

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

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### Small Tasks for Big Kids

At school, your child will have a job in the classroom and this is something that you can do at home, too! Giving children jobs at home can actually make them feel important, boost their self-esteem, and make them feel more connected. Here are a few jobs a kindergarten student could do at home:

- Make their bed
- Put dirty clothes into the laundry basket
- Help feed the pet
- Pick up toys
- Get the mail
- Help wash the car
- Unpack the dishwasher
- Help put away groceries

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

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### Flipped Lid

You can use your hand to show what happens in your brain when experiencing a big feeling, like getting angry, excited, or scared. Pretend your hand is your brain. Hold up your hand and cross your thumb over your palm like you are showing the number four. Your thumb represents your amygdala. Your amygdala is in charge of strong emotions. If you are scared or angry, your amygdala knows it, because its job is to feel emotion. When your amygdala is calm, it allows you to learn and remember. Now, put your four fingers down over your thumb, so your thumb is covered up and your hand is in the shape of a fist. Those four fingers represent your prefrontal cortex, the front of your brain. When we are calm, this part of the brain is able to make good choices. Sometimes we get scared or mad and... (flip up your four fingers)... we "flip our lids!" This means the amygdala is in charge. When the amygdala is in charge, it's hard to make good decisions.

Ask:

- Which part of the brain is in charge when we flip our lids? (amygdala)
- Which part of the brain helps us make choices and do our best thinking? (prefrontal cortex)

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.

### School Connection

Your child will understand that breathing on purpose can help us feel better.

### 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.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### Move the Cotton Ball!

Children have a difficult time regulating their emotions in times of frustration. Practicing breathing strategies with your child during calm moments helps them have 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.

Model for your child how to take deep belly breaths by moving a cotton ball with your breath. Start the modeling by placing a cotton ball in the palm of one hand and place the other hand on your stomach. As you breathe, your stomach should push the hand forward showing that you are breathing deeply. Take a deep breath inhaling for four seconds, hold the breath for four seconds, and exhale slowly for four seconds. As you breathe out, the cotton ball should be moving on your hand. The idea is to move the cotton ball without it falling onto the floor. Now, have your child try. Do this five times and discuss how calm your body feels. Another way to try this exercise is to place the cotton ball on a table and move the cotton ball across the table using belly breathing.

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

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### *Let's Go to the Doctor*

Having big feelings is part of being human, and understanding how to control these feelings is part of growing up. At this age, children love to make up stories, use their creativity and play pretend. This is also a time when positive connections with caring adults activate their brains and get them ready for the world. Engaging in pretend play with your child is important to help them work out big feelings they might have a hard time articulating through conversation but can express through play.

Going to the doctor or dentist are common places that can sometimes be scary for young children. Role play before you go to help your child understand the process and work through any nervous feelings. You may need a chair, stuffed animal, bandages and other household items they can use to pretend. Join in the play by talking about the different types of medical items, like a stethoscope, thermometer, or a shot that you and your child are using to help your stuffed animal patients.

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?

As children practice mindfulness, they become more aware of how their brain and body are connected and grow in their sense of self-awareness. Mindfulness helps us learn to pay better attention, and when we pay attention to how we are thinking and feeling, we are better able to manage our emotions, reactions, and relationships.

### School Connection

Mindfulness is a tool that children can use and practice to help them pay better attention to their bodies.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### Mindful Eating

A fun way to start practicing mindfulness and developing self-awareness is to try mindful eating! Choose a food to enjoy with your child using your senses, like an apple slice, or any food you both enjoy. Begin by examining the apple slice with your eyes. Notice its texture and color. Ask your child to use their own words to describe what they see. Now, close your eyes. What does this food feel like? Is it hard or soft? Moist or dry? Now, open your eyes and smell the food, What do you notice? Now, take a bite! Chew very slowly and notice the texture of the food. How does it taste? Sweet, sour, bitter? Does the flavor change as you keep chewing? The idea of eating in this way is to pay attention, moment by moment.

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 impulses empowers them to navigate difficult situations successfully.

### School Connection

Your child will have an understanding of what an impulse feels like and learn self-calming strategies to control impulses.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### *Create a Beat and Repeat*

Create a beat and repeat it. As your child listens to your beat and copies your patterns, they're practicing self-control. Start out with a beat with two claps and ask your child to mimic what you do. Work your way up to three, four, five, and so on. Anytime they make a mistake, encourage them to try again. Take turns creating beats and mimicking each other.

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

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### *Look for the Good!*

Encourage your child to look throughout the day at things or people they are grateful for, think about why they are grateful for them, and brainstorm what to do to express appreciation in return. Focusing on the thought process of identifying what to be thankful for and an action to show thankfulness helps children get in the habit of showing gratitude for little things each day.

