

Julian Curtiss' Social-Emotional Learning Guide for School and Home

Improves academic achievement 	SEL skills are life skills 	SEL skills improve class performance 
Builds strong decision-makers 	Why SEL Belongs in Schools www.thepathway2success.com	
Improves behavior in the classroom 	SEL skills teach academic skills 	Builds confident learners 
Builds a strong community 	SEL can be integrated into content 	SEL can help partner with families 

helping kids work with others,
build confidence,
develop meaningful friendships,
work towards goals,
& make good choices!

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Social-Emotional Learning helps provide support with:

- Difficulties with attention, focus, following directions, and/or impulsivity
- Poor frustration tolerance (difficulty persevering) and inflexible thinking
- Emotional regulation (coping with Big Feelings)
- Executive Functioning (difficulty organizing, planning, remembering, completing homework, time management, self-monitoring)
- Friendship- making friends, keeping friends, managing conflicts, positive and healthy communication
- School related stressors (peers, schoolwork, classes)
- Family stressors (divorce, illness, death, job loss, a move)

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support in JC:

Tier 1:

- School wide Positive Behavioral Support (PBIS)- recognizing and celebrating positive behavior (JC Eagle feathers and eggs, monthly norm ambassadors recognized at school assemblies)
- [Second Step](#) lessons taught by teachers and embedded into the classroom and school culture
- Bullying prevention and mindfulness workshops (by district staff and Junior League program)
- Push in lessons by school and district mental health professionals
- Calming areas in classrooms/ programs

Tier 2:

- Small groups to address specific issues, such as “lunch bunch”
- Frequent push-ins by mental health providers in classrooms
- Checklists, visual reminders on tables; classroom incentive plans
- Targeted lessons for grades/ classes as indicated

Tier 3:

- Short- term individualized support plans, regular communication with families, frequent team meetings with school staff and families
- 1:1 counseling with school social worker or psychologist

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GPS District Norms



Be Here

Be Safe

Be Honest

Care for Self and Others

Let Go and Move On

Be Here... *persevere*

What is PERSEVERANCE

Staying with the task and not giving up, showing commitment, pride and a positive attitude when completing tasks, trying again and again and again, being patient and willing to work hard!

Be Safe... *think before you act*

Safety rules for the hallway, classroom, cafeteria, recess, outside, our words, our bodies

S - SEE your SURROUNDINGS (pay attention to what's around you- cars, doors, people, animals)

A - ASK for permission to hug/ touch a friend, or sharing food

F - FOLLOW adult directions

E - EMPATHY- protect friends' feelings/ emotional safety

T - TAKE your TIME

Y - YOU are in charge of your body

Be Honest... *be true to yourself*

Choosing to do what is right even when no one is watching!

Tattling on peers versus telling so an adult can help

Care for Self and Others... *kindness starts with you*

Feeling concerned for, interested in, and considerate of others; doing things from your heart to help others feel good.

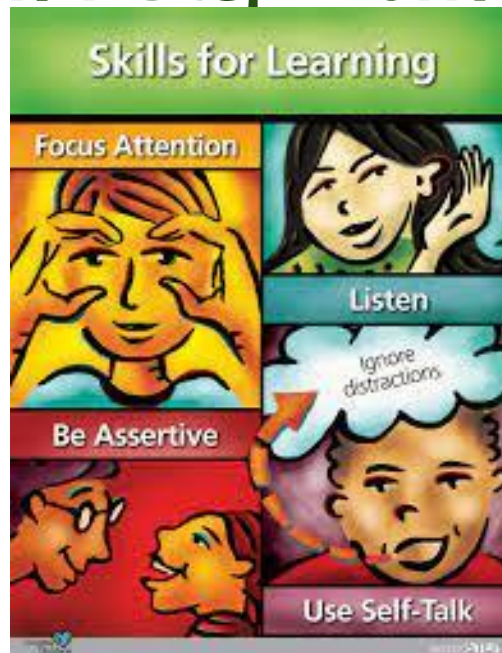
Recognizing when you show kindness to someone or they show kindness to you.

