

Welcome to Learning From Each Other!

Grades K-2

Dear Parent, Guardian, or Caretaker,

We are beginning the Learning From Each Other unit of Harmony SEL, our social and emotional learning program. In this unit, students will learn to resolve interpersonal problems, develop cooperation skills, and practice strategies to get calm. Learning to solve problems in an intentional way with others lays a foundation for skills they will need throughout their lives, including strategies to learn from others. Important ideas from each lesson include:

Understanding Problems

- Problems are a necessary part of life and it's important to understand others' perspectives and feelings when problems occur.
- We learn about others and build relationships when we identify and solve problems with others.

Identifying and Talking About Problems

- The first two steps (out of four) in problem solving are (a) Stop and get calm and (b) Talk to understand the problem.
- Stopping and getting calm first allows you to think about your perspective and other's perspective when a problem occurs.
- "I messages" allow you to share your thoughts and feelings about problems, as well as what you would like to see happen.

Solving Problems Together

- The last steps in the four-step conflict resolution process are (c) Think of possible solutions and (d) Try a solution and see how it works.
- Collaborate with others to choose and try possible solutions to problems that are fair and will work for everyone. If it does not work, you can choose another solution.

Work Things Out

- Compromise and collaboration. Help children to teach and learn from another, while also respecting each other's individuality.
- Think about consequences when choosing a solution.

Correcting Our Mistakes When We Hurt Someone

- Taking responsibility for our actions involves being honest about how our actions influence others.
- Offering sincere apologies and forgiving others moves relationships forward.

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 problem-solving 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 how to learn from and solve problems with 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 reinforce. These are all designed to fit into your daily routine and provide opportunities to further connect with your child.

- Take opportunities, when reading stories or watching videos that involve a problem or difference of opinion, to guide your child:
 - To recognize each person's perspective and using words to label the problem. This gives children practice in developing empathy and identifying problems in situations in which they are not involved and possibly feeling upset.
 - To pause and ask your child to think of possible solutions to the problem. Guide your child in thinking about the consequences of these possibilities for each person involved.
 - To draw your child's attention to how characters take responsibility for their actions or apologize when they are wrong. Ask your child to identify examples on his or her own. Discuss how the people or characters were responsible and caring. Ask how your child could react in similar situations.
- Talk with your child about the first two steps to solving a problem (Stop, Talk).
 - Encourage your child to use calming strategies when they are upset or overexcited (for example, taking a deep breath, counting slowly, thinking of something beautiful, hugging a stuffed animal).
 - Help your child practice "I messages" to share thoughts and feelings, such as, "I am confused because Samantha didn't come over to play" or "I will ask Samantha why she didn't come over to play."
- Talk with your child about the last two steps to solving a problem (Think, Try).
 - Encourage students to think of solutions when you notice that problems arise and the potential consequences of each of those solutions.
 - Have students try out a solution. Have students reflect on three questions when deciding which solution to try: Is it safe? Is it fair? Will everyone feel okay?
- Ask your child what is important when working together.

Potential responses include including everyone, listening, cooperating, using kind words

- Ask your child what it means to compromise. Role-play with your child about situations when compromise is helpful.
- Talk with your child about the ways your family cooperates with one another, such as making dinner, washing the car, and putting together a puzzle, and discuss how fun it can be to work together and how everyone helps to get the job completed.
- Ask your child what it means to "make it work for everyone."
- "Making it work for everyone" is a form of compromise so everyone is happy.
- Use unit SEL vocabulary when speaking with your child. Two vocabulary words you might use from this unit are *compromise* (reaching an agreement in which each person or group give up something in order to end an argument or dispute.) and *responsible* (able to answer for your behavior and decisions; trustworthy).