Dear Family,

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is a hot topic in many schools these days. You may be wondering, *What is social-emotional learning? How does it benefit my child?*

Just like students need to practice reading and math to sharpen their skills, they need to practice their skills with managing emotions, setting and achieving goals, working well with others, and making good decisions. In short, they’re practicing the skills that will help them live successful and fulfilling lives.

Social-emotional learning is taught informally in schools every day. But there’s a growing trend to formally practice these skills. The American Heart Association is working with schools nationwide to equip students to work well together, treat one another fairly, stand up to bullying, and be their best.

In the weeks to come, your child will be working on these skills and others in class. We will be doing group activities in class and maybe even assigning a little SEL homework, too. Ask your child all about it!

I look forward to working with you to teach important life skills that address the whole child.

Sincerely,

________________________________

Your child’s teacher

Research Recap

A lot of research shows that SEL programs provide lifelong benefits to kids:

- SEL programs can lead to immediate improvements in mental health, social skills and academic achievement.
- Students who participate in SEL programs have fewer behavior problems.
- SEL programs continue to benefit students more than a decade later.

Source: casel.org/impact

Grin and Share It

What do you call a reptile with good people skills?

A good communi-gator
Skills for Life

Here’s what’s included in the new American Heart Association Social-Emotional Learning program that our school is using:

- Clear communication
- Resolving conflict
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Being an active listener
- Standing up for yourself
- Fairness and compromise

Each lesson includes engaging activities with mini-posters, organizers, assessment sheets, and more for students to work on individually or in groups to develop skills that will last a lifetime.

Start the learning at home. Here’s how:

**Be honest** with your child. If you’re struggling to get a message across or resolve a conflict at work, tell your child a little about the situation and ask him or her what might help.

**Admit mistakes.** If your directions or expectations were unclear, admit that to your child and discuss how to do better.

**Focus on conversations** with your child. Whenever possible, avoid answering phone calls, sending texts, or checking your phone during a discussion.

Allow your child to **explain a question or situation fully;** don’t go off on tangents before your child gets to the main point.

Create and sign a **family pledge** to listen carefully and respectfully, explain differing points of view calmly and to be fair to one another. You’ll be glad you did!

Just for Fun

**Do you remember the game called Telephone or Whisper Down the Lane?**

To play, one person whispers a silly sentence to the next. That person whispers it to the next person until everyone has had a turn. The last person shares the sentence that traveled “down the lane,” and the first shares the original sentence. The results can be silly — and also underscore how easily miscommunication happens. After the game, ask your child about the skills he or she has learned for clear communication.