

Dear Family,  
 This week we're learning about  
**SAFE RELATIONSHIPS**

What is it?

We know that we are stronger when we work together. In third grade, students will learn that teamwork is also fun! While we want all children to recognize their own strengths, we also want them to recognize that together they can achieve even more!

Why is it Important?

Our class learns about teamwork because we share responsibility for keeping our classroom running smoothly.

Third Grade at a Glance

Your child will identify their responsibilities to self, to the classroom and to the school community.

**PRACTICING AT HOME:**

Talk with your child about his/her responsibilities at home. Consider making a simple chore chart like the one below. When a job is completed, praise your child, thanking them for their contribution to the family!

MY JOBS	Make my bed	Set the table	Feed our pet	Take out the trash	Help fold laundry
MONDAY					
TUESDAY					
WEDNESDAY					
THURSDAY					
FRIDAY					
SATURDAY					
SUNDAY					

Dear Family,  
 This week we're learning about  
**THE BRAIN**

What is it?

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

Third Grade at a Glance

Your child will be list areas of personal strength and attribute those strengths to brain function.

Why is it Important?

Learning how the brain works helps children understand that their brain makes them the special people that they are.

**PRACTICING AT HOME:**

Working side by side with your child, make a list of their areas of strength. Next to each strength, ask your child to identify which part of the brain helps with that skill. You might be surprised that you have a third grade brain expert in your home!

MY STRENGTHS	MY BRAIN
I tell good jokes.	Prefrontal cortex (social connection)
I'm good at spelling.	Hippocampus (memory)
I'm a good soccer player.	Cerebellum (coordinated movement)

Dear Family,  
This week we're learning about  
**BREATH**

### What is it?

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

### Why is it Important?

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

### Third Grade at a Glance

Third graders are learning to pay full attention to something. In order to do this, we encourage them to engage in activities that help them slow down. This helps them to really notice what you're doing.

### PRACTICING AT HOME:

Grab a few crayons or colored pencils, sit in a comfortable spot, and....color. This may seem silly at first, but it's an activity that requires focus and can be calming - just like breathing deeply. Invite your child to color with you! This quiet activity will help them relax as they enjoy being close to one of their favorite people - you!



Dear Family,  
 This week we're learning about  
**FEELINGS**

What is it?

Feelings are emotional states or reactions that stem from circumstances, mood, or relationships and are not permanent, but change throughout the day.

Why is it Important?

Knowing how to change the intensity of feelings will help your child power through challenging situations.

Third Grade at a Glance

Third graders are learning to distinguish between different intensities of emotions.

**PRACTICING AT HOME:**

Help your child develop a strong vocabulary of feeling words so that they can be more specific when working through strong feelings. You can help your child increase their emotional vocabulary by helping them with the simple activity below.

Gather five different crayons. Help your child use the color key to color each word according to it's category.

TENSE	STARTLED	ANNOYED	GLOOMY	CHEERFUL
BUBBLY	BORED	DISAPPOINTED	BLAH	WORRIED
GROUCHY	SILLY	AWFUL	IMPATIENT	ENRAGED
DISTURBED	MISERABLE	WONDERFUL	PROUD	TERRIFIED

COLOR KEY:

GRAY = SAD FEELINGS  
 RED = ANGRY FEELINGS

YELLOW = HAPPY FEELINGS  
 BLUE = SCARED FEELINGS

Dear Family,  
This week we're learning about  
**THE BODY**

### What is it?

Third graders are developing an awareness that their body occupies physical space, is affected by and reflects internal emotional states.

### Why is it Important?

It's important for kids to understand that their bodies often show how they're feeling. When they pay attention to their body's reactions, kids are better able to identify their feelings and work to reduce the intensity of those emotions.

### Third Grade at a Glance

Our third graders are learning to recognize how emotions affect them physically.