Let Go and Move On... *kindness works like magic*

Using a growth mindset to move forward from experience of frustration or worry.

Solving conflicts with restoration and a positive step forward.

Second Step Curriculum



Weekly classroom lessons targeting grade-level social-emotional learning.

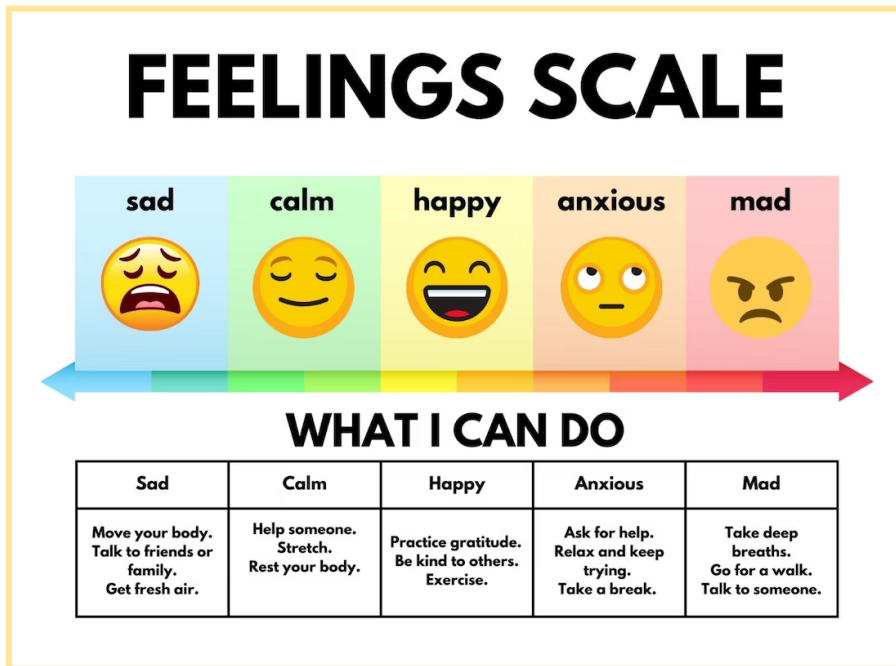
- Positive discipline conversations to look at behaviors collaboratively (allow adults to find the true meaning of the behavior to best support them)
- Instruction and guided practice in skills for learning: focused attention, active listening, assertive communication, positive self-talk.
- Instruction and practice in empathy: understanding what someone is feeling.
- Strategies to calm down: stop and use your signal, name your feeling, calm down by breathing, counting, or using positive self-talk.
- Identifying the problem solving STEPs: Say the problem, Think of solutions, Explore outcomes, Pick the best solution.
- Fair ways to play: sharing, trading, and taking turns.

[Curriculum Overview](#)

Labeling our Feelings

Understanding our own feelings helps foster *empathy*, and also helps us work through “Big Feelings”

Becoming familiar with feelings names and what that looks like in our body helps us pick the right tool to feel better.



As supportive adults for our children, we can model labeling our feelings (big or small) out loud and how we want to feel better.

- Example: “I felt upset today because I could not find my computer right before an important meeting. I took a second to take some deep breaths and thought of the last place I saw it.”

