

**100 Activities and Methods for**

*Promoting*

**Social & Emotional Learning**

*in Afterschool Programs*



*A resource presented by Toolbox Training.*

This resource is designed to accompany the Toolbox Training workshop *Promoting Social & Emotional Learning in Afterschool Programs*. It is an extension of the 2017 article “100 Activities/Methods to Promote Social & Emotional Learning” at ToolboxTrainingOnline.com

(<https://toolboxtraining.blogspot.com/2017/07/activitiesmethods-to-promote-social.html>)

In addition, a Pinterest board with many of these activities was created on Toolbox Training’s Pinterest page at <https://www.pinterest.com/toolboxtraining/social-and-emotional-learning/>

For more information about the social & emotional learning workshop and other Toolbox Training workshops, go to: <https://toolboxtraining.blogspot.com/p/workshops.html>

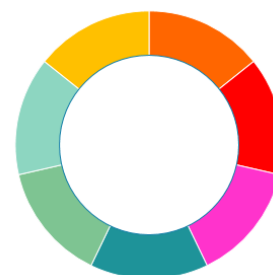
### What Is Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)?

“The capacity to recognize and manage emotions, solve problems effectively, and establish positive relationships with others.” – *Joseph E. Zins and Maurice J. Elias, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)*

### A.R.M.O.R.E.D.

There are seven social & emotional skills with which all youth should be A.R.M.O.R.E.D.:

- [Awareness of Self](#) ..... 4
- [Regulation](#) ..... 11
- [Motivation](#) ..... 18
- [Others \(Awareness of\)](#) ..... 22
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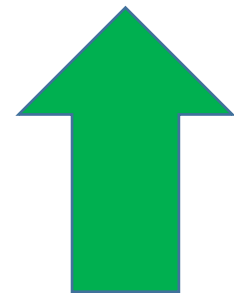
## Why SEL Matters

There are proven benefits for youth who participate in social & emotional learning programs in school settings.

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### What Goes Up:

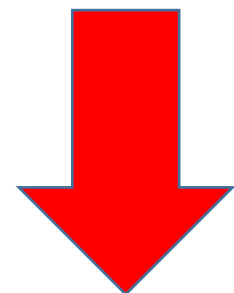
- ↑ Academic achievement – GPA and standardized test scores up 11% (CASEL, Edutopia)
- ↑ Social and emotional skills – up 23% (Durlak)
- ↑ Attitude toward self, others, school (CASEL, Durlak, Edutopia)
- ↑ Helping/prosocial behaviors – up 9% (Durlak, Edutopia)
- ↑ Emotional regulation (Go Strengths)
- ↑ Classroom engagement (Go Strengths)
- ↑ Resilience (Go Strengths)
- ↑ Self-confidence (Go Strengths)



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### What Goes Down:

- ↓ Problem behavior – down 9% (Durlak, Go Strengths)
- ↓ Aggression (Edutopia)
- ↓ Emotional stress – down 10% (Durlak)
- ↓ Negative thinking decreases (Go Strengths)
- ↓ Substance abuse (CASEL)

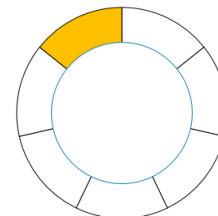


*Above information taken from various sources – CASEL, Durlak, Edutopia, Go Strengths – all of which are cited at the back of this resource.*

## Awareness of Self

These are activities designed to help youth to:

- Identify their strengths & limitations
- Develop accurate self-perceptions
- Develop self-confidence



## 8 Phrases That Nurture Growth Mindset

This is a poster which you can download at: <https://18670-presscdn-pagely.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/poster-we-say-weareteachers-final.pdf>

However, you can also adapt it to your afterschool environment. You could show them this poster, but ask them to come up with their own version for your program.



## 26 Questions to Help Kids Know Themselves Better

**26 Questions to Help Kids Know Themselves Better** ?

© 2106 Sharon Martin, LCSW

1. What are your strengths?
2. If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be? Why?
3. What are your goals for this school year?
4. Who do you talk to when you have a problem? How do they help?
5. What do you like to do for fun?
6. What are you worried about?
7. What do you wish your parents knew about you? What do you wish your friends or classmates knew about you?
8. If you could have one wish, what would it be?
9. What do you feel ashamed of?
10. Where do you feel safest?
11. If you weren't afraid, what would you do?
12. What does failure mean to you? Have you ever felt like a failure? How did you cope?
13. How can you tell that you're getting angry? What does your body feel like? What are you thinking?
14. How are you different?
15. What's something that adults (parents, grandparents, teachers, etc.) say to you that's really stuck with you? Do you think they're right?
16. What do you do when people don't seem to like you?
17. What is your proudest accomplishment?
18. What things are in your control? What's out of your control? How does it feel to notice that some things are out of your control?
19. What do you like about your school? What do you dislike?
20. What do you do when you're stressed out?
21. What's something nice you could say to yourself?
22. What is your happiest memory?
23. What do you do when you're feeling down? Do you think it's OK to cry? Do you think it's OK to yell?
24. What is your favorite book? Movie? Band? Food? Color? Animal?
25. What are you grateful for?
26. What do you like about yourself?

Happily Imperfect | PsychCentral

This was posted on Pinterest here:

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/308144799495522088/>

It is listed as copyrighted by Sharon Martin, LCSW (2016). Once again, you could work with the youth in your program to come up with your own questions.

### Brag Bracelets

This is another activity from Pinterest: [www.pinterest.com/pin/308144799495522111/](http://www.pinterest.com/pin/308144799495522111/)

It is a product sold by [www.Teacherspayteachers.com/](http://www.Teacherspayteachers.com/) but would be an easy project to make in an afterschool setting.

The person who posted it on Pinterest said, "Brag Bracelets are an awesome classroom management tool and have been super popular in my classroom. Students work hard to earn them and are super excited when they receive one! I particularly love the fact that students get to take them home which helps to create a positive teacher/parent communication channel. This pack includes 24 different BLACK AND WHITE brags bracelets to use for multiple occasions. I print them on bright colored paper and they look super cute!!!"





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## Expression Through Art (Creative Writing Portraits)

This was posted at <https://www.weareteachers.com/21-simple-ways-to-integrate-social-emotional-learning-throughout-the-day/>

The article said of this activity: “Sometimes students think and feel things that they can’t quite put into words. Art is a great tool to allow them to explore topics from a different perspective. Sketch your thoughts and feelings out as a prewriting activity. Create a painting as an interpretation of a piece of music or poetry.”

Source: <http://artprojectsforkids.org/creative-writing-self-portraits/>




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## Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset (Sharing)

This is a suggestion from the Edutopia article “13 Powerful SEL Activities” at <https://www.edutopia.org/article/13-powerful-sel-activities-emelina-minero>

It says: “Have your students share moments when they have demonstrated a growth and fixed mindset.” In another Edutopia article, “Recognizing and Overcoming False Growth Mindset,” (<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/recognizing-overcoming-false-growth-mindset-carol-dweck>) Carol Dweck defines the two kinds of mindsets:

**Growth mindset:** “the belief that you can develop your talents and abilities through hard work, good strategies, and help from others.”

**Fixed mindset:** “the belief that talents and abilities are unalterable traits, ones that can never be improved.”



image from Big-change.org



## Positive and Negative Self-Talk

This is an article from Centervention <https://www.centervention.com/positive-negative-self-talk/>

There is a downloadable worksheet here:

<https://www.centervention.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Positive-Self-Talk.pdf>

The worksheet explains self-talk as the thoughts running through one's head, noting that negative self-talk "pulls you down into fear, anger, or worry" and that youth should focus on stronger, positive self-talk to counter the negatives.



## Reflective Writing



1. Your goals for this month
2. What don't you share?
3. A reason to celebrate
4. Describe where you are now
5. A dream that seems impossible
6. Something you hope for
7. What good are you doing?
8. The people who make your life better
9. A tradition that makes you feel at home
10. Your top five favorite movies
11. Someone you'd like to meet
12. Is your life what you imagined?
13. The best kind of laughter is...
14. A silly thing you'd really like
15. Where do you want to be
16. Something that truly doesn't matter
17. What you do when you are lost
18. A book from your childhood
19. What are you thankful for?
20. An evening ritual
21. A small change you'd like to make
22. A big change you'd like to make
23. Something you're still not sure about
24. The best dessert to share with friends
25. One thing you can't stop talking about
26. How do you spend a rainy day?
27. Your favorite things about yourself
28. Three things you do well
29. A story that captures your imagination
30. Memories beside a fireplace

Made by Elizabeth McNair / Life of Lovely

This activity is from the WeAreTeachers.com article  
 “21 Simple Ways to Integrate Social-Emotional  
 Learning Throughout the Day”

(<https://www.weareteachers.com/21-simple-ways-to-integrate-social-emotional-learning-throughout-the-day/>)

It suggests giving youth “time to journal and free-write. Put on quiet music. Dim the lights. Make writing time a quiet, soothing break from busyness that your students will look forward to.”

At left are some suggested journal-writing prompts.

There is also a link to a [k5chalkbox.com](http://k5chalkbox.com) article “6 Benefits of Journal Writing”

(<http://www.k5chalkbox.com/benefits-of-journal-writing.html>)



## Self-Assessment Tools: Emoji Style

This Pinterest post comes from the article, "Self-Assessment Tools, Emoji Style" on the Light Bulbs and Laughter website ([www.lightbulbsandlaughter.com/2016/07/self-assessment-tools-emoji-style.html?pp=1](http://www.lightbulbsandlaughter.com/2016/07/self-assessment-tools-emoji-style.html?pp=1))

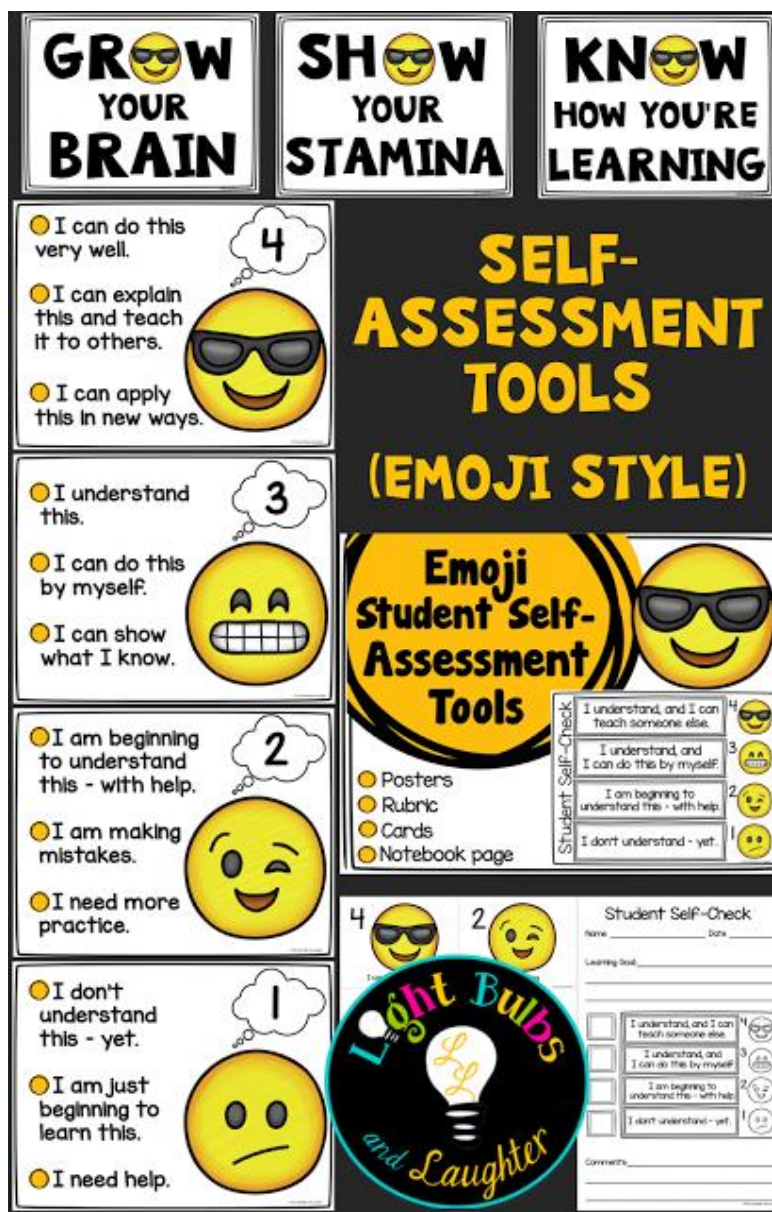
This set of posters, cards, and a student response page is available as a digital download for \$4.00 at TeachersPayTeachers.com ([www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Emoji-Self-Assessment-Tools-Posters-Cards-Student-Response-Page-2686385](http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Emoji-Self-Assessment-Tools-Posters-Cards-Student-Response-Page-2686385))

### Stop and Think

This activity is from Centervention.com ([www.centervention.com/stop-and-think/](http://www.centervention.com/stop-and-think/))

As explained on the web page, the activity is designed to get kids to reflect on the choices they make.