### PRACTICING AT HOME:

Just by looking at their body, you can often tell when your child has extra energy or their anxiety level is climbing. Help your child get their body back to a calm state by practicing some of the stretches below. Keep these simple diagrams on the child's door or the refrigerator, and encourage them to use it to practice stretching when they need to calm themselves.



Dear Family,  
This week we're learning about  
**IMPULSE CONTROL**

### What is it?

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

### Why is it Important?

It's empowering for kids to realize they can make choices about how we respond when big feelings come along.

### Third Grade at a Glance

Third grade students are learning to recognize impulses and select strategies to manage them. Because social status is becoming more important, most students regret impulsive actions. However, kids struggle to control their impulses, especially when they become emotional.

### PRACTICING AT HOME:

Long, serious lectures often have a negative effect and offer kids few opportunities to practice the skills they need. When teaching your child to exercise self-control, try this simple partner game which encourages them to practice self-control in a funny way!

Sit down with your child so that you're facing each other. One of you will be "Smiley" and the other will be "Silly". The game is played silently - no talking or touching allowed! Throughout the game, you must remain firmly seated and look at each other. During the game, "Silly" does everything they can think of to make "Smiley" laugh or smile. Meanwhile, "Smiley" tries to keep a straight face. If "Smiley" laughs or smiles, "Silly" wins the round and the next round begins. If "Smiley" keeps a straight face for 15-30 seconds, they win the round. Switch roles with your child each round. Be sure to ask your child how they managed to control their impulse to smile!

Dear Family,  
This week we're learning about  
**GRATITUDE**

### What is it?

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

### Why is it Important?

It's important for kids to develop a mindset of gratitude so that they notice the good things in their lives.

### Third Grade at a Glance

Like most kids, third graders learn from doing. And doing something with their family is the best way to learn ways of being that will become deeply embedded in who they are likely to become as adults. Teaching your child to look at their lives with a sense of gratitude for the simple things will help them appreciate those things that are truly valuable in their lives.

### PRACTICING AT HOME:

Ask your child to decorate a small box and label it APPRECIATIONS. This box should be located where everyone in the family can access it. Put a small notepad and pencil near the box. Tell your family that you want them to notice the nice things that your family members do for each other. Show them how they can get a piece of paper from the notepad and write a sentence or two showing appreciation for something specific. For example your child might write, "I appreciated it when \_\_\_\_\_ helped me pick up the food when I accidentally dropped my plate in the kitchen." After writing, your family member should sign the note and put it in the appreciation box. At the end of every week, read these aloud as your family listens to what they appreciate about each other.



Dear Family,  
This week we're learning about  
**OPTIMISM**

### What is it?

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

### Why is it Important?

It's important for children to develop optimism because this mindset will help them believe in their ability to achieve their goals.

### Third Grade at a Glance

Third graders are usually eager to join in a group goal, but might resist setting a personal goal because it feels riskier.

## PRACTICING AT HOME:

Big goals are easier when everyone is pulling together. Drum up optimism by establishing a family goal. Your child will be more enthusiastic about the goal if you let them decide the quantity portions of the goal, such as time, number, or duration. Here are a few examples of reasonable family goals:

- Eat more vegetables
- Volunteer together.
- Spend more time together as a family, by having a game night.
- Divide household chores to share the workload.
- Be more physically active together.

Help your child state the goal in a sentence (Goal: Our family will try one new vegetable every week for four weeks.) and design a simple goal tracker. Place the goal tracker so that it is visible to everyone in the family.

Dear Family,  
This week we're learning about  
**GRIT**

### What is it?

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

### Why is it Important?

It's important for third graders to learn about grit because when they keep going, one step at a time, they're more likely to achieve their goals.

### Third Grade at a Glance

Third graders love to learn from the world around them and nature provides many examples of grit. After seeing how many living things demonstrate grit, your child will be encouraged to address their own challenges with grit.