LOOK: I noticed that my sister put away all my toys for me.

THINK: She is showing me she cares.

DO: I can say thank you or give her a hug.

LOOK: I noticed that the cashier at the grocery store put all of my bags in my cart.

THINK: He is helping me out and being kind.

DO: I can smile and say thank you.

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 learn how to approach a challenge with optimism.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### *Let's Try Something New*

Make a list with your child of new things you can support them in learning, like drawing an animal or superhero, painting a picture, making a cake, swimming, jumping rope, or anything new and challenging! Encourage your child to try something new. The instinct as a parent is to shield our children from experiencing failure. By shielding them, we can communicate that we don't have the confidence that they will be successful even if they try. There are so many lessons that children learn when they try and fail and try again. So encourage them to learn new skills and hobbies, and encourage your child to say something like, "It might be hard now, but I'll give it another shot tomorrow."



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

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### *Let's Reset*

When working with your child on building grit, it is important to start by acknowledging their feelings. Notice the next time your child is struggling with an activity or schoolwork. Say something like, "You're feeling frustrated because you're having a hard time learning this" or, "You're feeling discouraged because you haven't been able to do it yet." Acknowledging that you see them working hard and that their feelings are normal will show them that you care and you are there to provide support. Along with providing verbal support, promoting short breaks could help stressful things seem more manageable. A hug, a drink of water, a funny joke, or just a few minutes doing something fun might be the emotional reset that your child needs to continue, and will give them strategies to keep going when things get tough.

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

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### *Let's Problem Solve Together*

Instead of giving your child the answer to their problem or running to their rescue, begin to give them the language to attempt to solve it on their own. Validate their problem first, then support the problem-solving process without handing them a solution. Note that this process will take a lot of practice and patience.

- Ask your child to think of as many ideas to solve their problem as they can in two minutes. Accept even silly suggestions. They are bound to think of a few ideas that they can use.
- Brainstorm what has worked before.
- Think of ways to break the big problem into smaller and easier to achieve problems (you may need to support them more with this task).

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 give 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 how to consider others' perspectives before making a choice about how to behave.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### *Do You Like What I Like?*

Being able to understand how another person is feeling starts with understanding that the other person exists separate from yourself and that they may see, think, and feel differently from you. This is a very difficult skill for young children to grasp, but with your support your child will have a basic understanding of others' views, thoughts and emotions as separate from their own and equally as important.

When taking a walk in the park or listening to music with your child, point out things that interest you or that you really like. Discuss how a beautiful flower or a pretty song makes each of you feel or what it makes each of you think about. If you don't have the same feelings or like different things, remind them that is okay too, because not everyone has the same feelings about the same things.

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 helping others is a way to show that you care about them.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### What I Do, Re-Do

When young children speak or act in an insensitive way, it can be helpful to allow them to have a "do-over." Allowing children to re-do their instinctual reaction will help them understand and respond more emphatically the next time they are in that situation.

- Point out and name the insensitive action.
- Tell them why it may hurt someone's feelings and help them understand their perspective.
- Re-do the action in a more caring way, stressing expectations for caring behavior in the future.

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 the classroom. 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 to initiate acts of kindness by focusing on others' needs.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### What Kindness?

Kindness is treating others with respect. Ask your child to list two ways they saw kindness and how they showed others kindness on that day. Make a routine of pointing out examples around the house, on TV, and when you are out together as a family.

Examples of ways to model kind behaviors:

- Hold the door open for someone.
- Feed the birds.
- Pick up litter.
- Let someone go ahead of you in line.
- Compliment a friend.
- Tell a manager how good your service was at a restaurant.

Examples of ways for kids to show kindness:

- Talk to someone new at school.
- Invite someone to play on the playground.
- Help make dinner.
- Share a special toy with a friend.
- Teach someone something new.

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 brainstorming different ways to show compassion and caring in their school and community through planning and completing a service learning project.

## HOW TO SUPPORT AT HOME:

### How Can I Help?

When you are modeling compassion for others, talk about why you're doing it. Try to include what prompted you to act this way and what outcome you are hoping to achieve. "I noticed that there was some trash on the playground, so I decided to bring gloves to pick up the trash and throw it in the trash can. I hope that helps kids have a clean space to play." Point out things you notice about others, and brainstorm together about things that you can do. "I notice... What do you think we could 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:

### Goal Setting

Self-talk is such an important part of being hopeful. Your words are powerful because they are the foundation of how you approach your future. Create a family phrase/mantra to say each day. Saying positive phrases helps shift your thinking and the way you approach each day. Keep it simple! Your family mantra doesn't need to be long or complicated. You can choose from the following examples or create your own.

- We are strong
- We are calm
- We have peace
- We are loved
- We are confident
- We are happy