There is a downloadable worksheet (<https://www.centervention.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Stop-and-Think-Activity-Positive-and-Negative-Consequences.pdf>) but this is another activity which can be tailored to your program. Create a series of "choice cards" which gives youth circumstances (the worksheet offers the example of eating cookies before dinner) and then have youth come up with the consequences of that choice. As the worksheet says, a positive would be getting to eat cookies, but a negative would be disobeying parents.

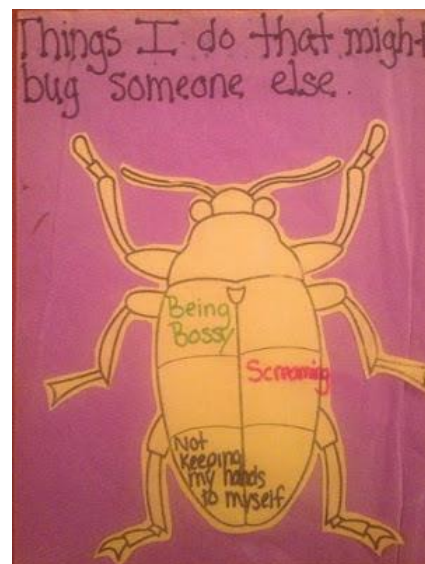


## Things I Do That Might Bug Someone Else

This idea was posted on Pinterest, but originated on the Creative Elementary School Counselor blog in a 2013 post entitled "Friendship Bugs." (<http://creativeelementaryschoolcounselor.blogspot.com/2013/01/friendship-bugs.html>)

On one side of the paper, students were instructed to write what bugged them (examples: bossiness, name calling, tattling, teasing, whining, etc.).

On the other side, they wrote things which they did which might bug someone else. It can be more difficult for youth to recognize qualities they may have which aren't so admirable.



## This Is How I Think I'm Doing (Self-Evaluation)

This is another activity posted on Pinterest. It originated from a website called Top Teacher which, as it says, offers "inspiring and creative early childhood curriculum resources for your classroom." It offers a downloadable personal self-evaluation for kids at <http://www.topteacher.com.au/class-ideas/planning-and-assessment/personal-self-evaluation>

Once again, this could be used simply as an idea generator for your youth program. Ask youth to come up with their own ideas of what they'd like to put on self-reflection. In fact, you might even opt to let each youth's self-reflection sheet be individualized.

**Self Evaluation**

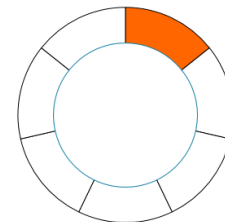
This is how I think I am doing...

I follow the teacher's instructions.	😊	😐	😞
I listen when others are talking.	😊	😐	😞
I participate in class discussions.	😊	😐	😞
I get my work done on time.	😊	😐	😞
I complete my work neatly.	😊	😐	😞
I try to complete my work independently.	😊	😐	😞
I ask for help when I don't know what to do.	😊	😐	😞
I try my hardest all of the time.	😊	😐	😞
I am responsible and my teacher can count on me.	😊	😐	😞
I work well with my classmates.	😊	😐	😞

## Regulation

These are activities designed to help youth:

- Manage reactions
- Address stress
- Learn impulse control



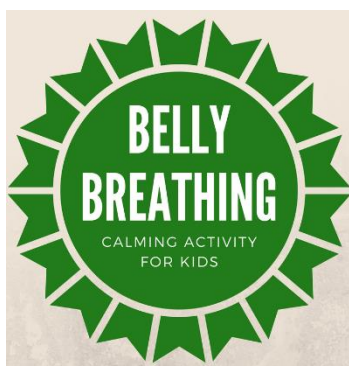
## 8 Ways Kids Can Calm Down Anywhere

These tips come from:

<http://themommyview.viewsfromastepstool.com/index.php/2016/04/10/tips-calming-angry-child-plus-8-calming-tools-anywhere/>

This could be a poster in an afterschool setting. Youth could make their own individual posters for which of the 8 techniques speak to them most.

## Belly Breathing



This lesson from Centervention.com ([www.centervention.com/belly-breathing-for-kids/](http://www.centervention.com/belly-breathing-for-kids/)) explains how to use one's belly for a special calming-down breathing technique.

1. Youth place one hand on their chests and the other on their bellies and then breathe normally. The hand on the chest moves up and down while the hand on the belly stays in place.
2. Ask youth to take a deep breath through the nose so that the chest doesn't move, but the belly does. When our hands move this way, we are taking deep, relaxing, belly breaths.

The lesson plan also offers suggestions for partner activities and activities with stuffed animals.

**8 WAYS KIDS CAN CALM DOWN ANYWHERE**

All kids can have a hard time regulating their emotions. Some have a tougher time than others. For those that need a bit of extra help, these calming tools that they can do ANYWHERE, will provide them with the skills necessary to calm down in any situation.

- 1 COUNT TO 5.**  
Counting is a great way to help kids learn how to stop and think before reacting to their anger. Impulse control is difficult to come by for young kids. This simple tactic gives them a chance to think before they act.
- 2 TAKE A DEEP BREATH.**  
Deep breathing is such a great relaxation technique. Despite how they are feeling, taking a deep breath (or two) can help them calm their bodies quickly.
- 3 BLOW INTO YOUR HANDS.**  
This is another technique for promoting deep breathing. By blowing directly into their hands rather than the air, the child receives feedback and can feel the strength of their breaths.
- 4 PLACE HANDS IN POCKETS.**  
This act provides kids with some deep pressure and physical restraint. An alternative to this would be to sit on hands or clasp them tightly.
- 5 ACKNOWLEDGE ANTECEDENTS TO ANGER.**  
It is so important that kids begin to notice and realize what happens to their bodies when they become angry. What does their face feel like? Is there tension in their body?
- 6 MAKE A FIST, THEN RELAX THE HAND.**  
Squeezing hands into fists and then releasing is a great way to remove some of the tension built up in the body. Often kids do not realize how much tension they are holding in their bodies when becoming upset.
- 7 DO A BODY SCAN.**  
Start at the head, working down the body, notice areas of tension and relax those muscles.
- 8 ASK FOR A HUG.**  
Hugs make everything better. Find someone you love and hug it out.

[www.viewsfromastepstool.com](http://www.viewsfromastepstool.com)



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## Calming Area



<https://www.whatihavelearnedteaching.com/5-things-classroom-calming-area/>

A calming area is a designated space that's open, but away from distraction. It is NOT a desk facing a wall. It should have:

- **Chill-out poster** on the wall accompanied by a few soothing remedies in a small container.
- **Calming bottle.** Fill a clear plastic bottle with water, food coloring, and glitter for youth to shake.
- **Books.** These should be books with social stories which address behavioral concerns, conflict resolution, and character building.
- **Squishy ball.** This allows youth to squeeze the ball to relieve stress.
- **Stuffed animals.** These can serve a similar purpose as security blankets.

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## Calming Strategy Cards

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/308144799495522055/>

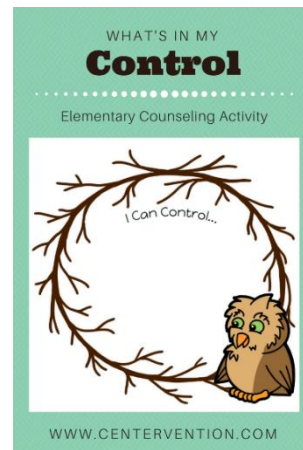
This activity came from Pinterest, but without any instructions or reference to the original source. However, you could pull ideas from other regulation activities (such as **8 Ways Kids Can Calm Down Anywhere**) and create individual cards for each idea. These cards could be placed in a **Calming Area**.




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## Circle of Control

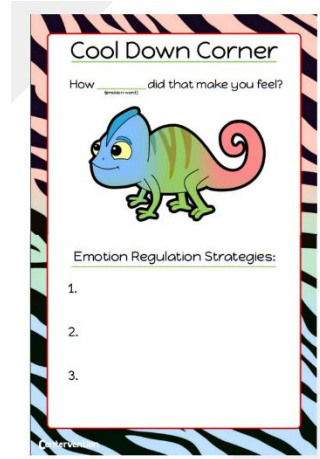
This activity from centervention.com (<https://www.centervention.com/circle-of-control/>) helps youth identify what is within their control and what isn't. On the downloadable worksheet (pictured here), youth can write what they cannot control on the outside of the owl's nest and write what they can control on the inside of the nest.



## Cool Down Corner

This activity from Centervention.com ([www.centervention.com/behavior-strategies-cool-corner/](http://www.centervention.com/behavior-strategies-cool-corner/)) encourages youth to identify different emotions and strategies for regulating their responses to those emotions.

1. List emotions identified by the group.
2. Ask youth to explain situations which might make them feel these emotions.
3. Ask youth to identify if these causes would lead to small or big emotions.
4. Note that if youth feel big emotions during afterschool time, they can excuse themselves to the Cool Down Corner. This could be a place with a beanbag chair or it could be the Calming Area outlined in an earlier activity in this section.
5. The Cool Down Corner poster at right (downloadable at the link listed above) can remind youth of emotions they've identified and then pick a strategy for managing that emotion. Consider laminating the poster so youth can write ideas directly on it or print Cool Down Corner sheets for youth to use.



## Coping Skills Anchor Chart

This is a free downloadable chart at: <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Anchor-Chart-Coping-Skills-Strategies-for-Frustration-in-Class-882168>

This chart can remind youth when they get frustrated what they can do to get "back on track."

1. Stop and think
2. Take a deep breath.
3. Ask themselves..."is this is a big or small issue?"
4. Look & Watch: See what the rest of the students are doing.
5. Asking a neighbor for assistance
6. Talking to the teacher.



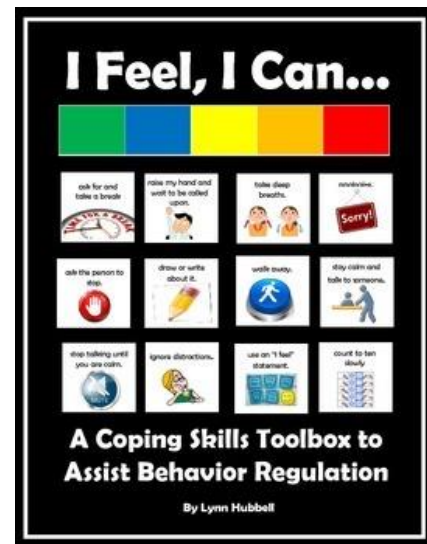


### I Feel... I Can: A Coping Skills Toolbox

This is a download available for \$4.00 at <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/I-Feel-I-Can-A-Coping-Skills-Toolbox-to-Assist-Behavior-Regulation-1809169>

What it does:

- Teaches youth how to “better regulate their own emotions and behavior.”
- Targets coping, frustration tolerance, and stress management skills
- Ideal for implementing related IEP goals or behavior intervention plans.
- Addresses emotional literacy by encouraging students to recognize and label their escalating emotions and related triggers.
- Designed to meet the unique needs of a wide range of learners in general and special education classrooms.
- Can be a go-to resource in most any classroom or therapy setting.
- Can be adapted for use in the whole group, small group or one-to-one setting
- Instruction can be delivered during structured lessons, as needed to take advantage of “teachable moments,” or through independent practice to maintain the learning.



Includes:

- 5-point color/number scale, inspired by ‘The Incredible 5-Point Scale,’ created by Kari Dunn Buron and Mitzi Curtis (2003)
- Materials for teaching 12 specific coping skills
- Both color and black and white versions of the visual supports are included
- Coping skill tokens are provided in two forms: one which pairs visual icons with words and another which includes only words.
- A template is provided which outlines a research-based strategy for teaching behavior skills and includes examples of how to use it.
- Worksheets to expand the learning while supporting differential instruction.

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## Karma Completion (Building Resiliency)

Free lesson plan available at <https://www.centervention.com/building-resiliency-children-karma-completions/>

Karma the Chameleon started several doodles, but gave up when she thought she made a mistake. Students must use their imagination to turn the “mistakes” into art by completing Karma’s drawings. It’s a great opportunity to discuss how mistakes can often lead to something greater than our original plan.

**Students will:** Discuss the emotions related to making mistakes and think critically to create drawings from abstract lines and shapes.

