

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

### What is it?

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

### Why is it Important?

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

### School Connection

Your child will be practicing how to listen to their peers and share important information in conversation.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### Guess What Happens Next?

Communication is a huge part of feeling understood, valued, and connected with others. Young children love communicating but often have a difficult time listening to others. This is normal. Listening involves taking in information, responding to instructions, and sharing ideas, thoughts, and opinions. It's a skill that needs regular practice. Children who practice being good listeners are building skills to become good communicators in the future.

Choose a book to read with your child. While reading, stop before turning the page and ask, "What do you think will happen next?" As they talk, give positive body cues like nodding or smiling. After they answer, ask follow-up questions to extend their thinking. Explain to your child that you will take turns sharing ideas as you read. Then you take a turn making a prediction and your child will be the listener. The idea is to practice taking turns sharing ideas which will help them practice being patient, listening, responding thoughtfully.

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?

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

### School Connection

Your child will be learning about the three main parts of the brain and that their brain allows them to think, feel, and make decisions.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### Whose Brain?

Reading with your child is one of the best activities you can do together! It promotes positive relationship building between you and your child, helps them process strong emotions and deal with life's challenges.

Choose a book that has a main character with big feelings. Flip through the pages together, enjoying the pictures. Then read it a second time to allow your child time to link what's happening in the pictures to what is happening in the story. As you are reading, ask questions that allow your child to add what they learned about the brain at school. Ask questions such as, "Wow, he looks like he is having big feelings. Do you know what part of the brain the character is using?" "What do you think he should do if he starts to feel like this again?"

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.

### School Connection

Your child will be learning that breath is a helpful tool to calm their bodies and their minds and learn the language associated with self-regulation.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### 1, 2, 3, 4 Let's Breathe Some More!

Children have a difficult time regulating their emotions in times of frustration. Practicing breathing strategies with your child during calm moments helps them learn tools to use when upset or overwhelmed. Learn to identify your child's triggers so that you can suggest breathing exercises before they get overwhelmed.

Sit facing your child on the floor or in a chair. The idea of this activity is to bring attention to different objects or body parts while you are breathing. While you are doing the actions, have your child mirror what you are doing. Breathing in this way helps integrate both the brain and body.

1. Take a deep breath in and stretch your arms up toward the sky and say, "One, sun." Exhale slowly.
2. Take another deep breath in and stretch your arms forward toward your child and say, "Two, you." Exhale slowly.
3. Take another deep breath in and wrap your arms around your body and say, "Three, me." Exhale slowly.
4. Take another deep breath in and stretch your arms down toward the ground and say, "Four, floor." Exhale slowly.

Repeat this process as many times as you need.

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

### What is it?

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

### Why is it Important?

The ability to manage emotions is a necessary lifelong skill for all social interactions.

### School Connection

Your child will be learning that feelings can change in their intensity.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### How are we Feeling?

Young children often don't know what to do when they experience big feelings and can become aggressive or show other unwanted behaviors as a way to express themselves. If your child feels sad that his friend won't play with him, talk about ways he can deal with his sad feelings.

Model how to express feelings by taking opportunities to share your feelings. Each day, ask your child, "How are you feeling today?" It's great to share how you are feeling, too. Talk about the types of things that influence your child's feelings. "I notice that your sister took your crayon and it seems to really upset you." Make sure you also point out times when you feel angry or frustrated and say it out loud. "Wow, I'm so upset that one of my favorite glasses broke." Then take some deep breaths or model another way to calm down so your child can learn to recognize the skills you use when you feel angry.

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

### What is it?

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

### Why is it Important?

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

### School Connection

Your child will be learning about the way their brain influences how their body feels and ways to respond when they are having strong feelings.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### How Does my Body Feel?

It's the job of the brain to make sense of what's going on in and around us and tell our bodies how to respond. When we have strong feelings, our brain sends signals to our body. Ask your child the following questions and come up with a plan of how to support your child when they have big feelings.

- How does your body feel when you have a big feeling?
- What can you do to return to calm?
- How does your body feel when you are calm and in control?
- How can I help you when you're having a big feeling?

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?

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

### School Connection

Your child will be learning how mindfulness relates to impulse control and tuning out distractions.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### Don't Make Me Laugh

Sit facing your child. This game is played silently - no talking or touching allowed! Both partners must remain firmly seated and must look at each other. When you begin, the adult does everything they can think of to make the child laugh or smile. Remember that you can't touch or make any sound. Your child tries to keep a straight face and not smile. If your child smiles, that is okay. They can stop and try again until the timer goes off. Set the timer for 30 seconds. When time is up, switch roles and allow for your child to try to make you laugh.

After playing two rounds of the game, answer the following questions with your child:

- How did you feel in this game?
- What were you thinking as you were trying to control your impulse to smile or laugh?
- What strategies did you use to help control your impulses?
- Outside of this game, what strategies could we use to help control our impulses?

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?

