

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

What is it?

A safe relationship is one in which you are accepted for who you are and valued for the unique contributions you bring to the world.

Why is it Important?

It's important to have safe relationships at school because every student brings similarities and differences into the room, making our classroom unique!

Fifth Grade at a Glance

Your fifth grader will be describing the personal qualities that make them a successful member of the school community.

PRACTICING AT HOME:

As your child starts spending more time with peers, it may seem that they don't need (or want) your emotional support any more, but that's not true! Kids never get tired of hearing how much they are loved! Play a game with your family to show each member why they are so important to the family. Start by having your 5th grader cut out the letters of a word that describes your family. Words like, *adventurous*, *friendly*, *silly*, or *loving* work well! (There are extra boxes in case more letters are needed.) Your child should keep this word secret! Put each cut-out letter in a bowl. Play starts with one person pulling a letter from the bowl, and the other family members describing that person with a word beginning with that letter. Play continues so that each person selects a letter and is described by the others until all the letters have been taken from the bowl. With all the letters on the table, the rest of the family tries to arrange the letters to form the secret word. Only your 5th grader will know the correct answer!

A	B	C	D	E	F
G	H	I	J	K	L
M	N	O	P	Q	R
S	T	U	V	W	X
Y	Z				

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.

Why is it Important?

Kids benefit from learning how the brain works because it helps them to understand their thoughts, emotions and behaviors.

Fifth Grade at a Glance

Fifth graders are learning the five parts of the brain including the amygdala, hippocampus, prefrontal cortex, cerebrum and cerebellum.

PRACTICING AT HOME:

Play a quick review game with your child in which they match daily tasks at home with specific brain areas. Here is some information you'll need to know:

AMYGDALA: the part of the brain in charge of feeling emotion

HIPPOCAMPUS: the part of the brain that helps us store memories

PREFRONTAL CORTEX: the part of the brain that helps plan, set goals, and solve problems

CEREBELLUM: the part of the brain that helps with coordination and balance

CEREBRUM: the part of the brain that helps you think and feel

Ask your child which part of their brain helps them to:

- Ride a bike (Cerebellum)
- Recall two ways to get home from a familiar place like a store (hippocampus)
- Feel fear after watching a scary movie (amygdala)
- Follow the directions of a recipe (prefrontal cortex)
- Know where to scratch an itch (cerebrum)

Dear Family,
This week we're learning about
BREATH

What is it?

Breath is a tool for self regulation that aids in managing impulses and emotions.

Why is it Important?

Breathing is a tool that your children (and you!) can use to relax and think clearly.

Fifth Grade at a Glance

Fifth graders are learning to apply breathing as a self-calming strategy when they experience intense emotions.

PRACTICING AT HOME:

Have you ever avoided an uncomfortable conversation because you anticipated a strong reaction from the other person? (We all have!) Sometimes conversations with our children can be tough. Talk with your child about this and explain that you'll both use the technique of deep breathing before (and sometimes during) conversations that feel hard. Then...look for the next opportunity to engage in such a conversation with your child, and *practice* deep breathing before proceeding. Keep up the practice - you'll be rewarded with conversations that are respectful - even when they're tricky.

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?

The tween years can be emotional! It's important for fifth graders to know that everyone experiences a huge range of feelings.

Fifth Grade at a Glance

Fifth graders are honing their ability to accurately recognize different emotions when they are expressed by others.

PRACTICING AT HOME:

Enjoy a good old-fashioned game of charades! Cut apart each word listed below and put them in a bowl. Next, gather your family and invite each to take a turn expressing this emotion using only their face and body - no words! If you want to ramp up some friendly competition, divide into teams or set a timer for each round of play.

JOY	DISGUST	FRUSTRATED	PROUD
WORRIED	TENSE	ANGRY	CALM
EXCITED	EMBARRASSED	ANNOYED	LOVING

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

What is it?

We are learning that one's body is affected by and reflects internal emotional states.

Why is it Important?

When we know how our bodies react to strong emotions, it helps us to understand how we're feeling.

Fifth Grade at a Glance

Fifth graders can be confused about their own feelings, and sometimes have difficulty expressing how they feel. They are learning to identify the physical symptoms and thoughts that give them clues to their own emotions.

PRACTICING AT HOME:

Notice your child's posture and mannerisms when they are experiencing an intense emotion. There's no need to mention what you noticed in the moment. Wait until they are calm and have some space from that emotion. Then discuss what you noticed. Giving your child insight about their patterns will help them recognize and process these emotions more easily. You might also open up about the way your own body reacts to strong emotions. When you are irritated, do you turn away physically? Have a certain facial expression? Stop talking? Letting your child see that you are aware of your own patterns will encourage them to pay more attention to theirs.