### Materials:

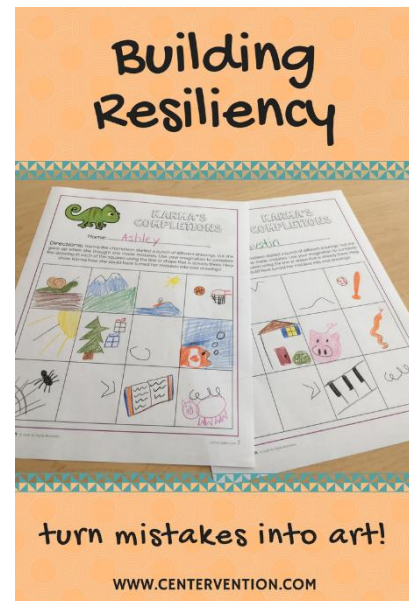
- Karma Completions worksheet:  
<https://www.centervention.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Building-Resiliency-in-Children-Karma-Completions.pdf>
- markers, crayons or colored pencils

### Discussion:

1. How does it feel when you make a mistake on something you’ve been working hard on?
2. What are some things we can do when we get upset about our mistakes?
3. Can mistakes ever be a good thing?

### Directions:

1. Tell students that sometimes what we think is a mistake can help us come up with ideas that are better than our original plan.
2. [On the worksheet](#), Karma started a doodle in each square, but gave up when she thought she messed up. Students should complete each drawing using the line or shape that is already there.
3. When students are done, have them compare their drawings. Discuss how they all started with the same “mistakes,” but came up with unique ways of turning them into something great!



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## Noise Isolation

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/13-powerful-sel-activities-emelina-minero>

There are a variety of sounds that your students hear when they’re in your classroom, from students walking in the hallway to outdoor construction noise. Have your students focus on one noise and describe it to themselves and recall the last time they interacted with it.

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### Pipe Cleaners and Popsicle Sticks (Teaching Flexibility vs. Rigidity)

<https://connectedfamilies.org/2013/03/12/how-a-pipe-cleaner-can-stop-your-childs-meltdowns/>

You can use this hands-on activity to talk to youth about the value of flexibility. Talk about how people can be rigid, but when they don't get their way, they may snap. (Break popsicle stick to illustrate this).

When people can adapt to the situation, they are able to bend (like the pipe cleaner) and can even straighten back out to their original position later.



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### Ready, Set, Go!: Impulse Control Strategies

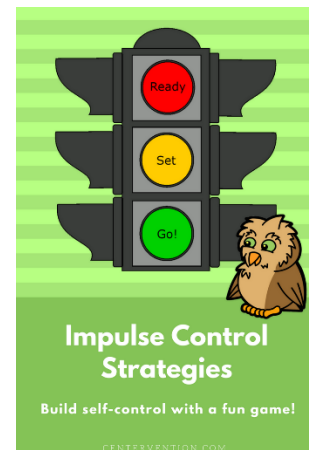
<https://www.centervention.com/impulse-control-strategies-ready-set-go/>

This activity focuses on impulse control, specifically teaching youth to listen carefully, focus, and wait for the other person to finish speaking.

**Materials:** ground markers, like cones or bases

**Directions:**

1. Choose a starting line. Place a marker about 20 feet ahead, and another about 20 feet beyond that.
2. Have students line up next to each other at the starting line.
3. Tell students that when they hear the word "Go," they should run to the first cone. If they start running before they hear "Go," they won't get to move to the next cone.
4. Tempt students' impulses by substituting "Go" with other G-words like "grow," "gotcha," "grin," etc. Say the phrase "Ready....Set....G....." slowly before completing the phrase with your chosen G-word.
5. If a student makes it to the first of second cone and false starts on a word other than "Go," they must go back to the beginning.



**Discussion Questions:**

- Was it hard to wait until the game leader was done talking to start running? Why or why not?
- Did you use any strategies to stay still until you heard the word "Go"? What were they?
- Did you have any false starts? How did that feel to have to start over?

Discuss how this is what happens when you interrupt others in conversation. If you always interrupt, the conversation starts over, and you lose the momentum you've built with the other person. And even if you don't interrupt, but you just stop listening intently, you'll often miss important information.

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### Visualization to Release Stress

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/13-powerful-sel-activities-emelina-minero>

Have your students imagine what stress looks and feels like inside their body, and then ask them to release it. “The mindfulness practice makes you think the stress is coming off your body,” says Geoffrey, a 12th-grade student.

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### Wheel of Coping Skills

[https://kristinamarcelli.wordpress.com/2016/05/02/spin-the-wheel-of-coping-skills/?utm\\_content=buffer2976f&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=pinterest.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](https://kristinamarcelli.wordpress.com/2016/05/02/spin-the-wheel-of-coping-skills/?utm_content=buffer2976f&utm_medium=social&utm_source=pinterest.com&utm_campaign=buffer)

This is a visual way to teach children and youth to identify multiple coping and expression skills that work for them personally in various situations.

This is one fun way to help children remember the skills that they have identified and realize that they have a choice of which skill to use in each situation. For example, walking outside may help with frustrations at home but cannot be done at school so another skill needs to be used instead, such as taking deep breaths or imagining a safe place.



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### Write Down, Rip Up and Throw Away Your Stress

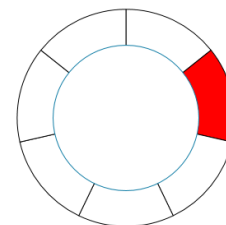
<https://www.edutopia.org/article/13-powerful-sel-activities-emelina-minero>

Have your students write down their expectations and insecurities, rip them up, and throw them away. This emotional check-in takes about three minutes. By acknowledging how your students are feeling at the start of each class, you'll acknowledge their barriers to learning and create a safe space for your students to overcome them.

## Motivation

These are activities designed to help youth to:

- Develop the ability to motivate themselves
- Set goals
- Tackle challenging tasks



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### Bin Toss

<https://ourpastimes.com/list-motivational-games-kids-6021338.html>

This game helps motivate kids by helping them learn how to properly motivate teammates in a stressful environment. Have the children sit at tables on opposite sides of a room. Set a large wastepaper basket between the tables. Give each team a separate color of paper so that their scores can be easily calculated. Have the teams make balls of paper and try to see how many they can get inside the basket within a time limit. They can use different strategies to get the paper into the basket. Several sheets can be crunched together to make heavier balls. Smaller balls can be made from one sheet of paper to add in precision throwing. Encourage the players to cheer each other on as the game progresses.

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### Candy Hunt

<https://ourpastimes.com/list-motivational-games-kids-6021338.html>

This game is best played in a setting where children are unfamiliar with each other. This game motivates children to become friends and work together on projects. Hide packages of candy around a large room. Write down a list of animals equaling the number of children at the event. Divide the children into teams of five to seven members. Assign a leader for each team who is then blindfolded. Each child receives the name of an animal and must make that sound throughout the duration of the game. The goal of the game is for team members to find the candy hidden in the room and then direct their leaders to the location of the candy using only animal sounds. The team leader has to remember which animals are in his group and follow their signals to the candy. This is a great motivational game because the team members must motivate their blindfolded leader towards the correct placement of the candy.



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### Monitor Own Progress

<https://www.weareteachers.com/21-simple-ways-to-integrate-social-emotional-learning-throughout-the-day/>

Make personal goal-setting (academic, emotional, social, etc.) a regular activity with your students. It will strengthen their intrapersonal skills and give them ownership of their own learning. Help them develop the habit of revisiting and adjusting their goals often to monitor progress. Am I meeting my goals? What do I need to work on next? How do I want to grow? For more on goal setting, go here: <https://www.weareteachers.com/my-problem-with-the-grit-movement-and-how-i-think-we-can-solve-it/>




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### Motivational Moment

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/13-powerful-sel-activities-emelina-minero>

Have two students start the class with a three- to five-minute presentation—and come up with two or three discussion questions—based on their interests. The presentation must be related to the course content in a real-world context. “Many students include a video for visuals and increased engagement, but it’s optional,” says Ching. Have the rest of the class partner up to discuss their questions for one minute and then give them the opportunity to share out to the whole class. This exercise gives your students insight into their peers’ interests.

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### Paper Planes

<https://ourpastimes.com/list-motivational-games-kids-6021338.html>

This game is motivational because it allows children to think about achievable goals and how they can be reached. Give each child a piece of paper and instruct her to make a paper air plane from it. On the inside of the plane have each child write a goal she has that she hopes to achieve by the end of the year. These goals could include better grades, being nicer to friends, a special toy or anything else the children can think of. Have teachers or leaders write encouraging messages on the outside of the planes. Allow the children to fly the planes, and discuss with the children how they should allow their goals to soar.

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### Quote of the Day

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/13-powerful-sel-activities-emelina-minero>

Introduce a quote relevant to what your students are learning or to a shared experience—for example, an act of violence in the community. You can facilitate a whole-class discussion, group students into pairs, or have each student share a one-word response to the quote. This gives students the space to

reflect on their beliefs and experiences and whether they agree or disagree with the quote and other students' opinions, and it gives them insight into their peers' perspectives and feelings.

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## Road Signs

[https://www.classroomfreebies.com/2012/07/student-road-sign-posters.html?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+ClassroomFreebies+%28Classroom+Freebies%29&utm\\_content=FaceBook](https://www.classroomfreebies.com/2012/07/student-road-sign-posters.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+ClassroomFreebies+%28Classroom+Freebies%29&utm_content=FaceBook)

Use the large road signs as gentle reminder posters on the wall or...

Print double ones and hang them back-to-back with a piece of fish line and suspend from the ceiling.

Use the smaller ones for a bulletin board boarder, or make bookmarks, a magnet, or cut slits and make pencil toppers for your students.

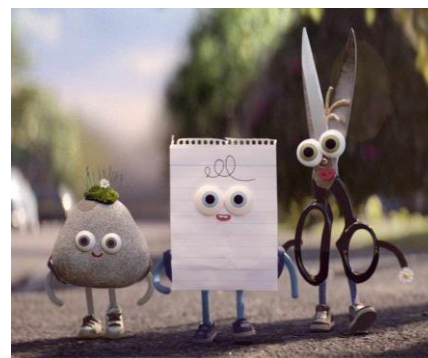



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## Rock, Paper, Scissors Cheerleaders

<https://www.playworks.org/game-library/ro-sham-bo-rockstar/>

1. Review the rules of "Rock Paper Scissors," available here: <https://www.playworks.org/game-library/ro-sham-bo-or-rock-paper-scissors/>
2. Group everyone into pairs.
3. Have each partner group introduce themselves and play a round of "Rock Paper Scissors" (or enough rounds to break a tie).
4. Everyone who does not win becomes the winner's cheerleader, following them and shouting 'Go \_\_\_\_!'
5. The winner moves on to play another winning student.
6. Each round, the winner advances to play again and the non-winners and any previous cheerleaders are now all cheering for that winner.
7. The game continues this way until it is down to two players and the whole group is cheering for one or the other.



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## Starting Positive

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/13-powerful-sel-activities-emelina-minero>

Have each student tape a sheet of paper to their back and then walk around and write positive qualities about their peers on their backs.

---

## What Can I Say to Myself?

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/308144799495522087/>

The board at the right offers some ideas of how youth could change statements to be more motivational. Work with the youth to come up with other phrases you could add to this.

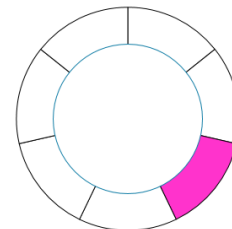


INSTEAD OF...	TRY THINKING....
-I'M NOT GOOD AT THIS	-WHAT AM I MISSING?
-I'M AWESOME AT THIS	-I'M ON THE RIGHT TRACK
-I GIVE UP!	-I'LL USE SOME OF THE STRATEGIES I'VE LEARNED
-THIS IS TOO HARD	-THIS MAY TAKE SOME TIME AND EFFORT
-I CAN'T MAKE THIS ANY BETTER	-I CAN ALWAYS IMPROVE; I'LL KEEP TRYING
-I CAN'T DO MATH	-I'M GOING TO TRAIN MY BRAIN IN MATH
-I MADE A MISTAKE	-MISTAKES HELP ME IMPROVE
-I'LL NEVER BE AS SMART AS HER	-I'M GOING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT SHE DOES AND TRY IT
-IT'S GOOD ENOUGH	-IS THIS REALLY MY BEST WORK?

## Others (Awareness of)

These are activities designed to help youth to:

- Practice empathy
- Understand diversity and other cultures
- Recognize social and ethical norms



## Acts of Kindness Task Cards

This is a digital download available for \$4.99 at

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Random-Acts-of-Kindness-in-the-Classroom-Student-Activity-Cards-EDITABLE-738305>

Promote being kind, thoughtful, and caring in the classroom with these 48 random acts of kindness task cards. Builds character and community. Editable. Create your own. Easy print, cut, use format.

Promoting kindness in the classroom benefits everyone and the positive energy and attitudes improve the learning environment and increase academic performance. Great for setting a positive tone at the beginning of the year. Each kindness card is numbered and has a title, graphic, and description. They can be printed in color or grayscale with good results. Use them with bulletin boards, a kindness chart, student desk or table pockets. Great with 2nd grade, 3rd grade, 4th grade, 5th grade, even 6th grade. Younger kids can be partnered with older kids as mentors. Included is an Acts of Kindness tracking chart to keep track of their kind act accomplishments. Can be easily combined with lessons on manners and social skills. The text on the cards is editable for more flexibility. Template cards are included for your own creations.



