

Mar 15, 2024

Dear families,

I will be on maternity leave starting March 18th to the end of the school year. Your child will still receive guidance lessons during this time. We will continue to focus on the CASEL skills (relationship skills, self awareness skill, self management skills, decision making skills, and social awareness skills). If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Michelle Gagne, our part time school counselor, at

mgagne@strafford.k12.nh.us

or our school counselor substitute, Laura Milner at laura.milner@strafford.k12.nh.us

Thanks,

Shonda Pecor

School Counselor

2/23/24

Hi 2nd grade families,

January and February we focused on self management skills. One way that we practiced improving this skill was by practicing self control. Self-control is being in charge of our bodies, our thoughts, and our words. Having self-control is important because it helps us get along with others and reach goals that we set for ourselves. We played a game where only certain times the students could touch the balloons and had to volley the ball. Many stated that it was hard to not touch the balloon when they weren't supposed to.

Students were also able to identify appropriate coping strategies to use when they feel big emotions. We talked about what the word "trigger" means (an event that leads to strong emotions) and when we find ways to soothe those feelings, we call that coping strategies. Students were given scenarios of triggers and lists of coping strategies, and they had to use self awareness skills to identify which coping strategies would help them in different situations/triggers.

We are focusing on a new CASEL skill the next two months, which is Responsible Decision Making. This skill is about the ability to identify and solve problems while considering the impact our choices have on ourselves and others. Considering the size of a problem and possible consequences of various solutions is a key part of responsible decision-making.

Ways to improve responsible decision making skills at home:

1. Over dinner, talk about the decisions that your child had to make that day. Ask your child to think about a tough decision they had to make today with questions such as: What made the decision difficult? What were your choices? What did you decide to do? Why? Did the outcome match your expectation?
2. Talk to your child about consequences. Ask questions such as, "if you don't go to sleep on time, what do you think you'll be like at school tomorrow?" Or, "how does your sibling feel when you play with their toy without asking?" Understanding a person's perspective helps with responsible decision making. It helps them understand how their actions affect others. When their actions affect others in a positive way it helps build empathy and responsible decision making skills.
3. Use bedtime stories or movie to talk about the characters' decision making skills. Do you agree with the character's decision? What possible outcomes could have happened if they made a different decision? How would you solve this problem?

1/19/24

Hi 2nd grade parents/guardians,

In December, we continued to focus on self awareness skills. One lesson, we focused on the benefits of telling the truth. We played a fun game, where students were able to see the actual benefits of telling the truth versus not telling the truth. We also focused on believing in ourselves. We used this definition: Self-belief (self-efficacy) means having confidence that you can succeed at most things if you try your best. Trying your best means using the skills you have, being willing to learn new skills, practicing your skills to make them stronger, staying focused, and sticking with something even when it is difficult. Each student was asked to draw a task or activity that they want to get better at, and then draw a picture of themselves completing that task. We talked about the strategies and steps it would take to complete the task that was chosen.

For January and February, we are focusing on the CASEL skill, self management. Self-Management is the ability to manage our emotions, impulses, and behaviors. Students with self management skills can identify what emotions mean, recognize what causes certain emotions, and understand appropriate behaviors to manage emotions and impulses. Self-management skills around goal setting, organization, stress management, and self-motivation are integral to feeling safe and supported.

Our first lesson on this skill, students learned about the role courage plays in learning and growing. We used this definition to describe courage: Courage means being able to do or try something even if it is challenging and you feel unsure.

At home activities to support Self Management skills:

1. Make routines: Use a large piece of paper or a dry erase board and work with your child to create a routine for bedtime or getting ready for school. Map out what is done first. You can get creative and draw pictures or take pictures out of magazines. Clearly label what is expected. Your child will need reminders at times, but showing your child what is expected is helpful. Routines can be difficult for some children, so break the routine into smaller chunks if your child struggles.
2. Stick to deadlines: Many times, students will avoid tasks they can't handle or are not interested in. They often refuse and/or delay doing it without thinking. This can become a bad habit. Create and stick to deadlines as part of a daily schedule. The more time your child spends on task, the more chances they will learn self control
3. Have your child create a list of strategies that help them manage their emotions. What tools help when you're in the blue zone? What tools help in the red zone? Model managing your emotions, and talk about the tools that help you manage your emotions.