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

### School Connection

Your child will be practicing gratitude daily by verbalizing several things for which they are grateful.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### Thankful Thoughts

Let your child know that you both will be looking for things to be thankful for throughout the day. As you begin, consider stopping several times throughout the day to make comments like, "Oh, I just noticed that the sun is shining so bright! I'm so thankful that we'll get to play in the bright sunshine!" or, "I'm thankful for our windy day because the wind cools me down when I feel hot." Ask your child to offer a thankful thought using the following sentence stem, "I'm thankful for \_\_\_ because \_\_\_." Expressions of gratitude should be genuine, wide-ranging, and emphasize the little things in life that make it good! See how many you can come up with throughout the day.

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?

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

### School Connection

Your child will be learning how to adopt an optimistic perspective when faced with challenging circumstances.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### Mind Movies

Visualization is a tool often used by athletes before a game. It encourages the players to see themselves succeeding. Try using visualization with your child before they attempt a new and challenging task to encourage them to see themselves as competent, independent problem-solvers that are capable of doing important things. Ask them to close their eyes while you walk them through a tough task. They will be able to "see" themselves doing all of the actions. Explain that this is like seeing a movie in their mind. After walking them through the visualization, ask them if they saw the whole movie in their mind. Tell them that you will practice making these movies before they try new challenges. Explain that making a movie in your mind before attempting something new can help you feel more optimistic about doing it well.



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?

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

### School Connection

Your child will be learning that grit is a characteristic that can help them succeed at difficult tasks.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### We Can Do It!

Grit is what helps us keep working on a difficult task in order to get better. Choose an activity that you can do with your child, like dribbling a basketball, completing a puzzle, making a block tower, or anything that they can do to feel some challenge and also the satisfaction of achieving success. Talk to your child about how the task can be frustrating at first because it's difficult, but with practice and better strategies, they will get better! They just have to keep trying!

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?

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

### School Connection

Your child will be learning what it means to "bounce back" and identify times when they've been able to "bounce back".

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### *Praise the Process*

Often it's our natural instinct as parents to praise the things our children create or accomplish. "Wow! That's a beautiful drawing!" "You made a basket!" Research has shown us that it can actually be more helpful to children for us to praise their process. When you notice your child working on something new, praise them for their process of learning. For example, "I'm so proud of you! When you got stuck you tried a different way and didn't give up!"

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?

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

### School Connection

Your child will be learning that others' perspectives may differ from their own and will accept multiple perspectives as valid.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### Fairy Tale Flip Flop

Practice considering someone else's perspective by reading versions of popular fairytales written from alternate perspectives. Looking at familiar stories from several perspectives encourages children to consider alternative perspectives in their lives. Read a classic fairytale like *The Three Little Pigs* or *Cinderella* and then read an alternative perspective fairytale such as *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* or *Seriously, Cinderella is So Annoying!* After reading, ask your child how they think the character was feeling in each book by the character's actions or words. Say something like, "When we take someone else's perspective, it helps us to understand their actions."

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?

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

### School Connection

Your child will be learning that having empathy affects themselves and others.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### Can You Imagine?

Developmentally, it will take children many years to empathize on a consistent basis, but it will get more ingrained when working at it bit by bit over time.

Thinking through different scenarios or situations your child is in, strike up a conversation that will make them think about how they might feel if they were in the other person's shoes or imagine how someone else may feel. After a party, you might ask, "Can you imagine if you were the only kid at that party? How would it be different?" At school, "Can you imagine being a new kid in the middle of the school year? It might be tough to make new friends when everyone else already knows each other." The point is to put your child in a place to think about the challenges others face.

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?

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

### School Connection

Your child will be learning how to identify speech that is kind and learn how to assess their speech with a kindness lens.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### What Kindness?

Children often feel like they can't make a difference because they are young. Share something kind or thoughtful that someone did for you recently. Through recognizing kind actions, children will learn to think about how being kind makes themselves and others feel. Once you have thought about the kind actions of others, ask them to think of a specific person they'd like to help and how they can be helpful. For example, "I can help Grandpa by raking the leaves." Reflection and action provide an ideal way to reinforce the concept that noticing kind actions are important to maintaining friendships, but doing something to share that kindness builds an attitude of kindness.

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?

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

### School Connection

Your child will be learning about how compassion affects themselves and others and show their understanding through a service learning project.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### Helpful Words

In order to practice compassion, children may need our help to model what to say and how to act. Explain to your child that you have a list of phrases that show compassion and kindness, and that you will practice using them together. When something hard happens to someone in the family, they can choose a phrase to practice using. Here are some examples:

- You look upset.
- I understand how you feel.
- I'm sad that you got hurt.
- I feel sad about that.
- I'm so sorry that happened. Let me help you.
- I bet it hurts a lot.
- What can I do to help?

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?

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

### School Connection

Your child will be learning that obstacles shouldn't stop the pursuit of goals.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### My Book of Hope

Try this activity as a way to help your child reflect on all of the learning they did this year and get excited about going to second grade. Gather 10 sheets of paper and different art materials (e.g., magazines, markers, designs, pictures, stickers, etc.) In their Hope Book, they can create a page showing the biggest lessons they have learned, their favorite parts of this year, things they are looking forward to for next year, and/or advice for themselves for next year when they will try hard things. When done, compile the pages into a book or bind them together with a hole punch and ribbon.