## Appreciation, Apology, Aha

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/13-powerful-sel-activities-emelina-minero>

Children or youth get in a circle and share an appreciation, apology, or realization with the group. Examples:

- I would like to appreciate Brenda for facilitating the conversation in our small group.
- I would like to thank everyone for taking this class seriously.
- I apologize to everyone for having my headphones in for half of the time.

**Tips:**

- Encourage authentic and timely apologies. Apologizing for something that happened a long time ago has less impact than apologizing for something that happened that day or week. Let your students know that they don't have to name who they're apologizing to when they apologize for what they did.
- Help students share helpful, not harmful words.
- Have your students snap, clap, or shake both hands when they hear something that resonates with them.

"When you pay attention to each other, not only does it build a sense of community, but we're more able to understand other people," says Janet, a 12th-grade student. "If you're able to understand people at a younger age, you could work better with them as adults. That changes how the future generations will be. People can be more accepting, more helpful towards each other."

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**Ants on a Log**

<https://www.playworks.org/game-library/ants-on-a-log-2/>

**Goal:** To develop strategic thinking and cooperation.

**Directions:**

1. Identify a line on the ground to play on.
2. Have everyone stand on a line.
3. Number the players from one to ten (or depending on how many are playing).
4. Once everyone is in line in specific order, the object of the game is to get the whole group to switch positions on the line without falling off the line.
5. If the first player is on the left end of the line, he or she should end up on the right end of the line.
6. The order of the players should remain exactly how it was before, only in reverse.

**Variations**

- Split the players into two groups. They should be standing on the line facing the other group.
- The object is to have the two groups switch places while staying in the same order.
- Vary the width of the line with a wider line being easier or vary the distance of the playing area from the ground to add a challenge.



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## Broken Heart

Activity from CharacterCounts.org.

1. Need a big heart on a large piece of paper (like big enough to have to hold up both arms outstretched).
2. Hold it as low as you can.
3. Ask audience to say things that are caring which will build this person up.
4. As audience says things, trainer lifts heart up until it is as high as it can get.
5. Then participants say things that tear the person down.
6. After each comment, trainer tears a piece off the heart.
7. Trainer asks for one volunteer to help tape the heart back together.
8. As trainer goes through set of slides, volunteer is taping heart back together. At the end of each slide, the trainer asks for another volunteer to help tape the heart together.
9. By the end of the slides, the heart is taped back together, but it took a village to put it back together.
10. At the end, raise the heart up and show how the scars will still be there even when we put it back together.

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## Feel-Good Scavenger Hunt (Random Acts of Kindness)

<https://www.centervention.com/encourage-random-acts-kindness/>

This activity helps youth focus on doing good deeds or random acts of kindness for others. You can choose to give a reward for having all the good deeds complete by the goal date or choose to have the reward be feeling good for making others feel good!

A downloadable worksheet is available here:

<https://www.centervention.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Podis-Feel-Good-Scavenger-Hunt.pdf>



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### Find the Airplane (Perspective Taking)

<https://www.centervention.com/perspective-taking-activities-find-airplane/>

This activity can help improve critical skills like empathy and communication. Youth work with partners to find items in your classroom or program space.

**Materials:**

Printable plane and walkie talkies (optional): <http://www.centervention.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/2001-Find-the-Airplane.pdf>

**Directions:**

1. Each player gets a walkie talkie. You can use the printable in this activity or real walkie talkies if available.
2. The first player in each pairing gets the printed plane (or other object of your choosing).
3. The second player in each pairing must hide his/her eyes, turn around, or leave classroom/program space.
4. First player hides the plane in the room.
5. Second player returns and moves at least 10 steps away from first student.
6. Partners should face each other at all times.
7. First player gives second player directions to find the plane, but with only words and no gestures.
8. Directions must be given from the first player's perspective. For example, if the plane is to the second player's left, the first player says to go to "my right." If the plane is in front of a trash can from the second player's perspective, the first player says it is behind the trash can.
9. Once the second player has found the plane, the players can switch roles.



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## Guess the Emotion Game

<https://www.schooltimesnippets.com/2015/02/guess-emotion-game.html>

Thanks to movies like **Inside Out** and **The Emoji Movie**, the topic of emotional awareness seems to be gaining popularity. Regardless, it's an important topic to work through – from toddlers learning how to deal with "big" emotions and/or older kiddos dealing with fluctuating hormones and the pendulum of moods they have throughout the day.

Learning how to deal and talk about how one is feeling is a wonderful way to show empathy and gives parents and teachers a way to help guide our kids through those crazy feelings.



Have fun teaching emotions and how to handle them by playing this **Taboo Inspired Guess the Emotion Game**.

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## Helping Others

<https://www.centervention.com/helping-others-activity/>



Eugene accidentally bumped into Sid while he was drinking from the water fountain. Sid's face got all wet.

Sid might feel... \_\_\_\_\_

I can tell because... \_\_\_\_\_

I could help the situation if I said... \_\_\_\_\_

This activity offers different scenarios to youth and gives them opportunities to determine how they would respond.

These *To The Rescue* worksheets show different school situations and ask students if they were right there in the room when that happened, what could they say to improve the situation? For example, one scenario shows a student bump into a classmate drinking at the water fountain, getting his face all wet.

Download the six scenarios here:

<https://www.centervention.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Helping-Others-Activity-To-the-Rescue.pdf>

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### "I" Statements: Responding to Them

<https://www.centervention.com/statements-part-2-responding-statements/>

This activity works in conjunction with the "I" Statements activity from the "Awareness of Self" section. It helps children and youth **respond** to I-Statements in an empathetic way. When someone else makes an I-statement (see above), the second youth can respond with statements like "You sound \_\_\_\_\_ because I \_\_\_\_\_. Next time I will \_\_\_\_\_."



A downloadable worksheet is available here:

<https://www.centervention.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/I-Statements-Responses.pdf>

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### If You Really Knew Me

<https://www.playworks.org/game-library/if-you-really-knew-me/>

**Goal:** To share and learn about one another and to increase social comfort.

#### Directions:

1. Demonstrate what one round will look like.
2. Lead a discussion about attentive listening before beginning the activity. Help students define what "attentive listening" means and what it looks like. It is fully hearing what the other person is saying without interrupting and not thinking about your own thing or how you want to respond while being spoken to. It includes facing the person who is speaking, making eye contact, nodding or other physical responses to what is being said, etc.
3. Group youth in pairs with one being player A and the other player B.
4. Player A listens silently while player B finishes off the sentence, "If you really knew me, you would know that..." Examples:
  - Family information- "If you really knew me you would know that I am the youngest of 4 siblings."
  - School information - "If you really knew me you would know that my favorite topic in school is Art."
  - Favorite/ least favorite things- "If you really knew me you would know that I hate broccoli."
  - Anything else they want to share about themselves.
5. Player B completes the sentence multiple times with new information each time for one minute.
6. After one minute the roles are reversed and player A finishes the sentences and player B becomes the listener.
7. Variation: you could also have the listener repeat back what he/she remembers the other player shared.

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## Interviews

<https://www.weareteachers.com/21-simple-ways-to-integrate-social-emotional-learning-throughout-the-day/>

Have your students interview each other throughout the year about topics such as cultural background, family traditions or opinions about a current event. Conducting a formal interview is different than a casual conversation and teaches skills such as focused listening and conversational skills. In addition, learning about their classmates will broaden their perspective as they consider that everyone's background and experience is not necessarily the same as their own.

Sample questions are available at the above link.


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## Role Play

Sometimes you have to put yourself in someone else's shoes to truly understand a situation. Taking time to role-play tricky or troubling situations that show up in your classroom helps kids develop empathy and understand other people's feelings. For example, it's a great strategy to use when discussing bullying.

You could use scenarios like those on the sheet at the right or work with the youth to create your own scenarios.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

 **Character Role Playing Cards**

You see somebody who is new to the school. During recess you notice that they are alone and looking sad.	You just observed a friend of yours stealing candies from another friend of yours.
You were assigned a partner in your group work that you don't like.	Your friends are teasing a person in your class who just got new braces.
During a test, you notice that the person sitting beside you is copying all of your answers.	A stack of library books toppled down, a classmate told the teacher you toppled the books on purpose.
You notice a friend stealing money from a classmate. Your friend says "If you say anything, I'll come after you."	Your friend says he won the bike race last night but you know that he actually came in 3rd place.

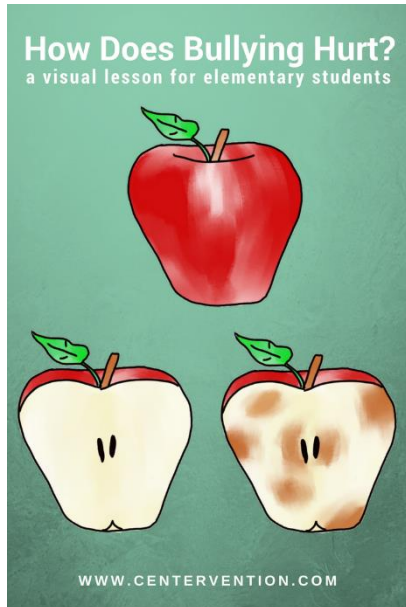
<http://worksheetsplace.com> ©



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## Using Apples to Teach Kids About Bullying

<https://www.intervention.com/bullying-lesson-apples/>



How do you impress upon your students that words can cause as much pain as punching or kicking? One idea is to teach a bullying lesson using apples.

Gather youth in a circle and hold up two apples. Have youth describe how the apples look the same.

Afterward, start insulting one of the apples. Then pass it to one of the youth and have them do the same.

Compliment the other apple and then pass it on to one of the youth and have them do the same.

When both apples have gone completely around the circle, ask if the apples look the same. Hopefully youth respond that the apples look the same as before!

Now cut open both apples. The one which was complimented is clean and white on the inside while the insulted apple is bruised, mushy, and brown.

Unbeknownst to the youth, you carefully tapped one apple on the table before the activity, which creates invisible bruises underneath the skin.

Let the youth react to the two apples. Why does one look so different on the inside than the other one?

Reflect with the youth how they could have prevented the first apple from becoming so bruised. Ask if the apple can be fixed. Point out that the damage can never be undone.

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## Write a Poem from Someone Else's Perspective

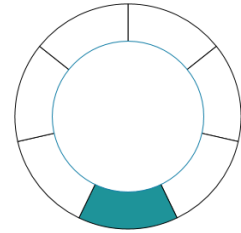
<https://www.edutopia.org/article/13-powerful-sel-activities-emelina-minero>

Youth choose a peer in the classroom or program who they don't know and write a poem from that person's perspective.

## Relationship Building

These are activities designed to help youth to:

- Establish and maintain healthy relationships
- Develop communication and listening skills
- Practice cooperation and conflict negotiation
- Understand how to resist social pressure



### Activities:

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#### Alligator Swamp

<https://www.playworks.org/game-library/alligator-swamp-2/>

**Goal:** To develop communication, teamwork and leadership skills.

#### Materials:

- Potato sacks
- Cardboard, carpet squares or anything that players can easily stand on and carry

#### Directions:

1. Mark a clear start and finish line.
2. Divide players into two teams.
3. Each team receives an equal number of potato sacks, one less than the number of people in the group.
4. The object of the game is to get all team members from one side of town to the other without touching the lava.
5. Players can only be in the lava zone if they are standing on a potato sack.
6. If players step off the potato sack and into the lava, they must return to the other side of town.
7. If a potato sack is placed into the lava without being constantly touched by a player, it is lost and the whole team must return back to the other side of town.
8. Each team should come up with a strategy on how to get all of their teammates across safely.

#### Variations

- Rename the game and tell a different story with the same goals, such as Toxic Waste Dump or [Lava Game](#).
- Everyone work together to race against a clock (instead of placing on teams.) Inform them that their side of town is going to explode in ten minutes and they must have everyone across by that time.
- Choose the amount of potato sacks based on the experience level of the group. Less potato sacks makes the game harder.
- Have players figure out their plan before they start and then remain silent during the game.
- Randomly blindfold or silence a few members of the group.

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## Buddy Binder (Making New Friends)

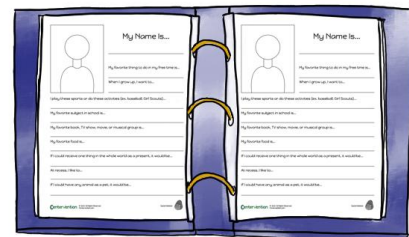
<https://www.centervention.com/help-students-make-new-friends/>

This can help youth make new friends, whether it be at the beginning of a new school year or throughout the year.

Have each youth fill out the printable template (<https://www.centervention.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/4001-Buddy-Binder-Survey.pdf>) about their interests. They will complete sentences like “At recess, I like to...” and “If I could have one thing in the whole world as a present, it would be...” (You should fill out the survey, too!) You can choose to have students draw a picture of themselves, or cover that spot on the printable with a photograph.

