

the

SEED

newsletter

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Social Skills at the Seed

Why Do We Teach Social Skills?

Social skills are essential for building relationships with friends, co-workers, husbands, wives, and family members. At Awakening Seed the students have an opportunity to learn these invaluable skills in a safe and encouraging environment. We believe that learning how to communicate, solve problems, express needs and listen to others is as important as learning to read and write.

Goals of the Seed Social Skills Curriculum:

- Kids will learn to respond skillfully with different types of people in diverse situations.
- Children will be guided through social conflicts with empathy, which in turn teaches them to interact with compassion.

- Teachers will use multiple sources for instructional use in the classroom as well as provide parallel resource materials to parents.

Characteristics of the Seed Social Skills Curriculum

When walking into a classroom, observers will see teachers demonstrating how to work through an actual conflict using language, active listening, and problem solving techniques. Children learn through role play and group discussions. Teachers work at the children's level, providing encouragement and explanation about social issues. As the children become more independent, teachers continue to give support when a child has difficulty solving a situation alone and at the same time, encourage independence.

The Seed's Social Skills Curriculum In Action

Toddler 1s

In the toddler 1s class, the primary experiences set the stage for whom each toddler will become. It's the beginning of a life long journey navigating through social experiences. Some are finding out for the first time what it's like to be one of many, as they join a classroom environment. It is important for each student to be a part of the community as toys are shared, group activities are offered, and friendships develop. Sharing classroom materials is often the biggest challenge. When two children want to use the same toy, the classroom teachers demonstrate the language that will hopefully become a part of self-directed conflict resolution skills in the future.

Toddler 2s

Even as adults, it can be difficult using our "brave talk." That is why the social skill we are encouraging with the Toddler 2s is use of verbal communication. As their social awareness develops, students require tools to bridge the gap between their ever-changing needs and the world around them. Phrases like "Can I be next?" and "More juice, please," are modeled to students and practiced. They provide students with words to use instead of less-desirable forms of communication like hitting and screaming. Verbal communication skills promote social growth and can be applied to all areas of life.

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Preschool 2.5/3s

"Can I be next, please?" "Sure, in one minute." These are common phrases among the 2.5/3s children. By providing preschoolers with language to help them navigate social interactions with their teachers and peers, we are giving them a foundation for successful communication. Through explicit modeling we demonstrate, in real situations, how to use words to communicate thoughts, feelings, needs and wants. We often facilitate interactions between students to help them use their voices in productive ways. Teacher modeling and guided practice, within the classroom, very quickly results in students using language independently to navigate the world around them.

Preschool 3s

Students learn best when they feel physically and emotionally safe. Each year, students come to school with varying levels of social experience. Some behaviors are helpful, some hurtful. Hurtful behaviors translate as signs of a child's emergence into a more sophisticated degree of social interaction, like an experiment to test social norms of the world outside themselves. Our job is to help students more likely choose to ask, "How could I play?" before knocking down blocks towers, say "Excuse me," instead of pushing through crowds, and "Find a job for friends," instead of excluding. Literature, discussion and role-playing, deepen the experience of social connection and make the most of those "teachable moments."

Preschool 4s

Taking turns, understanding personal space, using brave talk and problem solving strategies are among the social skills reinforced in the Preschool 4s on a daily basis. These topics are addressed through role playing activities, classroom discussions, modeling and literature. In addition, studies about friendship and self-awareness encourage a child's sense of identity and an appreciation of each other—a very important aspect of social development. In a recent self-study, the preschoolers interpreted their own image in a variety of ways. They created self-portraits using

different art materials, dictated their autobiographies, shared their likes and dislikes, discussed family relationships and explored personal differences to help strengthen social bonds and build self-esteem.

PreK

Learning when to interrupt and when to wait teaches children to respect conversations between others, to value their own, and to think before speaking. In PreK, "How to Interrupt" is introduced in August through the program Skill Streaming, and revisited throughout the year. After defining interrupting as a group, we discuss when it is necessary to do so (i.e., fire, injuries), and the steps to take when interrupting: 1. Think. Is it an emergency? 2. If it's not an emergency, move close to the person you want to talk to. 3. Wait. Stay still and wait for the person to look at you. 4. Say, "Excuse me," one time before talking. After discussion and review, students act out the skill with each other and teachers. Teachers then use language relating to the lesson in real-life situations (i.e., "Wait for my eyes"), point out student successes in using the interrupting steps they've learned, and read books revolving around the topic.

Kindergarten

Skill Streaming techniques and lessons continue in kindergarten. Ignoring others especially when behavior is disruptive can be quite challenging for students. However, ignoring skills are important when focus needs to remain on certain tasks. When a child is having a meltdown or needs time to gain composure it can often become worse when onlookers fan the flames. When the frustrated child yells, "Don't look at me," the teacher uses this as a learning moment, guiding other students to continue with their work. The teacher can demonstrate ignoring skills when a child is interrupting, often putting up a finger to signal the child to wait a minute. With these skills, children are able to attend to important tasks, while showing respect for classmates.

1st/2nd Grades

A skill that we frequently practice to calm our bodies at the start of each day and after

coming in from recess is called S.T.A.R. The initials mean Stop Take a deep breath And Relax. One of our weekly helper responsibilities is to be a S.T.A.R. helper. After I ring the bell that child helps by saying the S.T.A.R. words. I continue by asking the children to relax their eyes, their jaws, their shoulders and their bellies. At the early morning circle I ask the children to give a greeting to the sun for that day.

3rd/4th Grades

Children in 3rd/4th grade are ready to transition to solving their problems more independently. We use Love and Logic to guide them through the process. Our first step is listening to their problem, acknowledging or helping them identify their feelings, and offering empathy. ("Oh, man. I bet that made you feel lonely.") Next, we send a "power message" letting the child know they have the ability to solve their problem. ("What do you think you are going to do about it?") If the child is unsure, we offer them some choices ("Do you want to hear what other kids have tried?") Then, we have the student state the consequence of their choice ("How will that work?") Finally, we give them permission to either solve or not solve their problem ("Good luck. Let me know how it works out.").

november birthdays

Kinley Rawlings	Zeek Coyle
Phoebe Anderson	Sam Guston
Tobie Dunlap-Becher	Maggie Kruschek
Jacob Jordan	Alexis Krymow
Chyna White	Ryan Look
Raffi Barsam	Brendon Skaggs
Alex Salywon	Myles Carter

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Sam Guston, age 4, was feeling the heat during lunch recess. He stated, "The heat is not making a good choice today!"