

What Is My Child Learning?

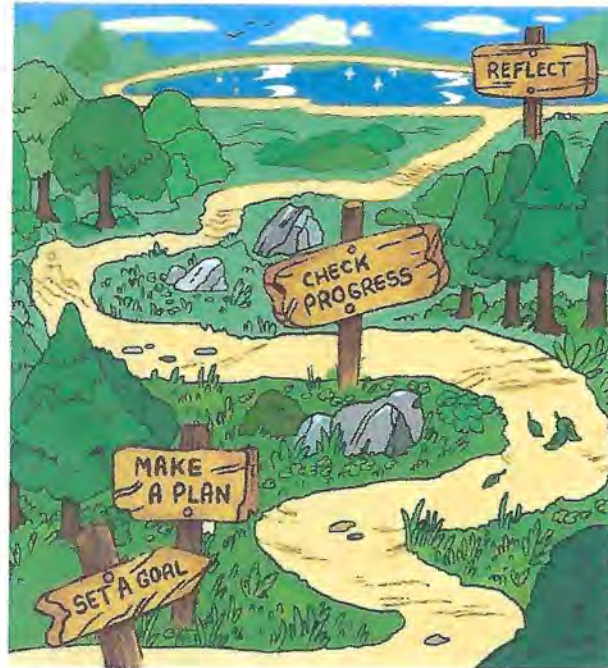
Unit Themes

Your child is learning a multistep process to help them set and work toward a goal that is personally motivating to them. Sixth graders gain experience choosing a goal, creating a plan, checking their progress along the way, and reflecting on the process to gain insights for the future. They learn that a goal that's right for one person may not be right for another and that they can adjust a plan to keep moving forward when they run into something that blocks their progress.

Why is it important?

Research shows that children who learn the skills in this unit are more likely to:

- Have greater self-reliance
- Build stronger relationships
- Develop increased empathy
- Be better problem-solvers



Practice at Home

What to Look For

Notice and praise your child when they make changes on their own that help them overcome roadblocks so they can keep working toward a goal. For example, if their goal is to turn homework in on time, you might see them change where or when they work. Instead of working in front of the television, they may choose a quieter spot. You can say, **I see you've changed your plan and found a better place to get your work done.**

Try This!

Discuss: Describe a time you didn't achieve a goal. Reflect on what you did, including what you would do differently next time. For example, **I wanted more family time on the weekend, so I planned to do one extra chore every day during the week. I realize now that was unrealistic. Next time, I'll think more carefully about what I have time to do.**

Practice: Help your child practice setting milestones and checking progress as they work toward a goal. For instance, if your child needs to complete a report by the end of the week, you can ask questions such as, **How will you know you're on track? What will it look like when you're halfway done?**

What Is My Child Learning?**Unit Themes**

Your child is learning to anticipate recurring situations that cause them to feel strong emotions like stress, frustration, or anger. Sixth graders practice looking at what makes a situation upsetting for them. Then they learn to identify a change they can make to handle the situation better in the future.

Why is it important?

Research shows that children who learn the skills in this unit are more likely to:

- **Develop stronger coping skills**
- **Be better problem-solvers**
- **Make better decisions**
- **Build stronger relationships**

**Practice at Home****What to Look For**

Notice and praise your child when they handle a situation more easily than they have in the past. For example, if your child is ready for school on time after days of being late. You can say, **I notice you've made some changes. Good job planning ahead so you could be on time today.**

Try This!

Discuss: Take turns talking about how you know when you're feeling stress. Describe situations that cause you to feel this way.

Practice: When your child seems stressed, ask how they're feeling and if there's anything they could do differently to feel better the next time they experience a similar situation.

What Is My Child Learning?**Unit Themes**

Your child is learning how to use empathy to help make their school community a better place. For example, they might make a plan to keep the school grounds clean or to help younger students safely use playground equipment. Sixth graders practice using empathy—feeling or understanding what someone else is feeling—as a way to identify potential problems and propose solutions that could work for everyone.

