

Welcome to Communicating!

Grades K-2

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

- Conversation Do's, like listening and supporting, helps us communicate with others so we can get along and understand each other. They also help avoid misunderstandings.
- Watching and listening to others helps students understand and learn from each other.
- Matching our words and body language helps keep our messages clear.

Conversation Skills

- Avoiding Conversation Don'ts, such as interrupting or ignoring, 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

- Speaking assertively allows students to have their ideas, desires, and needs addressed.
- 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.

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.

- Ask your child to explain what attentive listening is and how they can use their eyes and bodies to listen attentively. Ask them to demonstrate. Take turns role-playing some examples of attentive and inattentive listening with them.
- Talk with your child about situations that make it harder to listen and discuss possible solutions.
- Share your own experiences using communication strategies that are helpful and those that you learned are unhelpful.
- Tell your child when you notice him or her listening carefully and point out specifically how you knew that he or she was listening.
- Ask your child to share some examples of “Conversation Do’s” and “Conversation Don’ts.”
- Choose a topic that is interesting to both of you, note the time, and see how long you can continue a conversation with each other.
- With your child, think of the various settings in which they have conversations, for example, with the teacher in the classroom, with the bus driver on the school bus, in a store, a family gathering or with friends on the playground. Discuss how each conversation might differ based on its setting.
- Encourage your child to feel comfortable speaking up by asking for his or her opinions and ideas.
- Tell your child when you notice him or her using a strong, respectful voice and kind words when speaking up.
- 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 *listening* (paying attention to what someone else says, sings, plays, etc.) and *teamwork* (working with others to do something).