## PRACTICING AT HOME:

After discussing grit, lead your child on a brief nature walk asking them to look for things in nature that persevere through challenges in order to thrive. Point out a few things and then let your child explore. If possible, let them bring a sheet of notebook paper on a clipboard so that they can draw their observations on the walk. Here are a few examples of things in nature that show grit:

- Weeds or flowers emerging through a crack in the sidewalk.
- Bird's nests made from a variety of materials
- Insects that cling to foliage in the wind
- Weeds or grass that grow in arid soil
- Trees or branches that bend in the wind

During the walk, ask your child to tell you what they notice about grit in nature.

Dear Family,  
This week we're learning about  
**RESILIENCE**

### What is it?

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

### Why is it Important?

It's important for kids to learn resilience so that they don't let failure stop them from succeeding.

### Third Grade at a Glance

Third graders are learning to identify strategies that will help them cope with and bounce back from setbacks.

## PRACTICING AT HOME:

Let your child cut apart the cards on the next sheet. Next, they'll color the backs of the challenge cards red and the backs of the coping cards blue. Mix up the cards and lay them face down in front of you and your child. (Better yet, play with the whole family!)

You will use the cards to play a matching game. Unlike a regular matching game, you and your child will not look for matching cards. Instead you'll turn over a challenge card and then try to find a coping card that would be helpful in that situation. If the match makes sense, the player gets to keep the challenge card, but puts the coping card back in play to use again. Be sure that each player can tell why the coping strategy would be helpful in that situation!

**CHALLENGE CARDS:**

You just got stung by a bee!	You are so mad that you want to throw a chair across the room!	You keep losing when you play a new video game.	You are frustrated with your homework.
Your bike has a flat tire.	You are lost in a store.	You can't remember what your teacher said about the next step in your science project.	You misspelled 8 of the spelling words on the test.
You are really nervous to read aloud in class.	You've been trying to undo the knot in your shoelace for 10 minutes!	Your friend is yelling at you for missing the goal during P.E.	You are really upset because you've lost something special to you.

**COPING CARDS:**

Ask someone for help	Take a break	Try again	Get a drink of water
Try again in a new way	Watch someone who knows how to do this well	Take a deep breath	Tell yourself that you can do it!

Dear Family,  
This week we're learning about  
**PERSPECTIVE TAKING**

### What is it?

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

### Why is it Important?

It's important for children to develop the ability to consider another's perspective, because it helps them solve differences with others.

### Third Grade at a Glance

Friendships become very important in the lives of third graders, and perspective taking helps children build and sustain friendships. In third grade, students are learning to view issues from an opposing perspective.

## PRACTICING AT HOME:

Get two sheets of paper and two pencils. If you live in a house, send your child to the back yard and ask him to draw the house from that vantage point, while you stay in the front yard and draw the house from that angle. If this isn't possible, stand at different places in a room in your home, following the same directions as before. When you've both finished drawing, compare your pictures. Have a conversation with your child about how they are different from each other. Ask the question, "Wait! How could it be that we drew the same house (or room) and our pictures are so different from each other's?" Listen as the child explains in their own words how each of you drew from a different perspective. Help your child understand that both perspectives are correct even though they are different. Explain that this happens all the time, when two people see an issue in a different way. Encourage your child to respect other perspectives while you ensure them that you will always respect theirs.

Dear Family,  
This week we're learning about  
**EMPATHY**

### What is it?

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

### Why is it Important?

We want kids to develop the ability to show empathy so that they'll be able to help when someone is hurting.

### Third Grade at a Glance

In our classroom, third graders are practicing ways to express empathy for others.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

Your child's teacher probably encourages your child to practice reading at home. Whether this is done independently or you enjoy the activity together, reading is a great time to practice empathy.

