

Box Out Bullying Presents:

FAMILY LETTER - WEEK 1

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Dear Family,

We are starting a unit on **Diversity and Inclusion** from our BOX OUT BULLYING social-emotional learning program. Throughout this unit, students will discover shared interests, explore how each person is unique, and build a sense of community within the classroom.

Getting to Know One Another lays the foundation for a broad range of solid relationships, enabling students to feel comfortable with their peers while helping them understand that everyone is important. During this unit, students will explore what it means to be a friend, and they'll share a bit about themselves with their classmates. They will also learn to go beyond what's on the outside to discover what they have in common with one another.

Learning from Diversity involves respecting and appreciating what makes each person unique. This fosters understanding and empathy—skills that support students' ability to form positive relationships with all kinds of people. Students will discuss how everyone has unique characteristics and strengths. They will also learn that it's okay to be different and will work with their classmates to recognize and honor their differences.

Building Community is important because students learn and grow best when they feel welcome, accepted, and connected to others. In this unit, students will learn what it means to belong to a community and discuss how community members should treat one another. They'll explore what makes our class a community and then work together to create a visual representation to display in our classroom.

An important part of this program is for students to continue discussing and practicing concepts outside the classroom. I'm hoping you can reinforce at home what we are learning in class with our HOME ACTIVITIES.

Please contact us if you have any questions!

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WEEK 1: DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

The ideas below will reinforce what we are learning in school—there are activities to role play, topics to discuss, and behaviors to role-model in the first week. These are all designed to fit into your daily routine and, provide opportunities to further connect with your child.

Getting To Know One Another

- Ask your child:
 - If he or she greeted anyone at the start of school today and what they said to each other.
 - If he or she played with anyone new today and what they did together.

Discovering Commonalities

- Have a conversation with your child regarding how family members are similar or different. For example, compare whether (and how much) each of you do or don't like the following activities and why:
 - I. Cleaning your room, II. Eating (choose a food), III. Taking a walk, IV. Reading a book, V. Going to bed, VI. Riding a bike

Learning About Diversity

- Ask your child:
 - What diversity means.
 - What he or she is good at or what makes him or her proud.
 - If something new was learned or tried at school this week, and if it was shared with someone else.
- Discuss with your child how these qualities and experiences are similar to or different from others', and how that is a form of diversity.
- Building Community
 - Ask your child:
 - What it means to belong.
 - What it means to be a community.
 - Which communities or groups to which your family belongs.

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Box Out Bullying Presents:

FAMILY LETTER - WEEK 2

EMPATHY AND CRITICAL THINKING

Dear Family,

We are starting a unit on **Empathy and Critical Thinking** from our Box Out Bullying social-emotional learning program. Throughout this unit, students will have opportunities to learn about feelings, empathy, and stereotypes, and to put that knowledge into practice.

Feelings will be explored in depth in this unit. Students will learn how to recognize feelings, predict others' feelings, and explain feelings based on events. They will also explore how people can have different feelings about things. These skills help students have a greater understanding of themselves and others.

Empathy is the ability to understand another person's feelings. Based on their understanding of feelings, students will practice ways to show empathy and caring to people in different situations. Responding in an empathetic manner helps students create deeper relationships and avoid unnecessary conflicts.

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WEEK 2: EMPATHY AND CRITICAL THINKING

The ideas below will reinforce what we are learning in school—there are activities to role play, topics to discuss, and behaviors to role-model in the second week. These are all designed to fit into your daily routine and, provide opportunities to further connect with your child.

Recognizing Feelings

- Play Feeling Charades with your child, taking turns guessing the emotion. Be sure to use your entire body!
- Use a variety of "emotion words" to help your child name how he or she is feeling and how their body feels inside (stomach in knots, hot cheeks, butterflies in stomach).
- Play different types of music to express a certain emotion and then switch to another emotion and ask your child how it makes them feel.

Predicting AND Explaining Feelings

- While reading books together, pause and:
 - Invite your child to think ahead and predict what the character will feel next, or
 - After the characters express feelings, invite your child to think back about what events lead to those feelings.
- Talk with your child about the different ways people react emotionally to different situations. For example:
 - You have nothing to do for the next hour.
 - You just finished a really hard puzzle.
 - A neighbor's dog comes over and licks you.
 - Someone tells you that you did a great job.
- Help your children notice clues about why someone feels a certain way
 - "That child's parent is helping clean up the ice cream on the ground. Why do you think the child is crying?"

