about hard things. Challenges in life are real and really frustrating. Having an optimistic point of view would mean that you are able to see many ways out of this situation, and believe it will get better. Maybe you could call a friend, family member, or AAA and believe that even though this hard thing happened your day will get better.

Grit

What Is It?

Grit is the ability to keep working toward a goal, especially when it is hard or challenging.

Why Is It Important?

In school children are asked to work hard on things that are not necessarily intrinsically motivating. Sometimes, they can begin to associate struggle with failure. We want children to learn to feel comfortable with taking risks and working on challenges. When children learn early that they have an inner source of strength, they approach life and learning with more confidence.

VOCABULARY

- Frustration
- Difficult
- Grit
- Determination
- Strategy
- Challenge
- Goal
- Magnificent
- Setback
- Yet
- Persevere

Grade Levels at a Glance

PRE•K 3&4 Students will learn that they have already mastered difficult tasks and practice strategies to use when they encounter difficulties.

K Students will learn the meaning of grit and that using different strategies to approach challenges is a way to show grit.

1ST Students will learn that grit is a characteristic that can help them succeed at difficult tasks.

2ND Students will know that grit is a characteristic that can help them succeed at difficult tasks and be skilled at recognizing behaviors that show grit.

Reflection

When do you use grit? Think about a difficult project that you were able to complete and the process you went through before achieving success. Do you remember the frustrations along the way? How satisfying did it feel to overcome them? This is an experience we want all children to have, to know that frustrations and failure do not mean you give up. If appropriate, it may benefit your students to hear stories of how you have overcome challenges.

Resilience

What Is It?

Resilience is the capacity to recover quickly from failures or setbacks.

Why Is It Important?

Failure and setbacks are an inevitable part of life. Sometimes, the caring adults in children's lives try to shield them from failure. This is a mistake! We learn so much about ourselves when we experience failure and then "bounce back." It is essential to teach resilience so that students will have the skills they need to bounce back from setbacks that they will experience in the future.

VOCABULARY

- Challenge
- Setback
- Strategies
- Difficult
- Positive
- Encourage
- Frustrated
- Irritated
- Annoyed
- Self-talk
- Thought Bubble
- Speech Bubble
- Bounce Back
- Friendly Phrase

Grade Levels at a Glance

PRE•K 3&4 Students will learn that setbacks are a part of learning and the feelings associated with them are a part of learning too.

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K Students will learn that they can experience a variety of emotions when confronted by a setback and that self-talk matters.

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1ST Students will learn what it means to "bounce back" and identify times when they've been able to "bounce back".

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2ND Students will learn what it means to be resilient and identify times when they have been resilient after a difficult situation.

Reflection

Resilience is an important skill for children and adults alike! We all face our own stressors and failings in life. While your children are practicing resilience, you can work on your own as well. Think about your own self-talk, what do you say to yourself when things get hard? Consider trying out a positive mantra like "I am strong, I am capable, I am kind." Mantras not your thing? Think back to times in your life when things were really hard and you overcame them. Remembering our past successes can give us strength to face hard things in the future.

Perspective Taking

What Is It?

A perspective is a particular attitude toward something or a point of view. Perspective taking is the ability to appreciate the viewpoint of another person, even if it differs from your own.

Why Is It Important?

Understanding that it is OK for each of us to have our own unique needs, ideas and opinions gives us the emotional space to consider perspectives that differ from our own. Seeing things from the perspective of others opens up a whole new world of possibilities and gives us options that would never be available otherwise.

VOCABULARY

- Opinion
- Prefer
- Choice
- Polite
- No Thank You
- Yes Please
- Perspective
- Perspective Taking

Grade Levels at a Glance

PRE•K 3&4 Students will learn that others may have thoughts, opinions and preferences that are different from their own.

K Students will learn how to consider others' perspectives before making a choice about how to behave.

1ST Students will learn that others' perspective may differ from their own and will accept multiple perspectives as valid.

2ND Students will learn that other's perspectives may be different from their own and practice seeing things from a different perspective.

Reflection

As you consider the expectations you have of your students to work well with others, take a moment to think about your own ability to see things from different perspectives. Can you recall a time when you offered an idea or suggestion and someone just couldn't or wouldn't see your point of view? How did you feel when that happened? In that situation, would seeing things from each others perspective have helped the situation improve?

Empathy

What Is It?

Empathy goes beyond simply seeing another's point of view; it takes us into the other person's world of feeling and helps us understand the motives and context of their perspective.

Why Is It Important?

Empathy is the glue that binds relationships of all kinds. When we are able to express empathy and really let the other person know that we feel with them, we form bonds of trust and cooperation that create the solid foundation of relationships in every aspect of life.