See [page 14](#) for additional tips in modeling and coping with Big Feelings

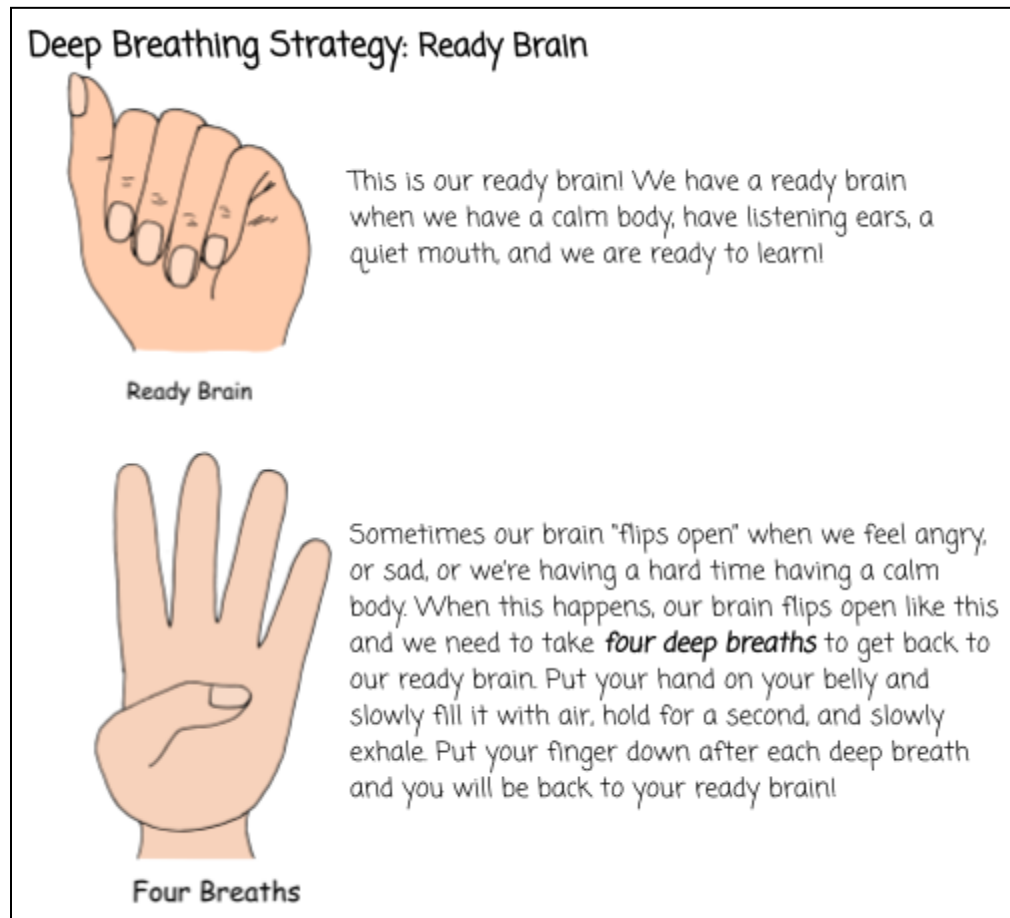
Coping Strategies

Coping Strategies are the tools we can use to calm and soothe ourselves when we have big feelings, and want to go back to feeling calm and ready to problem solve/learn.

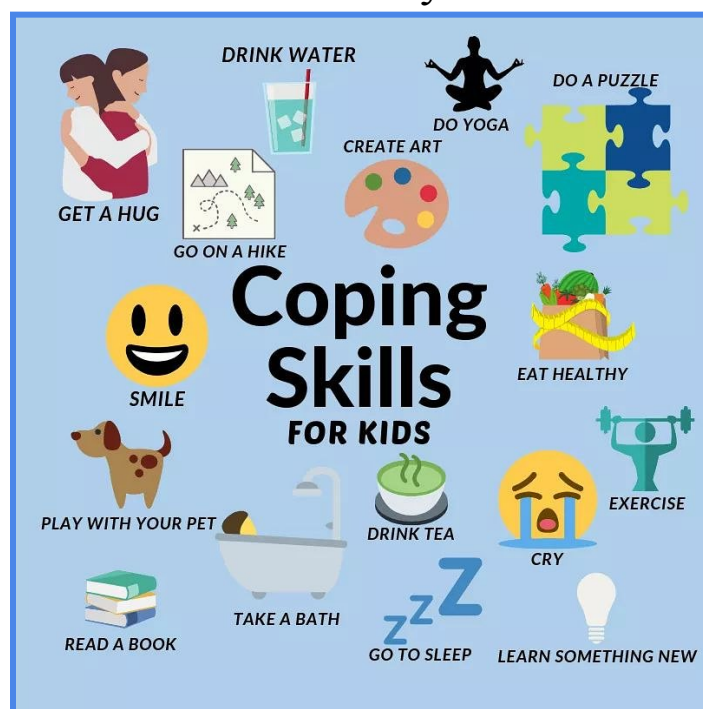
When we have Big Feelings, our brains are operating out of the **amygdala** (fight or flight response, irrational thoughts and feelings). Coping strategies and deep breathing help our brains get back to the **prefrontal cortex** (logic, regulation) to problem solve.

