

Counselor's Corner

Ms.

Flores

January 2022

Classroom Topic and Lessons

Schedule:

1/6 – 1/8/2022—PreK-Kinder
(Size of Problem/conflict)
1/10 – 1/14 – 4th grade
1/18 – 1/21 – 3rd grade
1/24/ - 1/28 – 2nd grade
1/31 – 2/4 – 1st grade
2/7 – 2/11 - PreK-Kinder

Resources

Brett Dennen Empathy Song with lyrics (Mosaic Project Empathy song)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8aDcHSUYHfo>

Take a look at the PurposeFULL home letter for different reading resources and activities to try at home. Which one will you try? Which one will be implemented every day or every week?

Events

Career week 1/24 to 1/28.

Students will rotate through career presentations during their specials on 1/27. Thank you for our Career Day presenters. We appreciate your time and dedication.

Happy New Years and welcome back! I am continuing “Big Problem vs Small Problem” with pre-k and kinder students this week. Afterwards we start our Empathy lessons.

We are excited to share that we will be using a program called PurposeFull People from Character Strong this year. It is all about helping schools weave simple, powerful, relatable content into everything happening at school and beyond! It includes a huge library of practical resources and activities to help effectively teach a wide variety of traits that we know help make students more successful in their academics and in their lives outside of school.

PurposeFULL
People

Character Trait of the Month: Empathy

This month we're talking about the character trait of Empathy. The dictionary defines it as the ability to share someone else's feelings or experiences by imagining what it would be like to be in that person's situation. To make sure everyone is speaking a common language at school, we are sharing this definition with the staff and students:

Empathy: the ability to understand and connect to the feelings of another.

If you have any questions, concerns, or comments please reach me at floresd@pearlandisd.org or 832.736.6600

Please visit <https://www.pearlandisd.org/Page/25239> for resources.

Donations of mint candy and double bubble are always welcomed 😊

Lunch Groups

Lunch group highlights:

October – all groups focused on group dynamics and building trust

November – all groups learned about self-esteem

December –

4th girls – friendship

4th boys – disagreeing, listening

3rd girls – friends

3rd boys – control, listening

2nd girls & boys – friendship

1st girls & boys – social skill

Activities:

Several morning activities were also implemented that required signed permission slips in advance. Book Academy (3rd and 4th graders) spent 8 weeks reading *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*. Another book will be chosen in the Spring. Creativity In Motion (2nd, 3rd & 4th graders) met in October to make a suncatcher. November students participated in music and movement with our Music Teacher Mrs. Martinez. December, students created Christmas crafts. The 2nd Grade Green Thumb Gardeners planted herbs and tracked growth. Before students went on Christmas break, the Green Thumb Gardeners took their herbs home. Much thanks to Cockrell PTO for providing time and materials to make our beautiful garden. Citizen's Patrol also started in November. 4th grade students were nominated by their teachers for being safe, responsible and respectful. These students have various jobs around school such as teacher's helpers, flags, breakfast assistants and door greeter. So far, Cockrell students are busy and engaged.

What Does CIS Do:

CIS is a support system for students and families and works closely with the administration and school counselor on campus to identify needs and provide services. CIS provides services to encompass the following 6 components:

- Academic Support - grade monitoring, homework assistance, peer tutoring
- College / Career Readiness - Career Week, College/Career bulletin board highlights
- Enrichment Activities - Book Academy, Creativity In Motion, Green Thumb Gardeners
- Health / Human Services - Back Pack Buddy, Swap Shop vouchers, clothing closet on campus, VSP vouchers, dental & immunization referrals, school supplies, community resource referrals
- Parent / Family involvement - monthly newsletter
- Supportive Guidance / Child Development - social skills & self-esteem lunch groups, character lessons

Donations of healthy (nut free) snacks are greatly appreciated. Also, I am accepting gently used clothing, jackets, and shoes (all sizes). We are in need of donations of belts.

Cockrell's CIS Site Coordinator is Lori Brown and can be reached at brownlo@pearlandisd.org or 832-736-6624.

Empathy (Grades 3-5)

For PurposeFull Families



EXPLANATION:

This month we are having conversations and experiences to help us develop the social-emotional skill of Empathy! We are using this definition at school:

Empathy: the ability to understand and connect to the feelings of another.

Empathy is an important skill for creating connected and kind communities. It is critical to our relationships both personal and professional. There is a huge need for Empathy in our world because, as anxiety increases in our culture, Empathy decreases. Even though we have lots of digital connections, we need a lot of training on in-person communication and understanding! So, we are working to develop a few key skills in order to live more empathetic lives. First, developing an "emotional vocabulary" to make sure we have the words to understand and describe what we are feeling personally. Second, being able to connect with others based on their feelings even though we may not have the exact same story or perspective as someone else. Finally, we will think about how listening and sharing help create more Empathy in our classroom and the world. There will be some powerful activities and some amazing conversations inspired by people like Brenè Brown and Dr. Oz. It will be a wonderful experience for your child and (hopefully) you!