Have a great weekend!

Shonda Pecor- School Counselor

Dec 8, 2023

Hi parents/Guardians,

For the months of November and December, we have been focusing on the CASEL skill, self awareness. Self awareness skills support students in building a greater understanding of themselves; their strengths, weaknesses and how they perceive themselves in the world. Students with self awareness recognize their own emotions and how their personal values impact their behavior.

We first focused on emotions. Learning about ourselves involves learning to recognize our emotions, what causes them, and how to manage them. We talked about the 8 core emotions (fear, joy, disgust, anger, surprise, trust, sadness and anticipation) and students played a game where if they landed on that particular emotion, the discussed with their group how that emotion felt, a time they felt that emotion, and what they did when they felt that emotion.

Then, we focused on our strengths and challenges. Students were able to identify some of their personal strengths and articulate how they use them in different aspects of their lives. They also identified a challenge they would like to overcome, and strategies on how to overcome those challenges.

Activities at home to help support self awareness:

1. Play emotion charades! Acting out an emotion, the facial and body languages help people understand how an emotion looks and feels on their body. After acting out that emotion, what tool or coping skill would be helpful to manage that emotion?
2. Ask your child what their strengths are and share yours. Ask your child what they think is your strength and share what you think is your child's strength. Do you agree? Disagree? Sometimes hearing someone else's perspective helps us identify our strengths.
3. Have your child create a "what makes me unique" poster. It can be about their skills, challenges, hobbies, and character traits. Get creative!

We are going to continue to focus on self awareness skills. Our next lesson will be about the importance of telling the truth.

10/27/25

During guidance, we have continued to focus on relationship skills. We recognized that our words have power on others and ourselves. We focused on the importance of kind words, and how they can build relationships or break them down. Then, we learned what it means to be an upstander (a person who sees something unfair, unkind, or wrong happening and offers help or other support to make the situation better) and what is a bystander (someone who watches something wrong happening, but does not offer help or support). There are many ways to be an upstander, but we focused on four strategies called the ABC'S. You can review these strategies at home, and ask them about each strategy.

A stands for: Ask if someone needs help. Ask your child what are some questions you could ask? (ex: do you need help, are you okay, how can I help you?)

B stands for: Become a friend. Ask how you become a friend? (ex: invite someone to play with you or eat lunch with you, introduce yourself, learn about each other)

C stands for: Call out unkindness. What could you say calmly if a person is acting mean toward someone? (ex: point out that the behavior is unkind, remind them of the rules or possible consequences, ask if they want to be treated the same way)

S stands for: Seek a trusted adult to help. Sometimes you need an adult to help, especially if someone might get hurt physically. Who could you ask for help?

Starting next week, we are focusing on the CASEL skill, self awareness.

Self-Awareness skills support students in building a greater understanding of themselves; their strengths, weaknesses and how they perceive themselves in the world. Students with self-awareness recognize their own emotions and how their personal values impact their behavior.

9/22/2023

Hi 2nd grade parents/guardians,

Your child participates in guidance group, in class, every other week. During this time, we focus on a specific social and emotional learning skill (SEL). For the next two months, we are focusing on relationship skills. Growing this skill helps students to create and maintain healthy relationships. In their first guidance group, they were introduced to their school counselors, their role, and how to access them if needed. The next time we met, we focused on understanding the meaning of the phrase “trusted adult” and being able to identify a trusted adult in their lives.

We discussed in class that trust means believing that someone is honest, will do what they say they will do, and will be there for you. A trusted adult is a grown-up (18 or older) you know that cares about you and helps you keep safe. To help continue this conversation at home, talk with your child about who their trusted adult is in different places. The setting may be in an extracurricular activity, place of worship, school, after school program ect. Talking about who the trusted adults are in your child’s life is important for when they may need support, they know who to go to.

I’m looking forward to this school year, working and growing with your child!