We can model deep breathing strategies to co-regulate our children

Co-Regulate: providing support, coaching, and modeling for children when engaging in coping strategies together so children can **mirror** a state of calm and mirror our actions.



Coping strategies are a personal preference, so it's important to figure out what works for you!



The Zones of Regulation

Zones of Regulation (visuals and free resources)

- Develops **awareness of feelings, energy and alertness levels** using colors (zones)
- Offers tools and strategies for **regulation, prosocial skills, self-care**, and overall wellness
- Easy way to think and talk about how we feel on the inside and sort these feelings into four colored Zones
- Learn to use tools/strategies to manage our different Zones **in order to meet goals** like doing schoolwork or other tasks, managing big feelings, and healthy relationships with other'

What Zone Are You In?			
Blue	Green	Yellow	Red
			
Sick Sad Tired Bored Moving Slowly	Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to Learn	Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control	Mad/Angry Mean Yelling/Hitting Disgusted Out of Control

"I feel ____ because ____"

Social Thinking

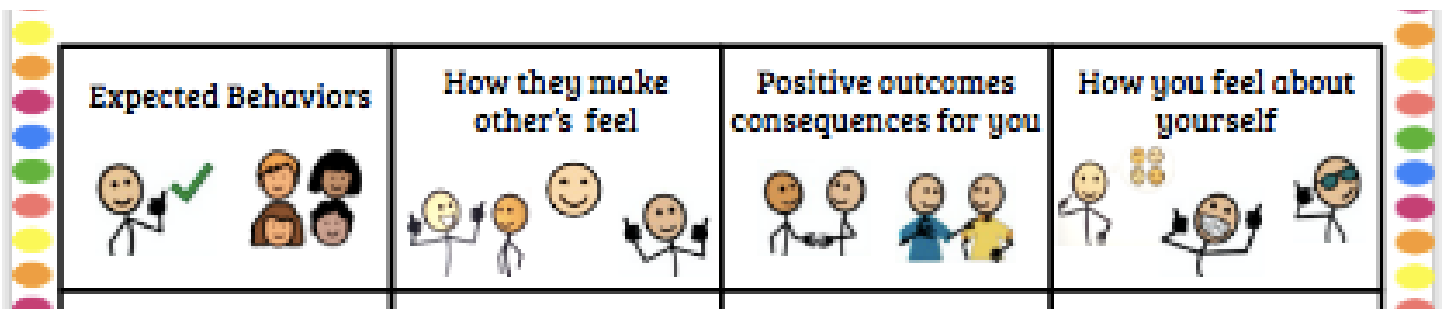
The [Social Thinking Methodology](#) builds Social Competencies using evidence-based strategies to develop social competencies, flexible thinking & social problem solving and improve:

- [Conversation & social connection](#)
- [Executive functioning](#)
- [Friendship & relationship development](#)
- [Perspective taking](#)
- [Self-regulation](#)



Be a Social Detective to find hidden social rules!