Empathy

- Model empathy by showing an awareness and understanding of your child's feelings—even if you don't share or agree.
 - "I can see that you're angry, but it's time to turn off the computer and get to bed."
- Explain your own feelings (both positive and negative) to help your child understand how and why others feel.
 - "It makes me so happy when I see you being kind to your sister by sharing your crayons with her."
- Talk with your child about the consequences of their actions (both positive and negative) toward others.
 - "How do you think your friend felt when you said that she couldn't come to your birthday party? It probably hurt her feelings and made her feel very left out."

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Box Out Bullying Presents:

FAMILY LETTER - WEEK 3 COMMUNICATION

Dear Family,

We are starting a unit on **Communication** from our Box Out Bullying social-emotional learning program. Throughout this unit, students will have the opportunity to learn about effective conversational strategies and to practice those strategies in a supportive environment.

Listening to Others thoughtfully and carefully allows students to gain information and develop vocabulary, comprehension, and oral language skills. In this unit, students will learn to be attentive listeners using their whole bodies: Eyes looking, ears listening, mouth quiet, body still.

Responding to Others is essential to maintaining conversations. Students will practice reciprocal communication—or "talking back and forth"—with their peers as they take turns listening, thinking about what was said, and responding appropriately.

Stereotypes can be about people, objects, activities, and roles. They lead to assumptions that prevent us from knowing what other people are like or what alternatives could be open to us. Students will learn how to recognize and challenge stereotypes, including stereotypes about themselves, and they will explore how people can change what they like, feel, and do.

Being Assertive allows people to have their ideas, desires, and needs addressed. In this unit, students will develop self-confidence as they learn when and how to "Speak Up and Speak Kindly" using a strong, respectful voice.

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WEEK 3: COMMUNICATION

The ideas below will reinforce what we are learning in school—there are activities to role play, topics to discuss, and behaviors to role-model in the third week. These are all designed to fit into your daily routine and provide opportunities to further connect with your child

Listening To Others

- Ask your child to demonstrate how he or she uses his or her entire body to be a careful listener.
- Brainstorm and create a special signal to remind or reinforce family members regarding good listening.
- Tell your child when you notice him or her demonstrating good listening skills.

Responding To Others

- Ask your child to share some examples of “conversation makers” and “conversation breakers.”
 - Conversation Makers: Taking turns speaking, listening, thinking, responding.
 - Conversation Breakers: Talking for a long time, not responding, not listening.
 - Choose a topic that is interesting to both of you, note the time, and see how long you can continue the conversation with each other.

Understanding Stereotypes

- Ask your child what a stereotype is.
- Ask your child what they would say to someone who said that ALL kids (or grandparents or teenagers) are a certain way
- Ask your child what can be done instead to find out what someone is like.

Being Assertive

- Ask your child what tone of voice is used when you or your child speak up.
- Ask your child what kinds of words are used when you or your child speak up.
- Tell your child when you notice him or her using a strong, respectful voice and kind words to speak up.

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Box Out Bullying Presents:

FAMILY LETTER - WEEK 4 COMMUNICATION

Dear Family,

We are starting a unit on **Problem Solving** from our Box Out Bullying social-emotional learning program. Throughout this unit, students will learn to resolve interpersonal conflict, develop cooperation skills, and practice self-regulation.

Identifying Problems and **Solving Problems** are skills that help children resolve day-to-day conflicts and lay the foundation for healthy behavior throughout their lives. In this unit, students will practice recognizing different perspectives and working together to find fair solutions. As a class, we will focus on the four steps of problem-solving:

1. STOP and calm down.
2. TALK to understand the problem.
3. THINK of possible solutions.
4. TRY a solution and see how it works for everyone.

Cooperating and **Being Considerate** both create opportunities for children to teach and learn from one another. By practicing teamwork skills and developing strategies for self-regulation, students will find compatible ways to collaborate while respecting each other's individuality.

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WEEK 4: PROBLEM SOLVING

The ideas below will reinforce what we are learning in school—there are activities to role play, topics to discuss, and behaviors to role-mode; in the fourth week. These are all designed to fit into your daily routine and provide opportunities to further connect with your child.