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- Empathy is about understanding how somebody else is feeling. It is about switching places and perspectives with them to imagine what they're going through. Share with one another about a time when you wished someone had shown more Empathy for you.
- Some people say that Empathy is "feeling with people." What could it mean to feel "with" someone? How can that be hard?
- Empathy requires a level of mindfulness that helps us be aware and notice how others are acting or speaking. Only then can we practice empathy. What are ways that we might practice mindfulness to become better aware of those around us? Ideas may include deep breathing, checking in with your five senses, doing a body scan, art, mindful walking or eating, etc.

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

- What gets in the way of us showing Empathy to one another?
- What is the difference between sympathy and Empathy?
- What is a conflict that you had recently with someone? How do you think they were feeling and why may they have been feeling that way? How could you respond to that situation with empathy?

APPLICATION:

Books:

- [*The Sandal Artist*](#) by Kathleen T. Pelley
- [*Stand in my Shoes: Kids Learning About Empathy*](#) by Dr. Bob Sornson
- [*The Potato Chip Champ: Discovering Why Kindness Counts*](#) by Maria Dismondy
- [*Just My Luck*](#) by Cammie McGovern
- [*Inside Out and Back Again*](#) by Thanhha Lai
- [*The Wall*](#) by Eve Bunting

FOR YOUR READING:

- [*9 Habits of Empathetic Children*](#) by Michele Borba
- [*5 Tips For Cultivating Empathy*](#) from the Making Caring Common Project
- [*There Is No Good Card for This: What To Say and Do When Life Is Scary, Awful, and Unfair to People You Love*](#) by Dr. Kelsey Crowe
- [*Empathetic Sentence Starters for Teachers \(and Parents!\)*](#) by Amanda Morin

Empathy (Grades 3-5)

For PurposeFull Families

PurposeFULL
People

ACTIVITY:

Learn the ASL (American Sign Language) letters to spell out the word E-M-P-A-T-H-Y.



Discuss: What might the experience of being hearing impaired be like?

PURPOSEFULL PURSUITS:

Trading Places

Have a conversation over a meal tonight about what it would feel like to be in each other's places. Have each person try to answer some of these questions about what it would be like to be every other person at the table: What are your biggest challenges? What do you want? What do you need? What feeling do you feel most often? What makes you feel happy?

Toughness: 3

Time: 2

Type: Group

Super Selves

Imagine that each member of the family is a superhero. Have a conversation about it with your child. Better yet, make it an art project or a video project! Make a costume. Film a preview for your upcoming movie!

You can ask (and share your own answers!) to questions like: Which superhero are you? What do you like about being this superhero? What are some obstacles that come with being this superhero? What is your superpower? How do you use it to help people? What would happen if you lost that superpower?

Toughness: 1

Time: 2

Type: Partner

Empathy and Service Go Hand in Hand

Having Empathy for others often drives us to practice service as well. Brainstorm as a family members of the community that may have a need you can serve. Examples might include elderly folks in need of some company, sick folks in the hospital in need of some creativity or fun, folks experiencing homelessness or hunger needing resources such as toiletries and clothing, or animals at the local shelter in need of some play time or a walk. You may also know of specific neighbors who could use some quality time, a kind word, or a warm meal.

Brainstorm together how you can recognize and meet a need in the community. Then, go out and do it! You may find it meets some of your own needs as well.

Toughness: 4

Time: 4

Type: Group

Family Temperature Check

Decide this week on a time and place to do a weekly Family Temperature Check. Sit together as a family and eliminate any distractions. Ask each family member, "how are you feeling today?" Practice active listening skills as family members each take a turn to talk about how they are feeling. When someone shares a challenging feeling, instead of jumping in to provide advice, take time to listen and use empathic statements like:

- "What has that been like for you?"
- "I'm sorry you are going through this."
- "That sounds really hard for you."
- "It makes me feel ___ to hear that happened."
- "What do you need right now?"

To start, you can use a simple check-in system like, "How are you doing on a scale of 1-5 today?" As you get good at answering questions like that, you can continue to develop your emotional vocabulary and vulnerability as we family with more complex sharing!

Toughness: 4

Time: 4

Type: Group

Empathy (Grades K-2)

For PurposeFull Families

EXPLANATION:

This month we are talking about the social-emotional skill of Empathy. We are using this definition at school:

Empathy: the ability to understand and connect to the feelings of another.

