

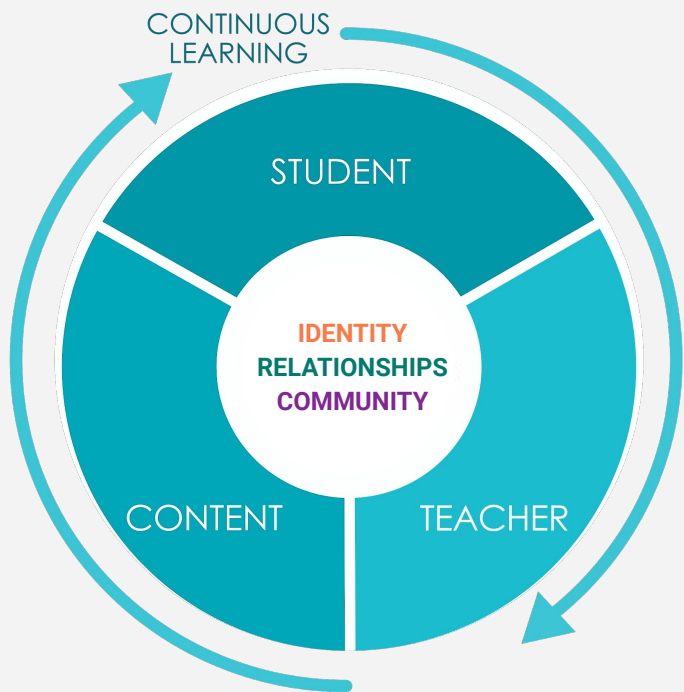


Start with Heart

THE GUIDE

A GUIDE TO START WITH HEART!

Success starts here. Success starts with heart.



The vision of Chicago Public Schools is Success Starts Here. And this school year, that means success starts with heart.

To **educate for equity**, the CPS Instructional Core centers on **identity**, **relationships**, and **community**.

The resources included in this guide are the heart of our instructional core and are intended to be activities you can utilize with your students in the first few weeks of the school year.

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We Honor Who We Are

Resources just for teachers that include activities to help you reflect on the past year, center future hopes, and identify feelings you might be experiencing about this school year in order to respond with mindfulness and intention.

#Honor



We Center Our Students

Resources to support your understanding of who your students are, the experiences they bring into the space, and the feelings they are navigating with returning back to school this year.

#Identity



We Prioritize Each Other

Resources to help inform how you might engage and build trusting relationships with students that are grounded in listening, empathy, and understanding.

#Relationships



We Cultivate Community

Resources to foster a sense of belonging that values different perspectives, experiences, and this school year, levels of anxiety about being together in-person.

#Community

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The activities included in this guide are intended to be activities you can click, print, and implement!

We recommend reviewing the activities and selecting ones that are safe enough to try.

Hopes + Concerns

#Honor #Identity

Talking Circles

#Relationships #Community

1-min Discussions

#Identity #Relationships

Identity Chart

#Identity #Community

Use the Last Word

#Relationships #Community

Hey, Me Too!

#Identity #Relationships
#Community

Empathic Notes

#Honor #Identity

Pause + Prioritize

#Honor

Self-Care Chart

#Honor #Identity

Note to Future Me

#Honor #Identity

5-min Chats

#Identity #Relationships

Ad for a Friend

#Relationships #Community

Gratitude Circle

#Community

Stay KALM

#Honor #Relationships
#Community

Shake Down

#Community

Biggest Fan

#Honor #Relationships
#Community

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If you are a school leader, you might...



- Include this guide in your welcome back message + resources to your team.
- Start with heart by modeling these practices with teachers.
- Have the team commit to doing the same activity with students at least once a week over the course of the first several weeks of the school year.

If you are a teacher, you might...



- Use this guide as inspiration and modify activities based on the academic and emotional needs of you and your students.
- Review the strategies and prioritize ones you want to complete + ones you want to bookmark to do with your students.
- Connect with your team and do them together.

The Strategies

LINKED IN THE GUIDE

HOPES + CONCERNS

A simple activity to open up and share about how you are feeling about this upcoming school year.

Time: 15-20 minutes

Tips:

- Consider doing this activity with your team.
- This activity could be leveraged with students as an opportunity to learn about their hopes and concerns this coming school year.
- Learn more about the power of naming feelings [here](#).

Tags: *#Honor*, *#Identity*

STEP ONE: On a piece of paper, draw a vertical line, splitting it on two sides with the titles: Hopes and Concerns.

STEP TWO: Write down your hopes and concerns for what's ahead this school year.

STEP THREE: As you continue to plan the student experience, consider these hopes and concerns and make decisions that honor both.

TALKING CIRCLES

A proactive classroom ritual that allows you and your students to connect and share.

Time: 15-20 minutes

Tips:

- Consider a consistent block of time to help build this ritual into your classroom routine.
- This activity can help students celebrate successes, share good news, solve problems, and heal or grieve.
- Learn more about this strategy on pages 66-75 in the CPS Restorative Guide and Toolkit [here](#).

Tags: [#Relationships](#), [#Community](#)

STEP ONE: Ask students to independently reflect using a guiding question.

STEP TWO: Form a circle with students by sitting or standing.

STEP THREE: Have students share out their reflections by using a *talking piece* (object) to signal whose turn it is to speak.

