

# Welcome to Valuing Each Other!

## Grades 3-5

Dear Parent, Guardian, or Caretaker,

We are beginning the Valuing Each Other unit of Harmony SEL, our social and emotional learning program. In this unit, students learn to value others by appreciating their contributions and taking their perspectives. Students develop empathy, build relationship skills, and stand up for themselves and others when they see unfair behaviors, creating a welcoming and supportive classroom. Important ideas from each lesson include:

### Appreciating Our Differences

- We are all the same and different.
- We are all unique, and this uniqueness makes us special.
- We can learn both from and about one another.

### Including Everyone

- We understand how it feels to be left out instead of included.
- We can make sure others feel included.

### Breaking Stereotypes

- We understand that stereotypes are based on guesses about people because of groups they are part of instead of actual knowledge of a person.
- We can get to know others and “pop” stereotype thoughts to ensure everyone feels included.

### Showing Empathy and Supporting Others

- We can put ourselves in “someone else’s shoes” in order to understand how others may feel in a situation.
- We can use empathy to help others and make our relationships stronger.
- Empathy is one way to show we care about someone.

### Standing Up for Others

- We can recognize when a situation isn’t fair and take steps to make it fair.
- We can use empathy to support others in an unfair situation.

An important part of *Harmony SEL* is for students to talk about and practice concepts outside the classroom. See the Home-to-School Connections: Home Activities (on next page) for ways to practice skills that show we value each other at home.

Thank you for your continued support of *Harmony SEL*. Please contact me if you have any questions about the program. You are welcome to review all materials in the Harmony Online Learning Portal. You can register at no cost at [online.harmonysel.org](http://online.harmonysel.org).

Sincerely,

## Home-to-School Connections: Home Activities

Your child is learning the importance of valuing others. These activities provide fun ways to practice these skills at home. The ideas below will reinforce what we are learning in school—there are activities to play, topics to discuss, and behaviors to support. These are all designed to fit into your daily routine and provide opportunities to further connect with your child.

- Gather some picture books. Ask your child to identify the emotions of a character facing a problem. Have your child imagine how they'd feel if they were in the same situation. Encourage your child to think of ways they could support the character:
  - They could “ask” the character how they feel and what they need.
  - They could get help from an adult.
  - They could help the character out or help solve the problem.
  - They could include the character in a fun activity.
- When your child experiences a strong emotion or sees someone else experience a strong emotion, encourage your child to view the situation from another person's perspective. Ask your child what their perspective is and what they think others' perspectives are. Make sure everyone is calm before discussing.
- Compliment your child when they use empathy, exhibits welcoming behavior, behaves fairly, and pops stereotypes.
- Help your child recognize that some situations that may seem unfair can't be changed. For example, teams can only allow a certain number of players so everyone will get a chance on the field. This may exclude some people, especially when there aren't enough people to make a new team. But we can acknowledge others' feelings and try to find ways to help others feel included.
- Provide opportunities for students to think about what they would do when they see or experience unfair treatment. Use books, shows, history, and other life events to discuss when and how to stand up for oneself and others.
- Take opportunities, such as when reading stories or watching videos, to guide your child to:
  - Identify stereotypes.
  - Take a character's perspective.
  - Identify unfair situations and come up with possible solutions.
  - Identify ways characters could support one another.
- Discuss how characters' responses to unfair or stereotyping situations impact their relationships with each other.
- Use SEL vocabulary when speaking with your child. Two vocabulary words you might use from this unit are *stereotype* (a thought or belief about a person because of the group they belong to) and *empathy* (when you can feel and understand how someone else feels).