Place all these sheets in the transparent plastic sleeves of a binder so they’re easy to flip through.

There are several different ways you could use this **Buddy Binder** to help students initiate friendships with their classmates, but here’s one:



Once a week, or on a schedule that works for you, invite one student to join you for a special lunch in your classroom. (A former colleague called this “Secret Lunch Club.” A fun name makes it even more special for the kids.) That student will then choose a classmate from the Buddy Binder to eat with you both.

You could look through the binder with your student and talk through their choices, looking for someone with whom they share a common interest. Students shouldn’t be picking a classmate that they already spend time with at recess or after school. This is an opportunity to get to know someone new. For example, a student may say, “I didn’t know that Olivia liked koalas, too! That’s my favorite animal!”

Eating in your classroom will give both students a more relaxed space to chat than the busy cafeteria, and you’ll be there to facilitate the conversation if needed. It’s also an opportunity for you to build a more personal relationship with your students.

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## Circle Sharing

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/13-powerful-sel-activities-emelina-minero>

To encourage active listening, create small groups. Have your students position their chairs in a circle so everyone can make eye contact. To strengthen empathy, you can facilitate deeper discussion around what a student shares by asking, “Why did that student share what they did?” or “What perspective is that student coming from?”

## Conversation Bingo (Conversation Initiation)


<https://www.centervention.com/initiate-a-conversation/>

It can be so hard to start a conversation with someone we don't know. Some kids are much better initiators than adults, but others really struggle. I had a few students, as I'm sure you do, too, that wouldn't even tell *me* when they needed help because initiating made them so anxious. Tango Bingo is a fun way to get started. Students will use the questions or topics on the bingo card to start or continue a conversation with someone.

You can have students try to get five in a row in a certain amount of time, like two weeks.

Download the Tango Bingo sheet here:

<https://www.centervention.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/4002-Tango-Bingo.pdf>



# TANGO BINGO

Social Initiation

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Use the questions or topics in the boxes to start or continue a conversation with someone. Color in the box when you've done it. Try to get five in a row!

What did you do after school yesterday?	Introduce yourself	What's your favorite game to play at recess?	Give a classmate a compliment	What is your favorite subject in school?
Use the word "happy" in a sentence	What is your favorite TV show?	Ask someone if you can sit with them at lunch	I like your shirt! Where did you get it?	Ask a teacher what they did over the weekend
Do you play any sports?	Give a teacher a compliment	How are you?	Ask your teacher for help	What's your favorite book?
Invite someone to play with you at recess	What are you going to do this weekend?	Ask about a holiday that recently passed or is coming up	Do you have any brothers or sisters?	Ask a classmate about their art project
How is your day going?	Invite someone over for a playdate	What food do you like to eat?	Ask a classmate to be your partner	Do you have any pets?

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## Decode a Joke

<https://www.centervention.com/cooperation-activities-decode-joke/>

Cooperation activities are a fantastic way to improve overall social and emotional skills. In Decode a Joke, your students will work with a partner to [decode the punchline](#) to some of my favorite animal-themed jokes.

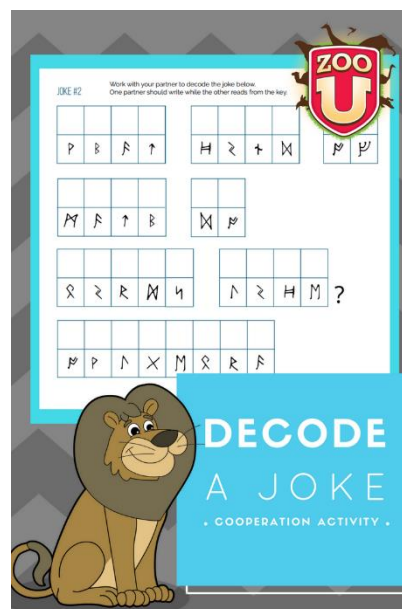
### Directions:

1. Split students into pairs.
2. Give one student in each pair the code and give the other the key. Download here: <https://www.centervention.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Cooperation-Activity-Decode-A-Joke.pdf>
3. The student with the code is the scribe. He will start by asking what the first symbol means, and the key holder will check the key and tell him the letter that corresponds to that symbol. The scribe will fill in that letter in the box above the symbol.
4. Students continue to work this way until they have decoded the joke.

- If you would like them to switch roles, give them another coded message.

### Decoded Jokes:

- What is a crocodile's favorite drink? Gator-ade.
- Which side of a cheetah has the most spots? The outside.
- What snakes are found on cars? Windshield vipers.
- Who was the gorilla's favorite American President? Ape-raham Lincoln.
- What time is it when an elephant sits on the sofa? Time to get a new sofa.
- What kind of math do birds like? Owlgebra.
- What do you call a bee that can't make up his mind? A maybee.
- What kind of bears like to go out in the rain? Drizzly bears.



### Find Someone Who...

<https://www.centervention.com/find-someone-who/>

**Students Will:** formulate strategies to politely initiate conversation with classmates, apply these strategies in a Bingo game.

### Materials:

- Bingo worksheets: <http://www.centervention.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/4000-Social-Initiation-intro-lesson-Find-Someone-Who.pdf>
- writing utensil

### Directions:

- Ask the group to think of a time when they were in a new situation with people they did not know, like starting at a new school or attending summer camp for the first time. Ask:
  - How does it feel to approach someone you don't know to ask them a question?
  - What are some ways you can do that politely? Is this different if there is more than one person there?
  - Is there anything you should avoid doing when approaching someone new?
- As you discuss this as a group, explain that it's understandable to be anxious about talking to new people, and that this game will help us practice so we can be more confident. Brainstorm some phrases that students can use when approaching their classmates and write them on the board. For example: "Excuse me, I'm wondering if you're someone who...?" or "Hi, I'm \_\_\_\_\_. I love to swim, do you?"

has a dog	hates bees	has blond hair	plays a sport	loves hot dogs
has gotten stitches	has an older sibling	loves the color orange	reads for fun	has lived in another state
plays soccer	has blue eyes	has been out of the country	has a younger sibling	sings
loves to swim	wears glasses	is new to the school	has a cat	hates spiders
plays an instrument	has been to a zoo	has been camping	is taller than you	loves to draw



3. Explain that you will be playing a game in which students will have to find a classmate who fits the description in each box on the page, and have that classmate sign his or her name in the box.
4. Students should use the strategies you discussed in the pre-discussion to confidently and politely approach classmates for their signatures. Role play with a student to demonstrate before you have the whole class start.
5. Play until students have gotten a signature in each box. Be sure to walk among students and comment on how they are initiating with each other.
6. After the activity has been completed, guide discussion with these questions:
  - How did it feel to approach new people?
  - Was anything about it difficult? Easy?
  - What was it like to have to approach a group of people, rather than someone who was by herself?

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### Have a Conversation with Someone You Don't Know

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/13-powerful-sel-activities-emelina-minero>

Have your students pair up with a student they don't know and provide the pairs with five questions to ask each other. Each student introduces their partner to the class, speaking as if they were their partner, while the rest of the class looks at the student being introduced. "We don't see people sometimes," says Ballard, "and this exercise helps students to see each other more deeply."

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### Hi My Name Is...

<https://www.playworks.org/game-library/hi-my-name-is/>

**Goal:** To learn everyone's name and increase social comfort.

**Directions:**

1. Gather the group in a contained area. If played outside, lay out clear boundaries.
2. Demonstrate the greetings with a volunteer.
3. Make sure all students can repeat back to you greetings.
4. At a given signal everyone goes around introducing themselves to one another. Students go up to each other and they shake hands. Four exchanges happen while shaking hands:
5. The first person says, "Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. " The second person says, "Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_."
6. The first person says, "Nice to meet you." The second person repeats this back to his partner.
7. The first person says, "See you later." The second person responds with "See ya!" or "Bye!"
8. After the exchange, the partners split up and find someone else to introduce themselves to.
9. Players go around trying to meet as many other players as possible in one minute.

**Variation:** Students can use signals or sign language to develop nonverbal communication.

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### I Love My Neighbor

<https://www.playworks.org/game-library/i-love-my-neighbor/>

**Goal:** To have students recognize commonalities within the group and to identify personal characteristics.

**Directions:**

1. Position chairs/cones to form a circle. Make sure there is one less cone/chair than the number of players.
2. Cue players to think about what they will say if they get to be in the middle.
3. The person standing in the center of the circle begins the game by saying "I love my neighbor especially my neighbor who..."
4. S/he completes the sentence with a piece of information that is true for him/her. Example: "I love my neighbor, especially my neighbor who was born outside of state, loves to play basketball, has a pet, is an only child, etc.").
5. As soon as s/he is finished with the statement, everyone (including the person in the center) who this applies to moves from their cone to an empty cone that is not right next to them.
6. The person who remains in the middle begins a second round of the game.
7. Briefly discuss awareness and review how to play "Rock Paper Scissors" in case there is a tie.

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### Interest and Identity-Related Bingo

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/13-powerful-sel-activities-emelina-minero>

Instead of squares filled with numbers or vocabulary words, create cards with information relating to your students. Summit's Bingo cards have things like "'I like to read' or 'I was born in a different country,'" says Armando, a ninth-grade student. Download a bingo sheet here:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1w7VUJPg9M9bGm-NQ4tHNvRMCzvARYdEWg5lReP63IE/edit>

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### Lester Drop (Working Together)

<https://www.centervention.com/working-together-activities-lester-drop/>

Cooperation games are a great way to teach important skills for working together. In this activity, students will practice their cooperation skills to keep a balloon in the air while holding hands.

**Directions:**

1. Split students into pairs and have them practice gently bouncing a balloon with their partner.
2. After students have sufficient practice, have your entire group form a circle and hold hands.

3. Explain that the goal of the activity is to see how many times the group can bounce the balloon to keep it in the air without dropping hands. To achieve this goal, the group must move and work cooperatively with each other.
4. Players can pass the balloon with any part of their bodies except for their feet.
5. If the balloon touches the ground, or students drop their hands, the count must start over. 6. Allow the group several repetitions before starting the discussion.

**Discussion:**

Go over the following questions with the group:

- What was the experience of keeping the balloon in the air like when you worked with a partner vs. when the whole group was working together?
- What skills did group members have to use to keep the balloon in the air? What didn't help the group?
- Were we able to achieve our group goal? What was our highest count? Were we more successful the longer we did the activity?

As you discuss these questions, help guide students to the idea that when we work together, we will achieve greater success.

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**Puppet Show (Nonverbal Communication Activity)**

<https://www.centervention.com/nonverbal-communication-activities-puppet-show/>

**Students Will:** Show clear nonverbal communication; Use the correct tone of voice to convey an emotion; Identify components of facial expressions and body language to convey an emotion.

**Materials:**

- Two copies of the hedgehog and lemur script, Printable hedgehog and lemur parts:  
<http://www.centervention.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/2002-Nonverbal-Communication-Activities-Puppet-Show.pdf>
- Laminator
- Velcro dots

**Directions:**

1. Print and cut out the hedgehog and lemur parts.
2. Laminate all of the parts separately and cut out.
3. Place pieces of the hook (hard) side of the velcro on the lemur's and hedgehog's face and body where eyes, mouth, and arms would go.
4. Place pieces of the loop (soft) side of the velcro on the backs of all the eyes, mouth and arms pieces.



5. Assign one student to be the hedgehog and the other student to be the lemur.
6. Instruct students that before they do the puppet show, they will practice their tones of voice. In front of each of their lines in the script, there will be a feeling word in parentheses, such as “surprised” or “angry.” When it is their character’s turn to speak, the student should read the line in a tone of voice that matches that feeling word.
7. Since this is practice, after each person reads his or her line, the partner should give feedback on whether the tone of voice matched the feeling word, and what they could do to make the tone of voice match better.
8. Once the students have gone through the script a couple times and mastered their tones of voice, they can create their puppets.
9. Students should create one puppet for each emotion that their animal displays in the script.
10. Partners should again give feedback on whether the puppets’ facial expressions and body language match the feeling word.
11. Students can now put on the puppet show using the correct emotion puppet and the correct tone of voice as they read their lines.
12. Optional: If students have practiced and performed with both scripts, have them write their own script! They should write dialogue between the lemur and the hedgehog and identify the emotions that match each line.

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### Shipwreck

<https://www.playworks.org/game-library/shipwreck/>

**Goal:** To increase children's listening skills, endurance and awareness.

#### **Directions:**

1. Have the players line up on a clearly marked line in the middle of the playing area.
2. The leader explains that s/he is the captain of the boat/ship and is going to give commands to the players/crew to perform a specific movement or sound.
3. Explain that the crew is sailing treacherous seas and need to work together and follow the captain’s commands to survive.
4. If a crew member does not follow the commands correctly or is the last to follow the command they must go to the *brig* or break-room.
5. Explain the playing area and designate which end is the *bow* of the ship and which end is the stern. The goal is to be the last crew member standing.

