

# Welcome to Communicating!

## Grades 3-5

Dear Parent, Guardian, or Caregiver,

We are beginning the Communicating unit of Harmony SEL (social and emotional learning). In this unit, students will learn about and practice effective and healthy communication strategies. Communicating well and respecting others' communication strategies promotes a positive, supportive, and welcoming environment for all students. Important ideas from each lesson include:

### Watching and Listening Attentively

- Using Communication Boosters, like listening, supporting, and negotiating, helps us communicate with others so we can get along and understand each other.
- Communicating involves words and body language.

### Conversation Skills

- Avoiding Communication Bloopers, such as interrupting, ignoring, or withdrawing, improves communication.
- Good communication includes making sure that others are part of the conversation.

### Communication in Different Settings

- How we communicate may change based on the situation, so students practice thinking about the setting (where they are and who they are with) when they communicate.
- Paying attention to the setting shows others that their thoughts and feelings are important.

### Speaking Up

- Communicating assertively means speaking up in a respectful and kind way.
- Ensuring everyone feels welcomed and supported can occur when we speak up and speak kindly when we notice others need help or support.

### Communicating for Collaboration

- Collaborating (working together) helps everyone think of new ideas and do things they might not do alone.
- Collaborating means listening to everyone's ideas and making changes as people share.

An important part of Harmony SEL is for students to talk about and practice concepts outside the classroom. See the Home-to-School Connections (on next page) for ways to practice communication skills 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 about skills to communicate effectively. These home activities provide fun ways to practice effective communication at home. The ideas below will reinforce what we are learning in school – there are activities to play, topics to discuss, and behaviors to reinforce. These are all designed to fit into your daily routine and provide opportunities to further connect with your child.

- Explore with your student what body language means and how it shows up. What does eye contact, body postures, and gestures mean when in conversations at home or in your community?
- Ask your child to describe the three types of Communication Boosters: listening, supporting, and negotiating. Which is easiest for your child to use? The most difficult? Share the Boosters you find the most challenging to use.
- Ask your child to name the Communication Bloopers discussed in class (interrupting, ignoring, and withdrawing). Discuss which Blooper is most difficult to avoid. Share the Blooper you have trouble avoiding.
- With your child, make a list of all the places and situations that he or she might participate in a conversation in the future, such as at a new school, in a new neighborhood, on a sports team, in a store, at a family gathering, or on a bus. Discuss how each conversation might differ based on its setting.
- Tell your child when you notice him or her using a strong, respectful voice and kind words to speak up.
- Talk about times when it is important to speak up and speak kindly for oneself and others. Discuss what it might look and sound like.
- Play a “collaboration game.” Think of a problem to solve. It might be something like figuring out how to help everyone get ready in the morning, or the best way to finish household chores. You start with an idea. Then your child either adds a new idea or adds onto yours. Keep going this way until the two of you agree on the best solution to the problem!
- Two vocabulary words you might use from this unit are *attentive* (mindful, observant, paying attention) and *assertive* (bold or confident).