- A **Social Detective** uses their eyes, ears, and brain to figure out what *hidden rules* are, what others are doing, what they plan to do next, and what they mean by what they say.
- **Hidden Rules** are rules that you are expected to know, but they are not always written down or taught! The rules are always changing and vary depending on where you are, who is there, what is happening, the timeline, or the topic of conversation,
 - Example: Polite greetings, respecting personal space, asking permission before touching others belongings, waiting your turn, chewing with your mouth closed, not always saying what you are thinking, or not commenting on someone's appearance/smell
- Looking at the **situation** and seeing the place, the people, and what is happening, helps us figure out the hidden rules
- We **think with our eyes** to find clues for hidden rules by looking for clues of what people might be thinking, feeling, saying or doing
- Hidden rules help us have **Expected Behaviors**: how we are expected to act, feel, and think in situations



Whole Body Listening helps us have expected behaviors!



Whole body listening helps us keep our body and attention in the group, use [active listening](#), and regulate our senses!

Whole Body Listening looks different for each kid:

Hands: Use a fidget tool, squeeze hands together, sit on hands or put them in pockets, or have them still on our laps!

Be mindful: Some kids move or flap their hands as a way to regulate themselves and can still listen/hear while moving their hands.

Feet: Tie a band around the legs of a chair as a place to rest the feet and/or use it as a fidget for restless feet. Explore proper seating for posture and comfort. Cross or sit on your feet to help keep them still.

Be mindful: Some kids need to move their body to stay regulated, attend, and feel comfortable. If they are moving, they can still listen and may be able to learn better.

Body: Adaptive seating options (e.g. wobble stools) or use of a weighted lap pad.

Be mindful: Some kids need to stand, move their body to stay regulated, attend, and feel comfortable.

Flexible Thinking

Flexible thinking: thinking positively about changes! Helps us deal with uncertainty, solve problems, adjust to changes, and incorporate new information into our plans and ideas.

Stuck Thinking 	Flexible Thinking 
"That's not fair"	I feel disappointed that I cannot get _____, but I know I will get to do something similar soon.
"This is hard" "I can't do this"	This is hard <u>right now</u> , but I can ask for help to learn how to do it
"I hate _____"	I'm upset with _____ right now. I can talk about what I'm feeling in order to move forward.
I'm not smart	This is hard, but I can try again and ask for help. Not knowing the answer right away does not mean I am not smart.

What it looks like:

Going from frustration or sadness to acceptance and action takes time. Kids may not respond as quickly as we'd like them to. When that happens, we can be patient and encourage kids to try flexible thinking to help manage distress and build resilience. When your child is regulated and ready to talk:

- Discuss that people may say things that mean something different from what we thought they meant. Talk about what they heard, and what it could really mean.
- Sometimes we have to consider what other people might want or need; this might mean not getting our own way, but we will still get to do it the way we like again soon.
- Discuss that sometimes things have to happen in a different order or different way than we're used to, but this does not change the thing we want to do!
- Example: *"I can see you're still thinking about going to the movies tonight instead of watching a movie at home, I wonder if there's anything that might help? Maybe we could make popcorn at home and make it feel like a movie theater?"*

Model your own flexibility to changes in schedules, rules, plans etc. out loud for kids to learn from!

Size of the Problem

Reactions come from our feelings. A reaction is what we show on the outside by what we say and do. Just as problems and feelings come in different sizes, so do our reactions.

It's expected that the size of our reaction **matches the size of the problem.**

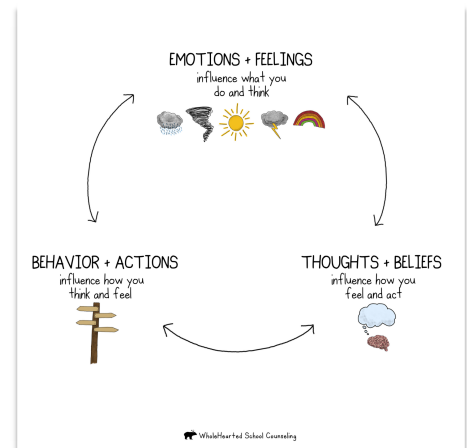
What is the size of the problem?	
3	Big <u>You need help from someone else right away.</u> -You get really hurt -There is an intruder in school -Someone threatens you or someone you know
2	Medium <u>Something that you may need help with to fix.</u> -You lose something -Someone is mean to you -You have a little accident
1	Small <u>Not a big deal. Something you can fix or get over yourself.</u> -You lose in a game -You are not line leader -Your pencil is dull