#### **Commands:**

- **Roll call:** the crew must line up at the midline of the playing area, feet together, toes on the line, salute and say *aye-aye captain!* The crew may not lower their salute until the captain salutes and says *at ease*.
- **Crow's nest:** players act as if they’re climbing up a ladder to the crow’s nest, the top of the main mast, an area at the highest point of the ship to lookout.

- **Swab the deck:** players act like they're mopping the deck.
- **Shark attack:** the captain becomes a shark and tries to tag the crew. Those tagged go to the brig to dance or perform a designated exercise.
- **Break time:** active crew members can run to the *brig* and tag as many people as possible. Those that are tagged can come back in and play again. Make sure everyone gets let out of the *brig* during break time.
- **Sailor overboard:** crew pairs up and decides which one gets on their hands and knees and which one places a foot gently on the other's back while acting like they're using a spyglass to find the sailor in the water.
- **Drop anchor:** crew lies on their backs with legs up and acts like an anchor.
- **Pirates:** crew closes one eye, puts up a hook finger, hobbles around like they have a pegleg and say *Aaargh!*
- **Row to Shore:** crew gets in lines of 4; players act as if they are rowing to safety, while singing *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*.



Create and add new rules, especially ones that require students to form groups of 2, 3, 4, 5 and more! Form lower skilled players, pick two or three rules to focus on.

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### Staying on Topic

<https://www.centervention.com/conversation-skills-staying-topic/>

In this activity, students will practice talking about the same topic back and forth with a partner without derailing the conversation. Listening to understand and make the other person feel heard and valued is an important communication skill.



## Talk Time

Give kids a lot of opportunities—both structured *and* unstructured—to talk to one another during the course of the day. Bouncing ideas off of one another or figuring out problems with a little give-and-take will help your students build understanding and confidence. Here are [10 great techniques](#) to try with your students. When your class is cracking up and getting wiggly, taking a five-minute chat break is a great way to hit the reset button.

<https://www.centervention.com/cooperation-games-teamwork-and-strategy/>

**Directions:**

1. Explain to students that the goal of the game is for everyone to “catch Lester,” meaning every person needs to touch the ball at least once. Explain that you will be timing them to see how quickly they can accomplish their goal.
2. In the first round, don’t allow students to talk to each other beforehand. Hand the ball to one student and tell them to start. Be sure to time them and monitor if each student has indeed touched the ball at least once before stopping the timer.
3. Tell students their time and ask how they think it went? What worked or didn’t work about what they did that round? Does anyone have an idea of what could be done better?
4. Have students try again while implementing one or a couple of their new ideas. Again, be sure to time them, and monitor if each student has indeed touched the ball at least once before stopping the timer.
5. Repeat steps three and four the desired amount of times.

6. Having a closing discussion about why certain strategies worked better than others. Did it work better when you had a plan? Did it work better when everyone was working together? Why? Examples of strategies to use if students have trouble:

- students sit in a circle and roll the ball to a person across from them
- students call out their name when they touch the ball so others know who still needs to touch it
- students stand in two lines across from each other and throw the ball across
- students sit in a straight line or circle and roll the ball along
- students stand in a straight line or circle and pass the ball to their right
- students stand in two straight lines across from each other. One student holds the ball and walks through the middle, allowing each student to touch it as he walks by.



#### Discussion:

Go over the following questions with the group:

- What was the experience like the first time we tried this activity?
- Were we more successful when we had a plan? Why?
- Was there anything that didn't help the group?
- What strategy was the most successful in our goal of everyone "catching Lester" in the shortest amount of time? Why was it successful?

As you discuss these questions, help guide students to the idea that when we work together, we will achieve greater success.

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#### Telephone Game (Body Language)

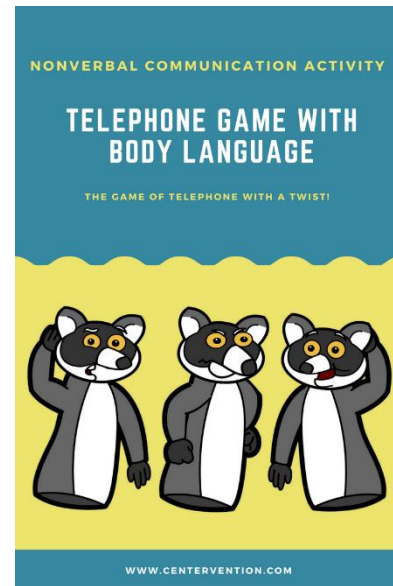
<https://www.centervention.com/telephone-game-body-language/>

Good communication is important to getting along well with others, but children often have difficulty understanding that their body language and facial expressions can affect how their words are interpreted.

**Students Will:** execute verbal and nonverbal communication.

#### Directions:

1. Tell the group that they will be playing a game called “telephone” in two different ways. The first time they play, they will communicate by speaking. Then they will communicate using only their body language and facial expressions.
2. For the verbal game of telephone, have students line up next to each other. In the first round, whisper a phrase of your choice to the first student. Each student should then whisper the phrase that she heard to the student next to her, until it reaches the last student. The last student should then say the message aloud and see if it matches the original.
3. Play the game this way for a few rounds, letting students pick the phrase and having students switch places in the line in between rounds.
4. Explain to students that they will now play a similar game, but instead of passing a verbal phrase down the line, they will try to pass a body language expression.
5. Have students line up so that they are all facing one way. Tap the first student on the shoulder, and when he turns around, express an emotion with only body language, such as arms crossed and an angry face. This student should then tap the person in front of him on the shoulder and do his best to imitate the body language. Remind students that they should not turn around until they are tapped on the shoulder. Continue until the last student in the line sees the body language and have her demonstrate what she saw to the class.
6. Play the body language version for a few rounds, letting students choose the initial body language expression and having students switch places in line in between rounds. Remind students that their body language should express an emotion, like sadness, surprise, disgust, fear, etc., not just a silly pose.
7. Once you’ve played a few rounds of verbal telephone and body language telephone, bring the group back together for a discussion. The main goal of this lesson is for students to recognize that we communicate both with our words and with our bodies, so we need to be aware of both while we are trying to convey a message. Ask students what they thought about both versions of the game, and try to guide them to this point.



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### What Are You Doing?

<https://www.playworks.org/game-library/what-are-you-doing/>

**Goal:** To develop creative thinking and listening to directions.

**Directions:**

1. Players get in line and the first two face each other.

2. Player A does a motion like in charades, and then player B asks, “What are you doing?”
3. Player A must name a motion that doesn’t match the motion that they are doing.
4. Player B must do the motion that player A named.
5. Player A then asks, “What are you doing?”
6. Game continues until someone makes a mistake. When a player messes up, they go to the end of the line and the next person steps up.



**Variations:** Have multiple lines going to increase participation. This game can also be played in pair, eliminating the rotational style and shortening the time of play.

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### [Where We Came From](#)

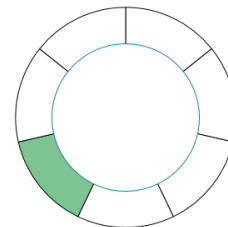
<https://www.edutopia.org/article/13-powerful-sel-activities-emelina-minero>

Collect baby pictures from your students. Project one baby picture at the start of class, have your students guess who it is, and then have the featured student share something about their childhood.

## Emotional Intelligence

These are activities designed to help youth to:

- Identify their own emotions
- Recognize others' emotions
- Control their own emotions



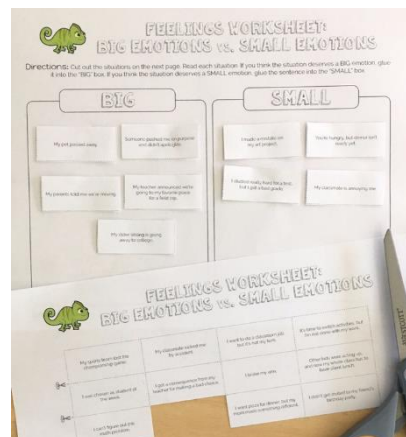
### Activities:

#### Big Emotions vs. Small Emotions (Feeling Emotions Worksheet)

<https://www.centervention.com/feelings-worksheets-big-emotions-small-emotions/>

These **feelings worksheets** will help students differentiate between situations that truly deserve a big emotion and those that really only deserve a small reaction.

Download worksheets here: <https://www.centervention.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Feelings-Worksheet-Big-vs.-Small-Emotions.pdf>



#### Chameleon Moods (Identifying Emotions)

<https://www.centervention.com/identifying-emotions-activity-chameleon-moods/>



Identifying emotions is the first step to helping students regulate them. Recognizing the physical signs associated with different feelings will strengthen students' ability to manage their emotions before they get too big.

Identifying and managing your feelings, or Emotion Regulation, requires the ability to respond to strong emotional situations in a socially acceptable manner. Children who are good at identifying and managing their emotions feel better about themselves and have more successful friendships.

**Students Will:** Understand why chameleons change color and identify ways humans show their moods/emotions

**Materials:** Chameleon story and worksheet, available here: <http://www.centervention.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/6003-Identifying-Emotions-Activity-Chameleon-Moods.pdf>



**Directions:**

1. Before passing out the worksheets, ask students why they think chameleons change color. Most students will probably say “camouflage.”
2. Read the story aloud to students while they read along and fill in the vocabulary terms on their worksheet.
3. Now that we know chameleons change color to show their mood, have students spend a few minutes writing down ways humans show their mood to each other on the lines.
4. Have a discussion with the group about different ways humans show moods and emotions to each other. Asks students some ways they personally show emotions when they are angry, sad, scared, etc.
5. Discuss with students which of these are the most appropriate ways to show someone how you are feeling. Remind students they they can go to the Cool Down Corner when their emotions get too big.

**Emotional Spectrum**

<https://www.centervention.com/emotional-spectrum/>

It's important that students learn to identify what degree of emotion they are feeling in different situations, rather than just mad, sad, happy, etc. In these worksheets, students will identify what things make them feel each level of one emotion.

Download worksheets here: <https://www.centervention.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Emotional-Spectrums-worksheets.pdf>

**Feelings Charades (Feeling Empathy)**

<https://www.centervention.com/charades-kids-feelings-empathy/>

Understanding how another person may be feeling in a given situation helps children be able respond with care and kindness. This activity helps youth identify different emotions their classmates will act out.

**Students Will:** act out different emotions; use clues to identify others' emotions.

**Materials:**

- chalkboard, white board, or smartboard
- Empathy poster, available here: <http://www.centervention.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/5000-Empathy-intro-lesson-feelings-charades.pdf>



**Directions:**

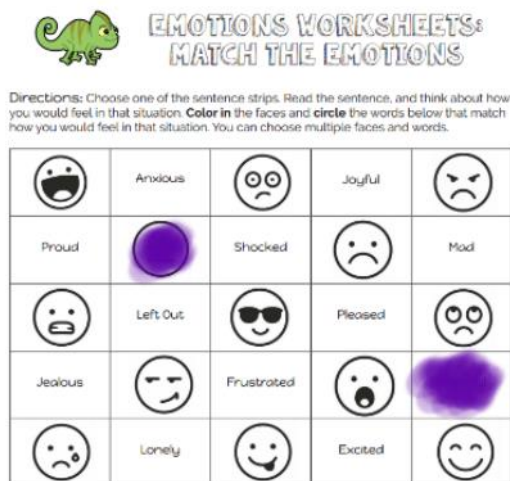
1. Talk to the group about the importance of recognizing other people's feelings. Invite discussion with these sample questions:
  - Raise your hand if you can tell when another person is happy? How about when another person is mad? Scared?
  - What are the clues that help you figure out what the other person is feeling?
2. Explain that we can tell a lot about how someone is feeling through their body language and facial expressions, without hearing them talk. In this game of Feelings Charades, just like regular charades, the actor cannot talk. One student will act out an emotion word, and the rest of the group will guess the emotion.
3. Invite students to come up with a list of different feeling words and write them on the board. Try to have about the same number of enjoyable feelings (i.e. happy, excited) as uncomfortable feelings (i.e. frustrated, confused). Demonstrate how to act out one of the emotion words, and have the group guess.
4. Ask a student to come to the front of the room and select one of the feeling words that is listed on the board. That child will then face the other group members and act out the emotion using facial and body expressions, while the other children try to guess which feeling it is. The child that correctly guesses the feeling will get to go next. (You may want to have students raise their hands to guess rather than calling out.)
5. Put a check mark next to each word as it is used, and continue playing until all the words in the list have been acted out, or as many fit in your time frame.
6. After completing a game of Feelings Charades, help students reflect on the activity by discussing some of the following questions:
  - What cues did you use to guess what another person was feeling during the game?
  - If it was easy at times, what helped make it easy? What made it challenging?"
7. Help children realize that it can be difficult to know what another person is feeling, especially when we don't know the other person that well, or when that person is experiencing multiple emotions at the same time. Encourage students not to jump to a conclusion about someone else's feelings. Explain that we can make educated guesses like we did in the game, but the best way to know and understand another person's feelings is to ask him or her. Suggest the following responses. *"It seems like you may be feeling , would you like to talk about it?"*
8. Remind students that it is okay if the other person does not want to talk about their emotions, and that, as friends, we should respect that decision. Offer this suggested response for that situation: *"Okay, I understand. If you change your mind, just let me know."* The goal is to communicate support and understanding.