If possible, give your child one or two sticky notes at the beginning of their evening reading time. If sticky notes aren't handy, offer a strip of paper to use as a bookmark. Encourage them to really think about how the character is feeling as they read each event in the story. When they come to a section that prompts them to "feel for" the character, ask them to stop and write down how they're feeling on the sticky note or bookmark. (Ex: "I feel sad for her because the character has lost her best friend" or, "I'm excited that she won the race!") After writing their empathetic response, allow your child to place the sticky note or bookmark on the appropriate page in the book. If your child is reading a chapter book, you can help them review their notes tracking all the times that they felt empathy for a character.

Dear Family,  
This week we're learning about  
**KINDNESS**

### What is it?

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

### Why is it Important?

We want kids to understand that kindness is an easy way to make others (and themselves) feel happy!

### Third Grade at a Glance

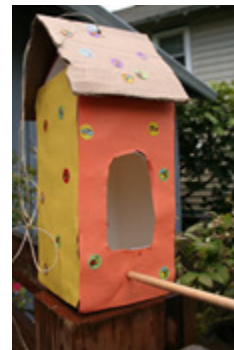
In our classroom, children are encouraged to realize that being kind applies to nature and animals as well as people!

## PRACTICING AT HOME:

This activity will jump start kids' thinking about how to be kind to all living things! It's a great project for the whole family and is perfect for springtime!

Gather materials to make a simple bird feeder:

- A small, clean milk or orange juice carton
- Bird seed or bread crumbs
- A long pencil or stick
- Yarn, twine or string
- Scissors



Guide your child as they cut one square in the front of the carton so that the birds can access the seeds. On opposite sides of the carton, your child will cut two small holes to thread a pencil or popsicle stick through to form a bird perch. A hole punch or screwdriver can be used to make a hole in the top of the carton for a place to thread yarn or twine. After decorating and filling with birdseed, or bread crumbs, students can hang the bird feeders on a tree in your yard or in your neighborhood.

Dear Family,  
This week we're learning about  
**COMPASSION**

### What is it?

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

### Why is it Important?

It's important for children to allow themselves to feel compassion so that they'll know how to help others who are in need.

### Third Grade at a Glance

In our classroom, we're learning that simple, everyday kindnesses can have a lasting impact. Children are learning to recognize when someone is having a problem, is hurting or upset, so that they can help.

## PRACTICING AT HOME:

It can be easy to feel compassion for our friends and families. This is terrific, but we can't stop there. You'll probably want your child to know that they can also feel compassion for people they don't know and may never even meet! In the next few days, look through social media for posts that discuss a person, family, or organization that has a need that would be appropriate for your child to think about. It might be an area of your State that has experienced a natural disaster or an elderly neighbor who needs support. Discuss this with your child and family, asking them to think of ways to show compassion to these individuals. If you can, let your child act on these ideas, sending whatever help that your family can. One of the simplest (and most compassionate) acts is for them to write a handwritten letter, expressing their concern and hope for the individual. This activity will help your child sharpen their ability to look at the world with a compassionate lens, which will make for a happier child and a better world!



Dear Family,  
This week we're learning about  
**HOPE**

### What is it?

Hope is the belief that the future will be better than the present and one has the power to make it a reality.

### Why is it Important?

It's important for children to hold hope by understanding that when they work with others, they can make the future better than the present.

### Third Grade at a Glance

Third graders are learning that sometimes we hope for ourselves and sometimes we hope for others. Both are important to building a sense of hope for their future.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

Ask the adults and older children in your family and circle of friends to finish this sentence:

My hope for (your child's name)'s future is \_\_\_\_\_.

Collect as many of these as you can. Cut out a picture of your child and glue it in the center of a blank piece of paper. Copy each statement and put the speaker's name near the statement. Roll the paper up and tie it with a colorful ribbon. Save it until your child experiences a let down or something that shakes their confidence. Then, present this "gift" to your child. You'll know if your child needs time alone to read or if they'd rather have you read with them. Either way, encourage your child by showing them how much hope their loved ones hold for your child. Experiencing this expression of support will help your child believe that their future will be better than their present.