

Want more support? Twice-a-month Drop-in support groups for parents and guardians of students in AAPS. Groups meet on the 2nd Tuesday (7:30-8:30 PM) and 4th Thursday (1-2PM) of the month. Please [register here](#).

Communication

Communication is the ability to express ourselves, recognize nonverbal cues, and build important interpersonal relationships. For school-aged children, communication is essential for healthy development. While we often think of verbal communication as the primary way to connect, there are many other ways students can learn to communicate and enhance their connection-building skills.



For Parents/Teachers

- Talk regularly with your student
- Describe the day in as much detail as possible
- Listen and reflect on what your student says
- Role-play conversations
- Point out body language
- Use conversation starters
- Read together
- Ask for your student's opinions
- Encourage journaling and/or drawing -Via: understood.org

For Preschoolers Try This:

- Utilize puppet play to create fun dialogue and engagement
- [Tap, Ask and Wait](#) skills for requesting objects

For Elementary Aged Kids try This:

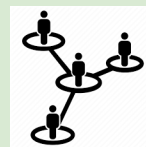
- Read a book together and ask questions
- Picture storytelling- provide your student with a set of pictures and ask them to create a story from it

For Middle Schoolers and High Schoolers Try This:

- Practice being present and having reciprocal conversations during established screen-free times / routines in your daily schedule (i.e. in the car, at the dinner table, etc.)
- [Conversation Starters for Teens](#) and [Conversation Starters for the Whole Family](#)



Social Engagement & Building Relationships



Parent/Teacher Engagement

- Check-in. Send a quick email to the teacher to see how your child is doing and what they can improve on.
- Ask your student questions regarding class and learning.
 - Who are your friends in class?
 - Who do you think is funny?
 - What did you learn today?

Building Relationships with classmates

- This begins with friendship skills that can all be practiced at home. Kindness, sympathy, honesty, forgiveness, trust, empathy, loyalty are all skills that can be learned through family interactions and translate to the school setting.

For Preschoolers Try This:

- For younger students we should model friendly behavior (sharing, kindness, empathy, etc.)
- Try this read aloud. [How Do Dinosaurs Play with their Friends](#)

For Elementary Aged Kids Try This:

- Here is a read aloud that shows how one student was able to make friends. [Meesha Makes Friends](#)
- Point out friendship traits demonstrated in books or movies while spending time as a family

For Middle Schoolers and High Schoolers Try This:

- Discuss these ways to be a good friend. [What makes a good friend.](#)
- With your teen, identify tech-free, safe ways to connect with other teens during the pandemic.
- Watch interviews with teens about their thoughts about [Friendships and Social Media](#)



Helping & Seeking Help

Self-Advocacy

- Self-advocacy is a skill that enables children to understand their strengths and weaknesses, know what they need to succeed, and communicate that to other people.
- Kids who exercise self-advocacy can
 - Find solutions to challenges parents may not be aware of
 - Build self-confidence
 - Create a sense of ownership over their learning
 - Develop independence and self-empowerment
- Steps to help build your child's self-advocacy
 - If a problem arises, allow your child to try and solve it before stepping in.
 - Praise your child's efforts at speaking up.
 - Remind your child that asking for help is a good thing.
 - Talk with your child about strengths and weakness



Bystander vs. Upstander

- Bystander: someone who witnesses bullying but doesn't get involved.
- Upstander: the person who knows what's happening is wrong and does something to make things right.

Preschool

- Self-Advocacy: Use [this activity](#) as a way for your preschooler to begin to understand who they are as a person.
- Bystander vs. Upstander: Use [this activity](#) to teach your preschool to be kind to others.

Elementary

- Self-Advocacy: Watch [this video](#) and talk to your child about who they are, what they like, and what their strengths and weaknesses are.
- Bystander vs. Upstander: Watch [this video](#) to teach the concept. Read [this](#) to explore this topic.

Middle School

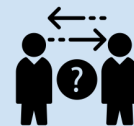
- Self-Advocacy: Complete [this worksheet](#) with your child.
- Bystander vs. Upstander: Explore [this website](#) and the videos to start a conversation with your middle schooler.

High Schoolers

- Self-Advocacy: Use [this activity](#) to explore the topic with your teen.
- Bystander vs. Upstander: Watch [this video](#) and have a conversation with your teen about the topic.



Managing Conflicts & Working Cooperatively



Step 1

- Understand how or what you are feeling

[Feelings Resource and Activity](#)

Step 2

- Identify calming strategies when experiencing strong emotions

[Calming Strategies](#)

Step 3

- Look for self improvement strategies in response to conflicts

[Social Stories](#)

Step 4

- Develop listening and reflection skills

[Active Listening](#)

Step 5

- Use skills learned to work collaboratively
- Also, read this article about ways to encourage youth to learn [collaboration skills](#)

This Cartoon from BrainPop shows ways to deal with conflict: [Conflict Resolution Video](#)

Calming Strategies:

For Preschoolers Try This: Physical Movement/Exercises
[Movement Cards](#); [Helping your child cope with anxiety](#)

For Elementary Aged Kids try This: Yoga Poses
[Yoga Poses](#)

For Middle Schoolers Try This: Create an Emotions Journal
[Emotional Journal](#)

For High schoolers Try This: Use Community Outreach Programs
[Community Resources](#)

Watch this 7 minute video from PopSugar / 60 Minutes that makes the case for mindfulness and how it impacts the brain:
[Under Pressure - Mindfulness for Teens](#)