Empathy is a crucial skill for being in community with others and a powerful skill to develop in personal and professional relationships. We are focusing on a few key pieces of Empathy: knowing how we feel (and having language to describe those feelings!), understanding what others are feeling, and listening to others well so that we can connect in more meaningful ways! We will reflect on powerful images that will inspire conversations about emotions, connection, and friendship. We will think about incredible people like the Indian author Arundhati Roy and our past president Barack Obama have to say about Empathy. We will celebrate what makes us different and find the amazing things that bring us together.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- If we are going to understand someone else's feelings, it helps to first understand our own. Ask: What makes you happy? When do you feel sad? What frustrates you? What confuses you? When do you feel embarrassed? What scares you? Think about these questions and then share with your child!
- Everyone has tough days. What can people do to help when you are having a tough day? Do you like to talk about you are feeling? Does it help when you take your mind off of tough feelings? Do you like to write or draw about how you are feeling?
- Have a feelings check in as a family. How is everyone feeling? Do we know why we're feeling that way? Where do we feel or show that emotion in our bodies? How does it make us want to ask? What do we need from others right now?

QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK:

- How do you know what you are feeling? How can you tell how someone else is feeling?
- When do you feel most excited? Most upset? Most happy? Most sad?
- How do you show Empathy towards your friends when they are sad?
- What are things others might do when they're sad, worried or frustrated? What might they say?

APPLICATION:

Books:

- [Those Shoes](#) by Maribeth Boelts
- [Hey, Little Ant](#) by Phillip and Hannah Hoose
- [Everyone](#) by Christopher Silas Neal
- [A Family Is a Family Is a Family](#) by Sara O'Leary
- [You, Me and Empathy](#) by Jayneen Sanders

FOR YOUR READING:

- [Empathic Parenting](#) by Tamara Parney
- [Teaching Empathy: Evidence-based Tips](#) by Gwen Dewar, PhD
- [What to Do When Someone Is Upset](#) by Growth Psyc
- [Brene Brown on Empathy \(2:53\)](#): A wonderful video clip summarizing Empathy

Empathy (Grades K-2)

For PurposeFull Families

PurposeFULL
People

ACTIVITY:

Sing along with The Mosaic Project's [Empathy Song \(3:49\)](#) to build vocabulary and talk about seeing the world through someone else's eyes and learn more about Empathy. If you want, add movement! Better yet, create words to a song or poem of your own!

PURPOSEFULL PURSUITS:

A Feelings Walk

Take a walk around the neighborhood or at a local park. Be on the lookout for how people are feeling. Watch for facial expressions and body language. Talk through your observations about how they're feeling with your child. See if they agree! Then, ask some questions like: What might that person want? What might that person need?

Toughness: 2

Time: 3

Type: Partner

Reel Empathy

Schedule a family movie night so that you can specifically watch for feelings and emotions. Let everybody know that you'd like them to point out how the characters in the show are feeling and that there will be periodic pauses to discuss Empathy. As emotions are identified, invite one another to empathize by sharing about a time they felt that way or imagining how they might be feeling and what they might want or need at that moment.

Toughness: 2

Time: 4

Type: Group

Our Emotions Pizza

As a family, draw a large circle on a piece of paper and then divide it into segments like a pizza. In each slice of pizza (towards the center of the circle), write different emotions, especially trickier ones to navigate such as frustration, loneliness, anxiety, boredom, sadness, anger, etc.. Then, in the middle of each slice, draw a picture of what each emotion might look like for a family member. Clenched hands? Hair twirling? Crying? Finally, on the outside of the wheel write down tools or strategies that each member may use when feeling that emotion such as wrestling with a pillow, listening to happy music, asking for a hug, laying under a pile of blankets, taking deep breaths, drinking water, etc..

Now when you practice Empathy and notice another member of the family feeling a strong feeling, you "give them a slice" and recommend tools to help them take care of themselves!

Toughness: 2

Time: 2

Type: Group

Coping with Feelings

Coping skills are strategies that we use to manage challenging feelings. Have a family meeting and talk about your favorite coping skills that help with tough feelings. Using words and pictures, each family member should create a coping skills menu that shows a variety of strategy options. Ask each family member to hang their chart in a location where it can be utilized the next time tough feelings arise.

Here are some coping skills ideas to get your menu started: Draw, read, take a bath, go on a walk, play with a pet, listen to music, talk to someone you trust, spend time in nature, bake, ride a bike, hug a stuffed animal, dance, meditate, read a book, and a lot more!

Toughness: 4

Time: 3

Type: Group