## Match the Emojis (Emotions Worksheet)

<https://www.centervention.com/emotions-worksheet-match-the-emojis/>

In this **Emotions Worksheet**, students will color in the emojis and circle the emotion words that match how they would feel in different situations.

After laminating the worksheet, have students use a dry erase marker to mark their answers for each situation. Once you've talked that situation through, they can simply erase their marks, choose a new sentence, and repeat. (If you don't have access to a laminator, you can also slip the worksheet into a plastic page protector.)



Download emotions worksheets here: <https://www.centervention.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Emotions-Worksheets-Match-the-Emotions-Activity.pdf>

## Mixed Emotions Paper Chain



<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/308144799495522005/>

Kids can write about their mood on different colored strips of paper to create a paper chain. A strong visual reminder that we all experience a colorful variety of emotions.

## M&M Anger Game

This is a digital download, available for \$4.50 at:

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Anger-management-activity-with-mm-1405252>

One could, however, make a version without buying a chart.



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Name the Emotion

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/13-powerful-sel-activities-emelina-minero>

Have each student call out the emotion they're feeling. This helps each student know how they and other students are feeling, what different emotions look like, and how to better interact with their peers based on how they're feeling.

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Today I Feel... Check In

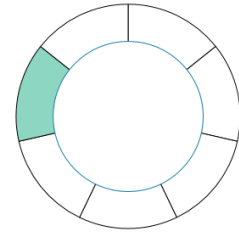
<https://www.weareteachers.com/21-simple-ways-to-integrate-social-emotional-learning-throughout-the-day/>

Circle up for just a few minutes at the end of each day to reflect on your day together. Check in with how your students are feeling, talk about what went well, read some notes from the kindness bucket and set some goals for tomorrow.

## Decision Making/Problem Solving

These are activities designed to help youth to:

- Expand their capacity to make good choices
- Recognize social norms
- Understand the consequences of their actions



### Activities:

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#### 4-Way Tug of War

[https://www.teachthought.com/critical-thinking/10-team-building-games-that-promote-critical-thinking/?utm\\_source=WeAreTeachers&utm\\_medium=8FunWaysArticle&utm\\_content=TeachThought&utm\\_campaign=EMCPub\\_Article](https://www.teachthought.com/critical-thinking/10-team-building-games-that-promote-critical-thinking/?utm_source=WeAreTeachers&utm_medium=8FunWaysArticle&utm_content=TeachThought&utm_campaign=EMCPub_Article)

That playground classic is still a hit — not to mention inexpensive and simple to execute. For a unique variation, set up a multi-directional game by tying ropes in such a way that three or four teams tug at once. Some teams might choose to work together to eliminate the other groups before going head-to-head.

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#### All Tangled Up

<https://www.playworks.org/game-library/all-tangled-up-2/>

**Goal:** To develop verbal communication, cooperation, strategic thinking and problem-solving skills.

#### Directions:

1. Divide everyone into small groups of up to twelve and have them form a tight circle.
2. The players take one hand and grab the hand of anyone in the group except the people standing next to them.
3. The players take their other hand and grab the hand of anyone in the group except the people standing next to them and the person they are already holding hands with.
4. The challenge is to get untangled without letting go of each other's hands.
5. Emphasize that getting untangled requires a lot of communication and cooperation.



#### Variations:

- Make the groups larger.
- Add restrictions to their communication methods.

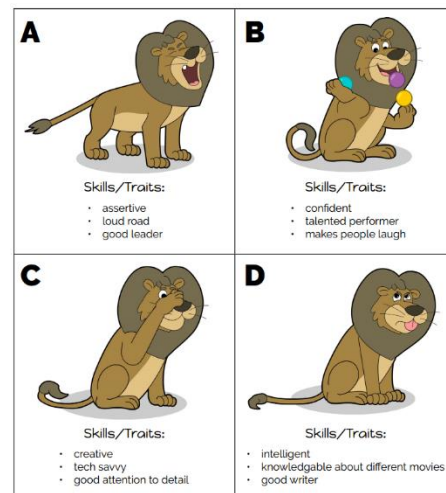


## Choosing the Right Job

<https://www.centervention.com/teamwork-activity-right-job/>

In this teamwork activity, students are told that they are making a movie, and they need to assign the roles of actor, director, camera operator and film critic to four different lions. The worksheet has pictures of each lion and lists their unique skills, and students must choose which lion's skills best fit each role.

This activity is a great opportunity to discuss with students the idea that we all have special skills or character traits to offer to the group, and we're all most successful when we use our strongest skills to help our team.



Click here to download activity: <https://www.centervention.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Choosing-the-Right-Job-Lions-Cooperating.pdf>

## Evolution

<https://www.playworks.org/game-library/evolution/>

**Note:** the website offers a video demonstrating the game.

**Goal:** To increase social comfort and to improve non-verbal communication

### Directions:

1. Have the whole group gather in a contained area.
2. Explain the evolution of all life in our group goes in this order: First the egg, then the chicken, the dinosaur, rock star, superhero.
3. Each stage of evolution has a corresponding action – egg is low to the ground with hands over their head, chicken walks like a chicken and clucks, dinosaur has arms outstretched like big jaws, etc.
4. Demonstrate clearly the different steps and order of evolution, including what to do if you win or do not win “Rock Paper Scissors.”
5. Make sure that everyone knows how to play “Rock Paper Scissors.”
6. Remind players that they can only do “Rock Paper Scissors” with someone who is at the same stage of evolution, this encourages players to interact with many different people, not just their friends.
7. Everyone begins as an egg.
8. Players mix up, pair up and play “Rock Paper Scissors.”
9. The person who wins evolves to the next step, the person who did not win goes down a stage. If the player is already an egg s/he remains an egg.
10. Players pair up again, only with someone who is in the same stage of evolution.

11. When a player evolves all the way to a superhero, s/he is finished and can fly around the area.
12. Game ends when all the players are also superheroes or when the time limit is up.

**Variation:** Allow players who lose “Rock Paper Scissors” to remain at their current stage of evolution. This makes the game go a little faster.

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### Freeze Dance Game

<https://www.centervention.com/freeze-game/>

**Goal:** practice controlling behaviors and resisting distractions.

**Materials:**

- music
- Impulse Control poster, available for download here: <http://www.centervention.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/1000-Impulse-Control-Intro-Lesson-Freeze-Game.pdf>

**Directions:**

1. Ask the group if they can think of a time when they were tempted to do something that they knew they should not do. Give the example of seeing a freshly baked plate of cookies but being told to wait until after dinner to have one. Explain that they would smell the cookies and would really want one, but they would also know what they had been told. Ask the following questions:
  - What would you do? Would you wait until after dinner, or try to sneak one?
  - What if you knew you could not get caught? Would you still take a cookie?
  - What if your parents didn't tell you anything about the cookies, but you saw them there. Would you take one then?
2. As you discuss this as a group, explain that resisting the urge to have a cookie requires a skill called self-control, and that all of us have moments when it is difficult to walk away from a tempting situation.
3. Explain that they are going to move and dance around the room while music is playing. They will need to pay close attention, because when the music stops, they have to freeze in place and are not allowed to start moving again until the music resumes. If they don't freeze or if they start moving before the music begins again, they will be “out” and will have to sit down.



4. After a couple rounds, consider adding an extra challenge. When the music stops and kids are frozen, offer them an incentive to move, similar to the cookies in the pre-discussion. (This could be anything, not necessarily cookies!)
5. Allow several rounds of the game before moving on to more discussion.
6. After the activity has been completed, guide discussion with these questions:
  - How did it feel to stop and freeze when the music paused?
  - What helped you to be able to freeze? What may have made it difficult?
  - Was it harder to stay frozen when I offered you treats to move?
  - What are some everyday situations, at home or in school, when practicing self-control could help us?

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## Group Meetings

<https://www.weareteachers.com/21-simple-ways-to-integrate-social-emotional-learning-throughout-the-day/>

Check in frequently to celebrate what is working and address things that need tweaking within your classroom community. Empower all of your students with a voice and a vote to give them ownership of their environment.

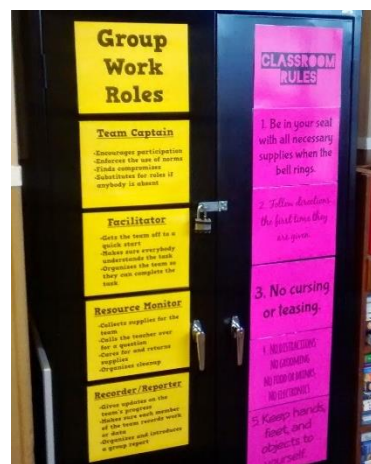
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## Group Work Roles

<https://www.weareteachers.com/21-simple-ways-to-integrate-social-emotional-learning-throughout-the-day/>

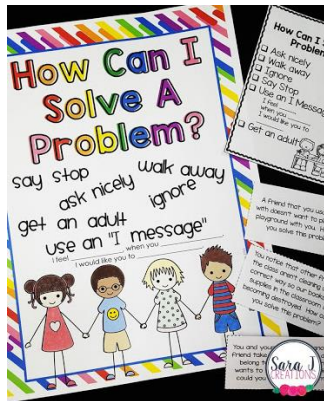
Being able to work in a group setting is an important life skill. Students will learn how to negotiate with others, develop leadership skills and figure out their own strengths so they can best contribute to the group. Click here for tips on making group work more productive:

<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/productive-group-work-andrew-miller>



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### How Can I Solve a Problem? Poster



<http://www.classroomfreebiestoo.com/2016/08/teaching-students-how-to-solve-problems.html>

This freebie includes lesson ideas, practice scenarios and a printable colored anchor chart to teach problem solving skills. Enough activities to teach problem solving skills for several days. Strategies and anchor chart perfect for grades K-5. Practice scenarios designed for K-2. It includes cut apart scenarios for journaling, update anchor chart and student checklists at school. In this freebie, I've included an anchor chart, practice scenarios, a checklist and lesson ideas.

Download here: <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Problem-Solving-FREEBIE-830073>

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### Hula Hoop Challenge

<https://www.playworks.org/game-library/hula-hoop-challenge/>

**Note:** a video of the game in action is available at above website.

**Goal:** To develop cooperation and teamwork.

#### Directions:

1. Have group form a circle, holding hands.
2. Demonstrate how to get body through the hula-hoop without using hands.
3. Designate a play space in which everyone can stand in a circle.
4. Place the hula-hoop over two people's interlocked hands so it cannot escape the circle.
5. Explain that the goal of the game is to get the hula-hoop all the way around the circle without anyone letting go of their teammate's hands.
6. Have group cheer each other on.
7. Once complete once, discuss successes and challenges and try again.

#### Variations:

- Have the group beat a chosen time.
- Play with eyes shut.
- Divide the group in two circles and have them compete.
- Pre-K: Have students stand in a circle with plenty of room between them. Start by walking around the circle with the hula hoop, helping each student practice going through it. Then set up the challenge without holding hands, simply going through the hoop, then passing it over to the next person. After they have done this successfully many times, have them try it holding hands. Adult should walk along with the hoop, helping students as needed.

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### If You Build It...

[https://www.teachthought.com/critical-thinking/10-team-building-games-that-promote-critical-thinking/?utm\\_source=WeAreTeachers&utm\\_medium=8FunWaysArticle&utm\\_content=TeachThought&utm\\_campaign=EMCPub\\_Article](https://www.teachthought.com/critical-thinking/10-team-building-games-that-promote-critical-thinking/?utm_source=WeAreTeachers&utm_medium=8FunWaysArticle&utm_content=TeachThought&utm_campaign=EMCPub_Article)

This team-building game is flexible. Simply divide students into teams and give them equal amounts of a certain material, like pipe cleaners, blocks, or even dried spaghetti and marshmallows.

Then, give them something to construct. The challenge can be variable (think: Which team can build the tallest, structurally-sound castle? Which team can build a castle the fastest?).

You can recycle this activity throughout the year by adapting the challenge or materials to specific content areas.

A variation is the game “Go for Gold.” Teams have a common objective, but instead of each one having the same materials, they have access to a whole cache of materials. For instance, the goal might be to create a contraption with pipes, rubber tubing and pieces of cardboard that can carry a marble from point A to point B in a certain number of steps, using only gravity.

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### Minefield

[https://www.teachthought.com/critical-thinking/10-team-building-games-that-promote-critical-thinking/?utm\\_source=WeAreTeachers&utm\\_medium=8FunWaysArticle&utm\\_content=TeachThought&utm\\_campaign=EMCPub\\_Article](https://www.teachthought.com/critical-thinking/10-team-building-games-that-promote-critical-thinking/?utm_source=WeAreTeachers&utm_medium=8FunWaysArticle&utm_content=TeachThought&utm_campaign=EMCPub_Article)

Another classic team-building game. Arrange some sort of obstacle course and divide students into teams. Students take turns navigating the “mine field” while blindfolded, with only their teammates to guide them. You can also require students to only use certain words or clues to make it challenging or content-area specific.