Identifying Problems

- Talk with your child about the first two steps to solving a problem (Stop, Talk)
- Encourage your child to use calming strategies when upset or overexcited like taking deep breaths, counting slowly, thinking of something beautiful, or hugging a stuffed animal.
- When reading or watching tv that involve a situation of conflict:
 - guide your child in recognizing each person's perspective. This gives children practice in developing empathy and bystander empowerment, and
 - Ask your child to name possible solutions. Guide them in thinking about the consequences for actions.
 - "She is angry because her little brother tore up her homework, but he really likes to rip and crunch paper. It seems like the problem in this story is that when she leaves her homework on the table, her little brother can get it and ruin it. But she really likes to put her finished homework on the table. What do you think?"

Solving Problems

- Talk with your child about the last two steps to solving a problem (Think, Try).
- Ask your child what it means to compromise.

Cooperating

- Ask your child to think of things that are important to do when working together.
 - Include everyone, listen and cooperate, use kind words.
 - Talk with your child about the ways your family cooperates and discuss how much fun it can be to work together and how everyone helps to get the job completed.
 - Tell your child when you notice their teamwork skills and point out how it is helpful.
 - I saw how carefully you were listening to Grandma explain how to pat the soil down around the plant, and the garden looks great after all your hard work today!

Being Considerate

- Play games that help your child practice self-regulation, or purposely change their behavior.
 - Alternate between counting to 10 very quickly and then very slowly.
 - Play loud music and dance excitedly, and then begin to dance more slowly as you turn down the volume.
- Brainstorm with your child to create a special signal, such as palms facing up/down to indicate "turn it up" or "turn it down," that can provide a gentle reminder to adjust behavior, and help him or her practice doing this.
- Tell your child when you notice him or her intentionally calming down, and discuss how that feels.

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Box Out Bullying Presents:

FAMILY LETTER - WEEK 5

PEER RELATIONSHIPS

Dear Family,

We are starting a unit on **Peer Relationships** from our Box Out Bullying social-emotional learning program. Throughout this unit, students will focus on attitudes and behaviors that are critical for maintaining positive and supportive relationships.

Caring for Others is vital to positive peer relationships. In this unit, students will practice acts of kindness and share expressions of gratitude. Feeling valued, responded to, and cared for helps children develop a caring attitude and empathy for others. When children feel connected to others, they develop a sense of social responsibility.

Being Inclusive ensures everyone feels accepted and welcomed. Students will discuss inclusive attitudes and behaviors for the classroom community, and practice finding ways to include others in classroom activities and play.

Making Amends and Forgiving are important relationship skills. People often make mistakes that can result in hurt feelings, broken belongings, and damaged relationships. Learning how to repair these situations helps students maintain good relationships despite the conflicts that inevitably occur. Students will discuss how to make amends ("Say your part, speak from the heart, and fix what's been broken apart"), develop a forgiving attitude, and then practice these skills with their peers.

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WEEK 5: PEER RELATIONSHIPS

The ideas below will reinforce what we are learning in school—there are activities to role play, topics to discuss, and behaviors to role-mode; in the fifth week. These are all designed to fit into your daily routine and provide opportunities to further connect with your child.

Caring For Others

- Ask your child how he or she helped a classmate "have a good day."
- "Catch" your child being kind to someone and point out how good it must have made the person feel.
- Model small acts of kindness during your daily activities, and talk with your child specifically about how and why the act benefited the other person.
- Brainstorm ways your family can do kind things for others in your neighborhood or community, or participate in a community service project as a family. Being Inclusive
- Ask your child about a time when someone invited him or her to play and how that felt.
- Ask your child if he or she invited anyone to play this week and what they did together.

Making Amends and Forgiving

- Ask your child how he or she can make amends.
- Help your child think of how to "fix what's been broken apart"—how to take action in making things better with a family member or friend when your child has been hurtful in some way.
 - Ideas may include giving a hug, drawing a picture or writing a note to them, doing something kind for them, or fixing something he or she ruined.

Reflecting and Connecting

- Ask your child to share with you some favorite memories from this past year, such as:
 - Something accomplished that makes him or her proud.
 - Something learned from classmates.
 - Something he or she helped classmates learn.
 - A favorite part of the school day.
 - Something memorable that happened at school.
 - Friendships he or she would like to continue.

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