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 important for everyone to learn to control their impulses because we are all in charge of our body and are responsible for the impact of what we do and say.

Fifth Grade at a Glance

Fifth graders are learning to take ownership of controlling impulses by focusing on the impact of those impulses.

PRACTICING AT HOME:

Home is where we learn to get along in the world, and our families are the people who teach us how to get along with others. For many kids, an important at-home lesson is learning how to apologize. "I'm sorry I hit you", "I'm sorry I called you a ___", "I'm sorry I broke your toy", "I'm sorry I lied about ___." The ability to apologize for an action is important, but stopping the apology here might deny your child from learning something even more important - how their action impacted the other person.

By fifth grade, children should be able to consider someone else's feelings. Acknowledge your child's ability to own their action and encourage them to accept responsibility for the impact of that action. An apology that does both will sound like this:

- I'm sorry I hit you. I was wrong to hurt you.
- I'm sorry I called you a _____. Hearing me say that must have really hurt your feelings.
- I'm sorry I broke your toy. I know you're upset because you can't play with it anymore.
- I'm sorry I lied about _____. I know it will be harder for you to trust what I say now.

Owning impact will put your child on a path of reconciliation with the person they've hurt. A big part of learning happens when we don't get along because it gives us an opportunity to make things right again.

Dear Family,
This week we're learning about
GRATITUDE

What is it?

Gratitude is the quality of being thankful and the ability to show appreciation by showing kindness in return.

Why is it Important?

In order to see good in their world, fifth graders need to understand that there are many people who work to help them.

Fifth Grade at a Glance

Fifth graders are learning different ways to express gratitude for the work of others.

PRACTICING AT HOME:

Because they are relatively new to the world, fifth graders tend to take things for granted. This doesn't mean that they are selfish or ungrateful. It just means that they don't have the experience to appreciate the hard work that goes into providing for someone else. A good way to help your child notice the efforts of others is to let them take on some of those efforts. Choose a task that an adult does at home that is suitable for your child to either take over or assist with. An example would be cooking a meal for the family. Let your child look online or in cookbooks for a good (simple) meal. Make the child responsible for planning, cooking and serving the meal (with assistance if needed). During the meal, ask your child what they found easy or difficult about this. Make sure every member of the family thanks your child for their work. As they experience gratitude, they'll be more likely to notice the actions of others that deserve their thanks as well.

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 fifth graders to have optimism, because it influences how they feel about themselves. And we know that self-talk matters!

Fifth Grade at a Glance

Our fifth grade students are learning to recognize that the stories we tell ourselves are often negative, unhelpful, and false. We are learning to change our self-talk to include optimistic thinking.

PRACTICING AT HOME:

While it might seem that children at this age are pulling away from family members, it's important to remember that they need you now as much as ever! As you pay attention to the ups and downs in your child's life, invite opportunities to listen as they talk through situations that have been frustrating or upsetting. Listen carefully to how your child talks about themselves, validate their feelings, and, when they're ready, gently redirect their thinking to optimistic self-talk. The following questions may be helpful in your conversations:

- Do you recognize the self-story you're sharing right now?
- Is your self-story helpful?
- Is your self-story really true?
- Is your self-story really at "the end"? Or is it still being written?
- Is there a way to think differently about what happened?

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?

Teaching children about grit will help them build confidence that they can do hard things.

Fifth Grade at a Glance

Fifth grade students in our class are going to interview someone they know to determine how they used grit when doing something difficult. This is a great opportunity to add grit to the qualities they admire in someone who is special to them. They are also learning to recognize how they show grit as they work toward a goal.

PRACTICING AT HOME:

You can help your child practice recognizing and using grit at home by switching up your end-of-day questions. It's easy to get in a rut of asking kids the typical questions at the end of each day such as, "How was your day?" "What did you learn?" "Do you have any homework?". Try substituting one of these with the question, "What was the hardest thing you did today?" At first, kids may reply with answers like, "Getting out of bed." or "Staying awake in school." Don't let that deter you from pressing further. "Yep. Getting out of bed never seems to get easier! But what was the hardest task you did in school today?" Once you get your child to talk about this, ask them to tell you how they got through the task. Giving kids an opportunity to talk about their strengths helps them to more easily recognize them! Consider asking this question occasionally during dinner time with the rest of the family. We all feel better when the people we love pay attention to us and validate our efforts!

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?

Everyone needs resilience! Resilience is strength that helps us work through difficult or stressful situations. Fifth graders have many sources of stress: conflicts with friends, keeping up with schoolwork, anticipating middle school - just to name a few!

Fifth Grade at a Glance

In our classroom, fifth graders will be learning about four different types of resilience, how to build resilience everyday and how resilience showed up in the lives of people who were changemakers!