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### Mystery

[https://www.teachthought.com/critical-thinking/10-team-building-games-that-promote-critical-thinking/?utm\\_source=WeAreTeachers&utm\\_medium=8FunWaysArticle&utm\\_content=TeachThought&utm\\_campaign=EMCPub\\_Article](https://www.teachthought.com/critical-thinking/10-team-building-games-that-promote-critical-thinking/?utm_source=WeAreTeachers&utm_medium=8FunWaysArticle&utm_content=TeachThought&utm_campaign=EMCPub_Article)

Many children (and grown-ups) enjoy a good mystery, so why not design one that must be solved cooperatively? Give each student a numbered clue. In order to solve the mystery — say, the case of the missing mascot — children must work together to solve the clues in order. The “case” might require them to move from one area of the room to the next, uncovering more clues.



## Peer Mediation

## Peaceful Conflict Resolution

**R**espect the right to disagree.

**E**xpress your real concerns.

**S**hare common goals and interests.

**O**pen yourself to different points of view.

**L**isten carefully to all proposals.

**U**nderstand the major issues involved.

**T**hink about probable consequences.

**I**magine several possible alternative solutions.

**O**ffer some reasonable compromises.

**N**egotiate mutually fair cooperative agreements.

Robert E. Valett

<https://www.weareteachers.com/21-simple-ways-to-integrate-social-emotional-learning-throughout-the-day/>

Peer mediation is a problem-solving process that helps students involved in a dispute meet in a private, safe and confidential setting to work out problems with the help of a student mediator. There are lots of programs out there.

### Principal Wild Says (Following Directions)

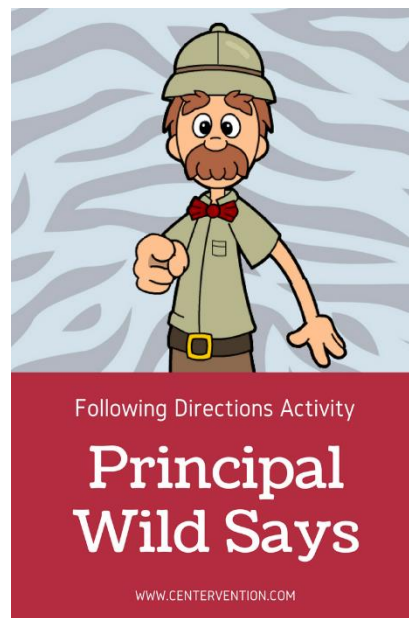
<https://www.centervention.com/following-directions-activities-principal-wild-says/>

**Goal:** Youth will resist distractions to focus on and follow specific instructions.

**Materials:** [Cue cards for distractors](#)

#### Directions:

1. Line students up in rows facing "Principal Wild." The Principal Wild role should be played by an adult the first few time, but could potentially be played by an older student as they get the hang of the game.
2. Choose one distractor for the start of the game.
3. Instruct the distractor that it's their job to distract the students who are playing while Principal Wild gives instructions. They should do this by talking to them using statements or question, not just by making random noises. If they are not sure what to say, they can use examples from their cue cards. Distractors should move around talking to different students throughout the game. They cannot touch other students or try to distract with gestures, such as waving their hands in front of faces.
4. Instruct the remaining students that you (Principal Wild) will be giving instructions on how to move. They should only move when you say "Principal Wild says..." before the action. For example, "Principal Wild says...touch your nose."
5. If Principal Wild just says "Touch your nose" and a student does it, he or she is out of the game, but then becomes a distractor! Hand the student a distractor cue card, and continue the game. The game will become more difficult as more distractors join.



6. Students (who are not distractors) *may not talk* during the game. If they respond to a statement or question from the distractors, they are out and then become a distractor.
7. The last one or two students to be left following instructions correctly while resisting distractions are the winners!

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### Save the Egg

[https://www.teachthought.com/critical-thinking/10-team-building-games-that-promote-critical-thinking/?utm\\_source=WeAreTeachers&utm\\_medium=8FunWaysArticle&utm\\_content=TeachThought&utm\\_campaign=EMCPub\\_Article](https://www.teachthought.com/critical-thinking/10-team-building-games-that-promote-critical-thinking/?utm_source=WeAreTeachers&utm_medium=8FunWaysArticle&utm_content=TeachThought&utm_campaign=EMCPub_Article)

This activity can get messy and may be suitable for older children who can follow safety guidelines when working with raw eggs. Teams must work together to find a way to “save” the egg (Humpty Dumpty for elementary school students?) — in this case an egg dropped from a specific height. That could involve finding the perfect soft landing, or creating a device that guides the egg safely to the ground. Let their creativity work here.

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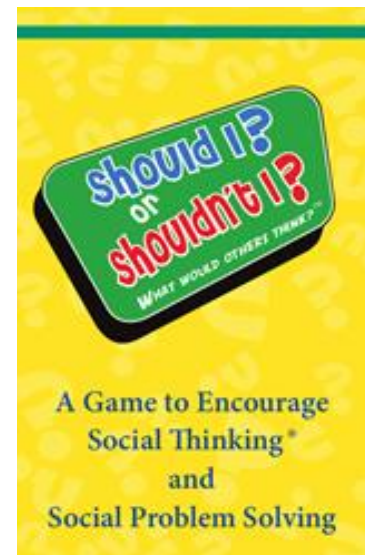
### Should I Or Shouldn't I?

<https://www.socialthinking.com/Products/Should%20I%20or%20Shouldnt%20I%20What%20Would%20Others%20Think%20Elementary%20Edition>

This is available at SocialThinking.com. The Elementary Edition game for ages 8-11 makes thinking and talking about behavior fun, and allows players to explore their own thoughts, perspectives, and behavior choices within a safe and consequences-free environment. Game play offers abundant opportunities to practice Social Thinking concepts, perspective taking, and problem-solving skills, and discuss how our individual behavior choices affect those around us.

The game is based on the Social Thinking concepts and vocabulary introduced by Michelle Garcia Winner and outlined in her many books and articles on the topic.

Cost: \$26.99.



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### Shrinking Vessel

[https://www.teachthought.com/critical-thinking/10-team-building-games-that-promote-critical-thinking/?utm\\_source=WeAreTeachers&utm\\_medium=8FunWaysArticle&utm\\_content=TeachThought&utm\\_campaign=EMCPub\\_Article](https://www.teachthought.com/critical-thinking/10-team-building-games-that-promote-critical-thinking/?utm_source=WeAreTeachers&utm_medium=8FunWaysArticle&utm_content=TeachThought&utm_campaign=EMCPub_Article)

This game requires a good deal of strategy in addition to team work. Its rules are deceptively simple: The entire group must find a way to occupy a space that shrinks over time, until they are packed creatively like sardines. You can form the boundary with a rope, a tarp or blanket being folded over or small traffic cones.

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### Switch

<https://www.playworks.org/game-library/switch/>

**Note:** A video of the game in action is available at the above link.

**Goal:** To develop active listening capability.

#### Directions:

1. You'll need four-square court or four cones forming a square and one additional cone in the middle.
2. Make sure everyone know the four areas to run to.
3. Review how to play "Rock Paper Scissors."
4. Five players at a time. Each player occupies a corner or the middle.
5. Play begins when the person in the middle says "Switch".
6. All players must find a new corner/cone to occupy. No player can go to the center cone.
7. If two players arrive at the corner at the same time a quick rock-paper-scissors is played, winner stays.
8. The next person in line, become the person in the middle and begins the next round.

#### Variations:

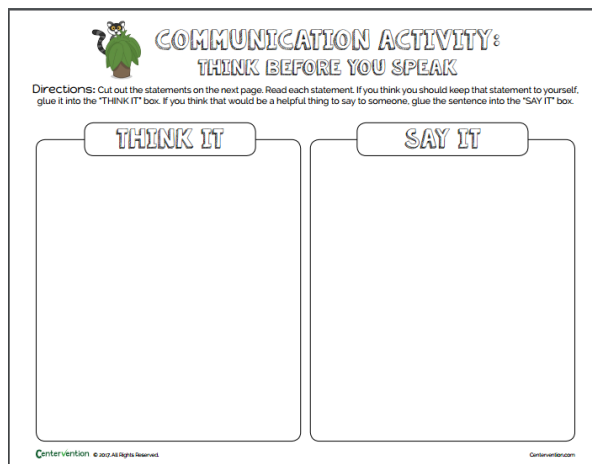
- Use different shapes
- Add more areas the players can run to
- Use for different colored hula hoops. Have the player in the middle call out a color that signals the players to run/switch. The caller runs to the color which s/he called aloud. All other players have to switch hula hoops but may not run to the color that was called out.

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## Think Before You Speak

<https://www.centervention.com/think-before-you-speak/>

In this activity, students will sort statements and questions into “Think it” or “Say it” columns. After students complete the activity, discuss with them why the “think it” statements may hurt others’ feelings. And as an extension activity, consider having students rewrite the statements in that column in a way that would make them okay to say out loud!



The worksheet is titled "COMMUNICATION ACTIVITY: THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK" and features a small cartoon character of a person with a speech bubble. Below the title, the directions state: "Directions: Cut out the statements on the next page. Read each statement. If you think you should keep that statement to yourself, glue it into the 'THINK IT' box. If you think that would be a helpful thing to say to someone, glue the sentence into the 'SAY IT' box." The worksheet is divided into two large rectangular boxes. The left box is labeled "THINK IT" and the right box is labeled "SAY IT". At the bottom left, it says "Centervention © 2017 All Rights Reserved" and at the bottom right, it says "Centervention.com".

Download materials here: <https://www.centervention.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Communication-Activity-Think-Before-You-Speak.pdf>

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## The Worst-Case Scenario

[https://www.teachthought.com/critical-thinking/10-team-building-games-that-promote-critical-thinking/?utm\\_source=WeAreTeachers&utm\\_medium=8FunWaysArticle&utm\\_content=TeachThought&utm\\_campaign=EMCPub\\_Article](https://www.teachthought.com/critical-thinking/10-team-building-games-that-promote-critical-thinking/?utm_source=WeAreTeachers&utm_medium=8FunWaysArticle&utm_content=TeachThought&utm_campaign=EMCPub_Article)

Fabricate a scenario in which students would need to work together and solve problems to succeed, like being stranded on a deserted island or getting lost at sea. Ask them to work together to concoct a solution that ensures everyone arrives safely. You might ask them to come up with a list of 10 must-have items that would help them most, or a creative passage to safety. Encourage them to vote — everyone must agree to the final solution.

## Resources

- “Building Community: Social Emotional Learning and the Library.” (slide show): <https://www.slideshare.net/apaganis/sellibrary2-32103898>
- CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) (2017). “What Is SEL?”: <http://www.casel.org/what-is-sel/>
- CASEL (October 2015). “What Does Evidence Based Instruction in Social and Emotional Learning Actually Look Like in Practice?” <http://www.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/PDF-25-CASEL-Brief-What-Does-SEL-Look-Like-in-Practice-11-1-15.pdf>
- Centervention (2017). “Free Social Emotional Learning Activities.” <https://www.centervention.com/social-emotional-learning-activities/>
- Edutopia.org (2017). “When Mindfulness Feels Like a Necessity.” By Aukeem Ballard. <https://www.edutopia.org/article/when-mindfulness-feels-necessity-aukeem-ballard>
- Francis Institute for Child and Youth Development and Metropolitan Community College (2014). *Professional Development for Afterschool/Youth Workers*. “Module 12: Social and Emotional Development.” Metropolitan Community College; Kansas City, MO.
- The George Lucas Educational Foundation (2013). “5 Keys to Successful Social and Emotional Learning” (video): <https://www.edutopia.org/keys-social-emotional-learning-video>
- GoStrengths.com (2017). “What Is Social Emotional Learning?” <http://www.gostrengths.com/social-and-emotional-learning/>
- Minero, Emelina (2017). “13 Powerful SEL Activities.” <https://www.edutopia.org/article/13-powerful-sel-activities-emelina-minero>
- Pinterest.com/toolboxtraining (2017). “Social and Emotional Learning.” <https://www.pinterest.com/toolboxtraining/social-and-emotional-learning/>
- ToolboxTrainingOnline.com (2017). “100 Activities/Methods to Promote Social & Emotional Learning.” <https://toolboxtraining.blogspot.com/2017/07/activitiesmethods-to-promote-social.html>
- WallaceFoundation.org (2017). “Navigating Sel from the Inside Out – Looking Inside & Across 25 Leading SEL Programs: A Practical Resource For Schools And Ost Providers.” <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Navigating-Social-and-Emotional-Learning-from-the-Inside-Out.pdf>