What is the size of the problem?	
5	Huge <u>You need help from someone else right away.</u> -You get really hurt -There is an intruder in school -Someone is fighting
4	Big <u>Something you need help with to fix.</u> -You are being bullied -Someone steals from you -You drop your lunch tray
3	Medium <u>Something that you may need help with to fix.</u> -You lose something -Someone is mean to you -It is too noisy
2	Small <u>Something that you may need help with to fix.</u> -You need a tissue -You made a mistake -You don't get assigned the project you wanted to do
1	Tiny <u>Not a big deal. Something you can fix or deal with yourself.</u> -You lose in a game. -You are not line leader -You drop your paper

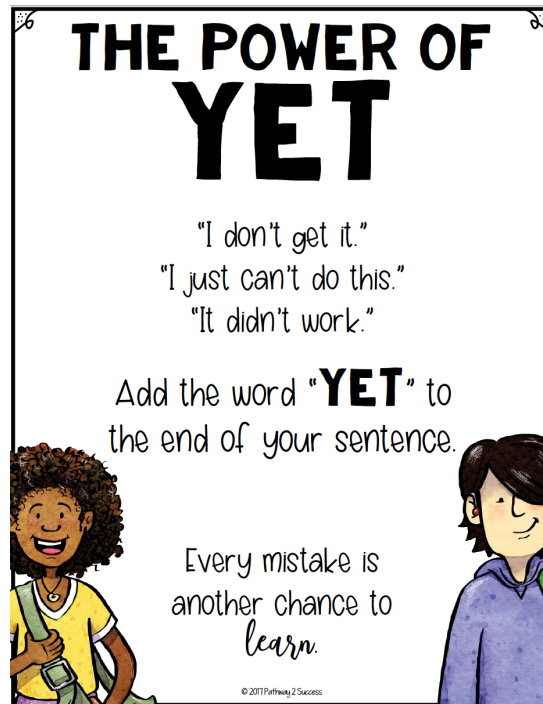
Talking about the size of the problem helps us feel better and pick the best solution.

Solutions- focused thinking: persevering through challenges by focusing on finding solutions to problems, mistakes, and difficult situations.

Perception is everything- when we change the way we look at things, the things we look at change. This happens from changing either our thought, feeling, or behavior when we encounter a problem situation.

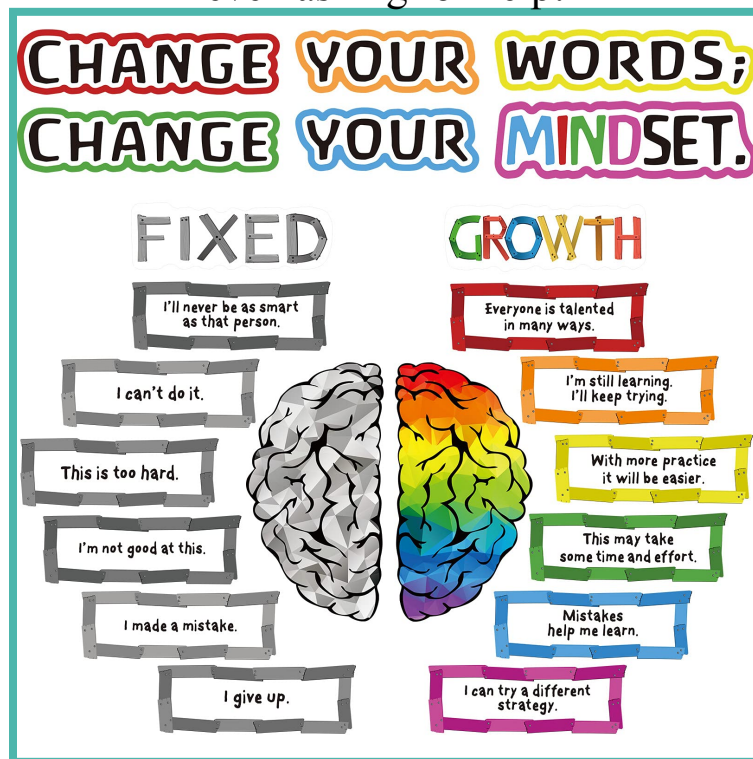


Growth Mindset



Having a growth mindset means believing we can learn and grow when we don't succeed the first time.