Why is it important?

Research shows that children who learn the skills in this unit are more likely to:

- **Build stronger relationships**
- **Resolve conflicts more effectively**
- **Exhibit positive behaviors**
- **Be more connected and compassionate**
- **Develop increased empathy**

**Practice at Home****What to Look For**

Notice and praise your child when they describe a problem from someone else's point of view. For example, your sixth grader might say, "There's a new student in our class. I noticed she didn't have anyone to play with at recess. I kind of felt bad for her." You can say, **I can tell you're really thinking about her point of view. It's nice to hear that you're trying to understand how she feels.**

Try This!

Discuss: Ask your child, **If you could change anything about your school, what would it be and why?** Take turns talking about how different groups of people—such as teachers, younger students, older students, and parents—might be affected by the change.

Practice: When you're in a place such as a grocery store, community center, or park, ask your child to notice the different groups of people using the space. For example, you may see older people and young children, workers as well as first-time visitors. Help your child think about what those groups might be experiencing. For example, **We're seeing some older people in the store. Can they easily do what they need to do? Are they safe? Can they enjoy themselves?**

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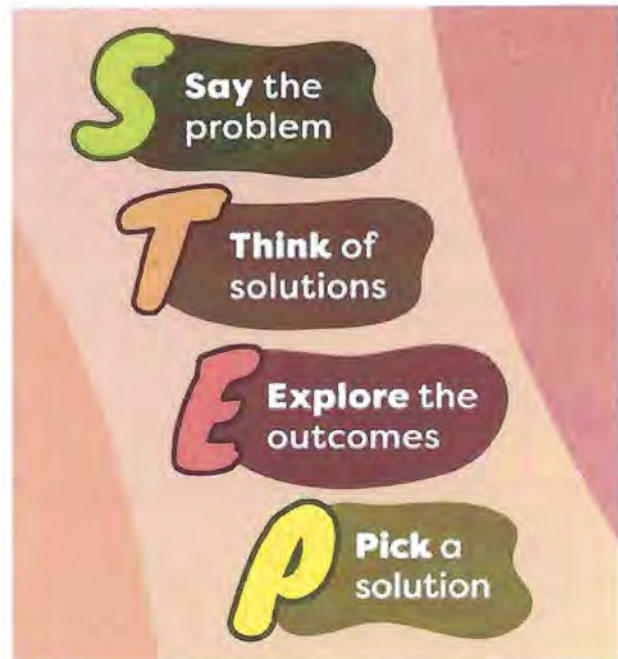
Unit Themes

Your child is learning how to use a multistep process to solve common interpersonal problems—disagreements or misunderstandings between two or more people. By sixth grade, kids start to deal with more complex problems that can result in hurt feelings, such as not being included in an activity or feeling disrespected by words or actions. Sixth graders practice each part of the STEP process, paying special attention to when, where, and with whom it makes sense to work on problems, and reflecting on the possible outcomes.

Why is it important?

Research shows that children who learn the skills in this unit are more likely to:

- **Have better mental health**
- **Make more positive choices**
- **Be more connected and compassionate**



Practice at Home

What to Look For

Notice and praise your child when you hear them name an interpersonal problem without blame or name-calling. For example, instead of saying “She’s so mean!” your sixth grader may say, “She said something that hurt my feelings.” You can say, **I’m sorry to hear that. I appreciate how you’re describing the problem in a respectful way. That’s a good first step to figuring out how to handle it.**

Try This!

Discuss: Take turns talking about an interpersonal problem, including what went well, what didn’t, and what you’d do differently. For example, **I forgot I made plans with a friend. When he called, I acted like it was no big deal. Now I know I hurt his feelings. If it happens again, I’ll apologize and make sure he knows I care about him.**

Practice: Help your child think through solutions to problems by asking questions such as:

- **When is the best time to work on this problem?** Find times when everyone can feel calm.
- **Where is the best place?** Think of places where people can focus.
- **Who should be included?** Involving too many people can sometimes make problems worse.