

Supporting our Students:



Social Emotional Learning During COVID-19

Social Emotional Learning in the time of Covid-19

As the country and the world respond to the coronavirus (COVID-19), we are all feeling a range of emotions. While children might not always have the words to express these feelings, they need our support more than ever at expressing and regulating emotions. Social Emotional Learning offers a powerful way to explore and understand our emotions, build relationships, and support each other during this challenging time. In this guide you will find a few SEL strategies that you can safely use if you are supporting children in day camps or other settings at this time.

Warm Greeting

Greeting young people with enthusiasm and warmth helps create a warm and supportive environment where young people feel welcomed, safe, and cared about. Especially during times of uncertainty and change it is important to be a calming and consistent presence! Below are some options that you can do without any touching!

Physical Warm Greetings	Verbal Warm Greetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 Second Dance Party• Play Rock, Paper, Scissors• Act like an animal (adult mirrors student)• Hop, spin around, or do a jumping jack• Enter (quietly) like an animal• Make your best silly face	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Say hello in English• Give a compliment to students as they enter!• Say hello in a different language• Tell a knock-knock joke• Say the first word that comes to mind (example: Person 1 says: Hamburger and Person 2 says: Happy)

Best Practices

- Warm Greetings happen in the morning and anytime a new provider or instructor takes over
- Everyone is responsible for greeting students!
- Adults should be standing up when greeting students.
- Be fully present when you are greeting a student so they can see how much you care!
- Do not use any greetings with touching, such as handshakes or high-fives.
- Take a look at these link sto learn some great knock knock jokes and how to greet students in other languages!
 - <https://www.babbel.com/en/magazine/how-to-say-hello-in-10-different-languages>
 - <https://parade.com/944054/parade/knock-knock-jokes/>

Circles

Community Circles foster trusting relationships between all members of the classroom and creates opportunities for each student to feel accepted and significant within the group. Circles can safely be done anytime you want the class to engage in a conversation-just remember to keep students 6 feet apart!

Best Practices:

- Make sure your space is adequate. Can students comfortably form a circle?
- Act as a timekeeper and keep things moving
- Make sure every student and adult is included in the circle
- Use positive, encouraging language and remind students to speak to each other, not just you!

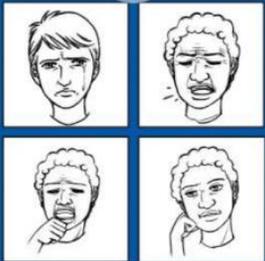
- You can use circle activities while keeping students at their desks, in order to ensure distance is maintained.

Circle Structures:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition: Before starting circle it can be helpful to have students stretch, deep breath, etc. • Opening Routine: Can include a mantra, deep breathing, emotion check, etc. • Talking Piece: Do not use a talking piece! Instead have students raise hands or have students or an adult choose who will share next. • Discussion Question: <i>Use these to help students process emotions or build community.</i> • Closing Routine: Go around the circle and have each student respond to an optimistic closure question, such as something they are looking forward to.

Emotion Check:

The Emotion Check-In strategy is grounded in the Zones of Regulation® framework for helping young people develop self-awareness and self-regulation of emotions. Ultimately, this strategy involves creating intentional opportunities for youth to identify, name, or describe their emotions.

The **ZONES** of Regulation® ?

i	i	i	i
			
BLUE ZONE	GREEN ZONE	YELLOW ZONE	RED ZONE
Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly	Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to Learn	Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control	Mad/Angry Terrified Yelling/Hitting Elated Out of Control

Student Check-in

Here are several options for ways students can check-in without needing to share materials. Choose a few that will work for your program and space. While remembering to keep students spread out.

- Have each student share their zone during circle time
- North, South, East, West style activity (go to the blue wall, etc)
- Adult asks and students each respond verbally
- If you have time, each student can act out their zone
- Have students write about or draw their zone! (See Resources at end of document)

Supportive Follow-up

There are many different ways to check-in with students on their emotions. Here are a few ways to help students process big feelings:

Supporting Students With Emotion Check	
Ask Open Ended Questions	Offer Suggestions for Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where are you feeling these emotions in your body?• What do you need from me right now?• How can I help?• Would you like to transition to a different zone?• Can you tell me more about what contributed to this zone?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Would you like some time to cool down?• Do you want to talk with me?• Would you like to draw a picture?• Let's take a deep breath together

Best Practices

- Ask students first if they want to move out of their present zone-it is okay to not be ready to stop being angry, sad, etc.
- When highlighting emotions, be cautious of assuming you know the emotion that is being expressed. Use tentative words, such as "it seems like" and ask youth to confirm how they feel.
- Highlight all types of emotions you see young people experiencing throughout the day—not just the intense emotions that naturally draw your attention (i.e. anger, frustration, sadness)
- Highlight your own emotions throughout the day to model naming and managing emotions (e.g. "I'm going to stretch and take a few steps to help me focus").
- Avoid labeling certain emotions as "bad," "challenging," or "negative." We experience all types of emotions. Instead, you can identify emotions as "big," "epic," or "whole body" (e.g. when we're so sad or mad that we feel it in our whole body).