PRACTICING AT HOME:

Resilience is required to achieve success. To practice this at home, be a goal-setting family! By setting goals and tracking progress toward success, challenges and setbacks will become obvious. It's during those times that you can talk about the importance of being resilient by keeping emotions in check, thinking through a problem, asking for help and being kind to ourselves. Help your child to set a short-term (1 to 3 week) goal. Use the simple goal tracking sheet below and remind your child to mark their progress daily. As your child works toward the goal, ask them about any difficulties they may be having and help them think through that difficulty. Celebrate the attainment of the goal and (maybe more importantly) the resilience your child showed on the way to success!

MY GOAL: _____ I WANT TO REACH MY GOAL BY: _____

Check each day that you make progress toward your goal:

Week 1

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

Week 2

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

Week 3

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

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 kids to have this skill because when they can see things from another's point of view it helps them make the best choices about what to say and do.

Fifth Grade at a Glance

Your fifth grader is learning that perspectives are shaped by your prior experience and they can change over time.

PRACTICING AT HOME:

By fifth grade, children are starting to pay closer attention to what's happening in the world. Musicians and celebrities, local or regional sports, community events and national or international causes are now of interest. Use this expanded interest to ask your child's perspective about an issue on your news feed or on TV. Because their perspectives are limited and evolving, it's best not to worry if their perspective doesn't match yours. Instead, focus on the most important question you can ask - "Why do you think that?" Their response will provide insight regarding what or who your child values as well as their dreams or concerns about the world around them.

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?

When students pay attention to how others feel, it helps them take a stand for what is right.

Fifth Grade at a Glance

By fifth grade, most students have witnessed or heard of bullying behaviors. Sadly, many of our students have been victims of bullying. We are learning that empathy helps us understand how a victim might feel in a bullying situation and how empathy can guide them to help.

HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

Our fifth graders are learning about four types of bullying:

1. Physical,
2. Verbal,
3. Social, and
4. Cyber

Take time to discuss these with your child and let them know that you care about how they treat and are treated by others. By fifth grade, kids get pretty good at hiding their feelings and are sometimes too embarrassed or ashamed to admit that they are in a difficult situation with peers. Start a routine in which you spend 10 minutes alone with your child every day enjoying conversation or silently engaging in an activity. You might be surprised at what topics might surface during a walk, while driving in the car, while washing dishes, or playing catch. It doesn't matter what you do, just reserve time everyday to be completely present with your child. Starting the conversation will let your child know that you are always available to help.

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?

Kindness is important because it is an action that can take very little effort, and still have a great impact.

Fifth Grade at a Glance

Our fifth grade class is learning that true kindness is given without the expectation of anything in return.

PRACTICING AT HOME:

Have you ever participated in a "Secret Santa" activity? This is when the members of a group exchange names, then have small gifts delivered to each other anonymously. Adapt this game to *Kind Kin*, playing this at home with everyone in the family. Start by talking about the kind things you do for each other and the types of kind acts that each of you appreciate. (Remember that tone of voice, paying attention, listening, and encouraging are considered acts of kindness!) Write each family member's name on a slip of paper and put them in a bowl or hat. Each family member pulls a name from the hat, making sure that it's not their own! During the week, the family focuses on being extra kind to the person they drew from the bowl. At the end of the week, let everyone guess who their *Kind Kin* was!

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?

We want to have compassion because it motivates us to help one another.

Fifth Grade at a Glance

Your child will be working with peers to address a social need.

PRACTICING AT HOME:

Have a short family discussion about a need of a neighbor, family member, a member of your church or community organization that you are familiar with. Together, think of ways to help meet this need as a family. This could be very simple! For example, a neighbor might need help with their lawn, a family member might be sick or lonely, or a friend just told you that they lost their pet. In your discussion, focus on the way the need makes this person feel. Next, choose one way to be helpful and make a plan to meet the need that you identified. When the need is met, ask our child how they feel about themselves after showing compassion for someone else.

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?

We believe that it's easier to plan for our futures when we believe the future will be good!

Fifth Grade at a Glance

Your child will identify and explore opportunities to develop their skills and talents.

PRACTICING AT HOME:

As fifth graders begin to look toward middle school, it's normal for them to experience some anxiety about the future. You can help your student ease these anxieties by discussing the hopes you have for their futures.

Take a minute of quiet time to write a short letter to your child. In the letter describe how you feel about them and how you feel about being their parent or guardian. Next, list the characteristics, skills or talents that make your child special. Be sure to explain how these skills or talents might be useful in their future. End the note with a message of love and gratitude for your child. Put the letter where the child will find it and have the time and privacy to read it on their own. The few minutes of effort you put into this letter can have a lifelong impact on how your child feels about their future!