We understand that our skills can improve with effort, learning, perseverance, and even asking for help!



[Fostering a growth mindset at home](#)

Active Listening



Listening to respond versus listening to engage:

Pay attention. When someone is talking to us, we can notice their tone of voice as well as what they are actually saying.

Listen with your body. We can turn toward the person who is talking, lean in, and make them feel listened to. Eye contact, smile, nod, and making leading noises (“Uh-huh”, “Really?”, “Go on”, etc.) are good ways to show we are listening.

Don’t interrupt. The best way to make someone feel like they are not being heard is to interrupt or talk on top of them! We can wait until they are done to ask questions or add our thoughts.

Repeat what they said. We can show we have heard what they said by repeating back to them a summary of what we heard before adding our own opinions.

Respond to what they said. We can be honest and respectful in our responses, and remember to talk — and listen — in the ways that we would want to be talked or listened to.

Communicating with Kids:

Ask **specific questions** about the stories when reading with your child (who, what, when, where, why).

When asking if your child had a good day, **ask for specific details** using specific questions

Example: "What activity did you enjoy the most today, why?" "Who did you play with at recess?"

Model labeling and reflecting on your feelings out loud!

During Feelings of Frustration:

- Use a calm and neutral tone, keep responses brief, and avoid lecturing or asking questions
 - Try not match their emotional level, rather remain calm, cool, and collected
- Model **regulation** by taking slow, **deep breaths** and asking your child to join you
 - Some relaxation techniques: slow deep breaths, counting to 10, write down thoughts, draw or color, visualize/imagine your favorite place, listen to music.
 - **Mindfulness** using the 5 senses, ask your child to notice and tell you things they hear, see, feel, etc. around them.
 - This is a great strategy to use on walks outside too



If your child is not ready to say what they are feeling, it might be helpful to ask them to tell you a story about a kid who is feeling something similar, and ask them what would help that kid feel better.

Additional Resources

- Dr. Ross Greene: [Lives in the Balance](#)
- [SEL at home](#)
- [Building resilience](#)
- [Fostering a growth mindset at home](#)
- [Social Thinking](#)
- [Zones of Regulation](#)
- [Second Step Curriculum](#)

Mindfulness

- [MindYeti](#)
- [1 Minute of Mindfulness](#)
- [7 Minute Progressive Muscle Relaxation](#)
- [Relaxing Sounds and Music](#)
- [Positive Affirmations Video](#)
- [Mindful Coloring - Kids](#)
- [Mindfulness Videos](#)
- [Meditation Scripts for Kids](#)

If you have any questions about the aforementioned SEL strategies, or need additional resources, please do not hesitate to reach out to us:

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Greenwich Community Supports

- GPS SEL Events
- Greenwich Public Schools Safe School Climate
- Greenwich Community Links
- Department of Human Services– Town and government aid programs
- Neighbor to Neighbor– Weekly and emergency food and hygiene products
- Filling In the Blanks– Supplemental weekend food bags
- Clothes for Kids of Fairfield County– Clothing donations
- Boys and Girls Club of Greenwich– After School, camp, recreation and tutoring programs
- YWCA– After School Program, Girls Empowerment, and Domestic Abuse Services
- Kids in Crisis– Case Management, Parenting Support, Youth Shelter
- Family Centers, Child Guidance Center, Jewish Family Services– Child and Family Counseling and many other programs that support children and families.
- *Mobile Crisis Intervention Services: 211-1-1 Youth Adults
- *Crisis Text Line: Text CT to 741741 or text: 988