Helping Students Regulate Emotions

(From the National Association of School Psychologists 3/27/2020)

- Be a role model. Children will react to and follow your reactions. They learn from your example.
- Be aware of how you talk about COVID-19. Your discussion about COVID-19 can increase or decrease your child's fear. Remind children that you are going to do everything within your power to keep them well and safe when they are with you. Carefully listen or have them draw or write out their thoughts and feelings and respond with truth and reassurance.
- Explain social distancing. Children probably don't fully understand why parents/guardians aren't allowing them to be with friends. Tell children that you are following the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which include social distancing. Social

distancing means staying away from others until the risk of contracting COVID-19 is under control. Showing older children the "flatten the curve" charts will help them grasp the significance of social distancing. Explain that while we don't know how long it will take to "flatten the curve" to reduce the number of those infected, we do know that this is a critical time—we must follow the guidelines of health experts to do our part.

- Demonstrate deep breathing. Deep breathing is a valuable tool for calming the nervous system. Do breathing exercises with children.
- Focus on the positive. Create masterpieces. Sing, laugh, and go outside, if possible, to connect with nature and get needed exercise.

Regulating YOUR Emotions!

- Pay close attention to your own feelings of stress or anxiety.
- Practice continued self-care strategies, including eating healthy, getting enough sleep, exercising, and finding time to take breaks.
- If you find yourself overwhelmed by negative thoughts, find ways to reframe your thinking.
- Seek out needed mental health support for yourself or loved ones.
- Keep a regular sleep schedule. Sleep plays an essential role in mental and physical health!

Covid-19 Resources

If you are wishing for even more resources, take a look at some of the links below!

- [How to Talk to Kids about Coronavirus](#)
- [A Comic for Kids Explaining Coronavirus](#)
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness Covid-19 Resources](#)

My



Zone moment:

I felt

when

Source: Kuypers, Leah M. (2011). *The ZONES of Regulation*, San Jose, CA: Think Social Publishing Inc.
This material has been created by Communication Works to be shared for educational purposes only

(510) 639-2929 www.cwtherapy.com
CW Speech & Language Pathologists, Inc.

Instructions: Have students write about a recent time (today, yesterday, this weekend) they felt a big emotion. Then, draw a picture of what that emotion looked like!

Guidelines for Addressing the Coronavirus Outbreak

Abridged from Morningside Center for Social Responsibility

Don't ignore issues.

Coronavirus is on everyone's mind, whether we talk about it or not. If you, the adult, provide a supportive environment in which to address challenging situations constructively, they can become powerful teachable moments that can strengthen your classroom community.

Be present and available.

When confusing, upsetting, or frightening things happen, when there is uncertainty, upheaval and stress, students need to know that adults in their lives are present, available, and ready to provide accurate information and support where needed.

Invite students' feelings and thoughts.

When students are worried or upset, it is helpful for them to know that they are not alone. Feeling a sense of connection and support is often more reassuring than a detailed explanation of what is happening.

Listen and paraphrase.

Acknowledge students' feelings and thoughts. It is important, especially in difficult times, for students to know they are being heard. Listening, paraphrasing, and acknowledging students' feelings and thoughts, allows students to process how they're feeling.

Normalize student feelings and thoughts.

Let students know they are not alone in their feelings. Many people feel fearful, confused, and anxious right now. It is not at all unusual to experience strong feelings in situations of uncertainty and crisis. Talking about it will help kids understand that they are not alone.

Be aware that sometimes uncertainty, fear, and anxiety can get misdirected.

Talk with students about misinformation, bias, and prejudice that could result in a backlash against specific groups of people. In the case of the new coronavirus, we've mostly seen scapegoating of staff and students of Asian descent.

Provide information as needed.

Share basic, factual information with students as is appropriate and needed. Be honest about the need for social distancing and online learning. And if you don't have answers to student questions readily available, know that that's okay. Things are moving quickly and admitting that we don't have all the answers in a situation that continues to evolve, shows that we're human.

Interrupt slurs and other biased behavior each and every time.

Even if we don't always know exactly what to say, it is important to interrupt slurs and other kinds of prejudiced, biased, and hurtful behaviors. Refer back to the school and classroom guidelines if needed, and speak up. It is important we speak up every time and in the moment. Say something, so that you send a message that this behavior is not acceptable.