VOCABULARY

- Unique
- Different
- Care
- Caring
- Calm
- Feelings
- Empathy
- Invisible

Grade Levels at a Glance

PRE•K 3&4 Students will learn that people can feel differently and that their response to those feelings is important.

K Students will learn that helping others is a way to show that you care about them.

1ST Students will learn that having empathy affects themselves and others.

2ND Students will practice empathy by imagining how others might feel and demonstrate empathy by showing concern for others.

Reflection

Take a minute to think about a teacher you had who you felt really understood you and your emotions. What was it like to be in that classroom?

Now, imagine you are a student in your classroom. Is there a culture of empathy amongst the students? What kind of interactions would you see the most of and is this a place you would want to be? As a teacher of young children, building empathy can be tough but not impossible. Notice over the next few weeks ways to enhance empathy in the classroom. Be on the lookout for students comforting or being helpful to each other. Practice drawing the students' attention to the positive interactions. What do you notice when you point out these interactions? Sometimes drawing attention to how the students are showing empathy to each other can provide learning opportunities needed to build a culture of empathy.

Kindness

What Is It?

Kindness is the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate.

Why Is It Important?

Children are often quick to announce when someone has treated them badly, and are surprised when another child offers an act of kindness. This makes sense because developmentally, children are focused on their own needs. When we model and teach kindness, we help children to develop this skill and create a positive culture in our classrooms. Children need to experience kindness to be able to reproduce it. It's our job to help them balance their needs with the needs of others, and learn that kindness toward others helps meet both sets of needs.

VOCABULARY

- Kind
- Unkind
- Action
- Care
- Act
- Helpful
- Bucket Filler
- Bucket Dipper
- Kindness
- Ripple
- Necessary
- Needful
- Powerful
- Dominoes

Grade Levels at a Glance

PRE•K Students will learn how to recognize acts of kindness and understand that doing kind things will help them feel good about themselves

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K Students will learn to initiate acts of kindness by focusing on others' needs.

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1ST Students will identify speech that is kind and learn how to assess their speech with a kindness lens.

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2ND Students will explore how kind acts impact themselves and their classmates.

Reflection

Kindness is indeed a universal principle, but how that kindness is expressed is a very individual matter. We all have our own ideas about what it feels like to be treated kindly. Take a moment to consider what YOU think kindness is, and what it looks like to YOU. As you reflect on your impressions of kindness, remember that the kind acts you express come back to grace your life too.

Compassion

What Is It?

Compassion is the feeling that arises when you are confronted with another's distress and feel motivated to do something to help.

Why Is It Important?

Nothing teaches compassion better than practicing it! Focusing on the feelings and needs of people in the community will empower children and lead them to realize they can be a positive influence in the lives of others.

VOCABULARY

- Calm
- Compassion
- Care
- Empathy

Grade Levels at a Glance

**PRE•K
3&4** Students will learn different ways to show compassion and caring.

K Students will brainstorm different ways to show compassion and caring in their school and community through a service learning project.

1ST Students will learn how compassion affects themselves and others and show their understanding through a service learning project.

2ND Students will learn how compassion affects themselves and others and show their understanding through a service learning project.

Reflection

Have you ever been in a store and seen a panicked and tearful child searching for their caregiver? Your initial reaction may be to reassure the child and guide them to safety. This is compassion. We know from experience that most people don't limit their compassion to their family and friends. Think for a moment about your life experiences that have led to a deeper understanding of compassion. How do you draw on these experiences when you see someone needing compassion?

Hope

What Is It?

Hope is the belief that the future will be present and that we have the power to make it so (Shane Lopez).

Why Is It Important?

Hopeful students are more likely to tell themselves, "I can do this! I'll try again." By helping students focus on how hope is at the center of what we want in our homes, neighborhoods and cities, we can help them to be more hopeful about their own dreams and future.

VOCABULARY

- Wish
- Super
- Future
- Superhero
- Goal
- Obstacle
- Hope
- Limited
- Unlimited

Grade Levels at a Glance

PRE•K 3&4 Students will learn how to value their own contribution in caring for the world around them.

K Students will learn that obstacles shouldn't stop pursuit of goals.

1ST Students will explore possibilities for their futures and learn that obstacles shouldn't stop the pursuit of goals.

2ND Students will identify a short term goal for academic success and celebrate accomplishments when a goal is reached.

Reflection

Hope means different things to different people, but one thing everyone can agree on is that a sense of hope is essential for health and well-being. Think about what your students have achieved this year. What have you achieved? What do you hope for your students next year? Hope is something that can be cultivated. We close out the school year by celebrating students' accomplishments and looking toward a promising future that is bright and full of potential.