1-MIN DISCUSSIONS

Students will actively listen and formulate open-ended questions by engaging in meaningful dialogue with their peers.

Time: 5 minutes

Tips:

- Check-out these [sample questions](#) + be sure to model what open-ended questions look like and sound like the first few rounds.
- Ask peers to contribute to the topics of 1-minute discussions.
- Partner up students who do not typically spend a lot of time together.

Tags: *#Identity*, *#Relationships*

STEP ONE: Divide students into pairs and explain that they will talk about a given topic for one minute without stopping.

STEP TWO: When a minute has passed, ask the listener to summarize what the speaker said in a sentence or two.

STEP THREE: Pose a few questions for your students after partner 2 goes such as: What did you learn about yourself as a speaker vs a listener?

IDENTITY CHART

An easy activity to help students share aspects of who they are with the classroom community.

Time: 15-20 minutes

Tips:

- Learn more about different types of prompts to use with students [here](#).
- Have a class discussion about the identities within the classroom community, exploring how they are similar or different.
- Learn more about the strategy and an example [here](#).

Tags: *#Identity, #Community*

STEP ONE: On a piece of paper, draw a circle in the center and write your name inside the circle.

STEP TWO: Outside the circle, write words or phrases that describe what you consider to be key aspects of your identity.

STEP THREE: Draw a line that connects the words or phrases to the circle labeled with your name.

USE THE LAST WORD

When students engage in conversations, it is important that students focus on what they are saying.

Time: 5-10 minutes

Tips:

- Give students a simple discussion topic such as “what are you going to do this weekend?” See more example topics [here](#).
- Pick a student to model the practice.
- Learn more about how to teach students to have great conversations [here](#).

Tags: [#Relationships](#), [#Community](#)

STEP ONE: Give students a simple topic and divide students into pairs.

STEP TWO: The first student must answer the question in a single sentence. The second students must follow up with asking a question, adding to their comment, or giving their opinion.

STEP THREE: They must BEGIN their sentence with the LAST word of their partner’s sentence to practice listening closely.

HEY, ME TOO!

Sometimes building relationships means asking the right questions. In this activity, students respond to questions when they have something in common.

Time: 5-10 minutes

Tips:

- Pre-plan how you want students to respond (ie. raising hands, standing, up, etc.).
- Consider letting students pose their own questions to the group
- Learn more about a similar strategy [here](#).

Tags: *#Identity*, *#Relationships*, *#Community*

STEP ONE: Pose questions to the classroom community.

STEP TWO: Students respond if that question applies to them.

STEP THREE: Give students a chance to look around the room and make connections with other peers who also responded.

EMPATHIC NOTES

Building empathy for others in the classroom through writing personal notes that express empathy.

Time: 10-15 minutes

Tips:

- Narrate an empathic note that you would like to write (I appreciate ... I notice)
- Generate a list of situations that would be a good idea to write someone a note to show you care.
- Allow students ownership on who they pick.

Tags: #Honor, #Identity

STEP ONE: Create a t-chart with the words “what is empathy?” and “what is not empathy?”

STEP TWO: Ask students to pick a person to write a note to with the paper and envelope you provide for them.

STEP THREE: Provide time for students to quietly write the note to the person they know who is in need of compassion.

SELF-CARE CHART

Boost self-esteem and bring confidence back into the space by prioritizing self-care for your mind, heart and soul.

Time: 10-15 minutes

Tips:

- Discuss an example of what self-care looks like under each category: *physical, mental, and emotional*.
- Identify a date/time to reflect on progress and highlight practices that are working, if you pick to do this activity more than once.
- Checkout more self-care activities [here](#).

Tags: #Honor, #Identity

STEP ONE: Create a three column chart and label: *physical, mental, and emotional*.

STEP TWO: Generate ideas for 3-5 mins on what you already do to support self-care in these categories.

STEP THREE: Reflect on the category with the most ideas vs the least and pick 1-2 self-care ideas you would like to do.

PAUSE + PRIORITIZE

Simple actions educators can take in 10 minutes or less!

Time: 5-10 minutes

Tips:

- Consider doing these actions with a friend or team.
- Schedule this into your daily routine at the beginning of the day.
- Checkout more self-care activities [here](#).

Tags: *#Honor*

STEP ONE: Review the [15 Ways to Pause + Prioritize](#) resource.

STEP TWO: Select an activity you want to complete

STEP THREE: Notice how you are feeling and if you paused long enough or need some more time to prioritize YOU!

NOTE TO FUTURE ME

This activity is great when you + your students want to think about what you want to be true for the classroom community in the future.

Time: 10-15 minutes

Tips:

- Consider crafting a letter as a class community.
- Set a reminder for the selected date on your calendar.
- Checkout [this resource](#) if you want to send an email instead of a note.

Tags: *#Honor, #Identity*

STEP ONE: Write a letter to yourself in the future and select the date you want to “receive” the letter.

STEP TWO: In your letter include your hopes and wishes for yourself.

STEP THREE: Seal the letter in an envelope and put somewhere safe until that future date.

5-MIN CHATS

The space to personally connect with each student to learn more about their experience and perspective.

Time: 5 minutes

Tips:

- Let all students know you'll be reaching out to meet 1:1 to learn more about how things are going. See sample questions [here](#).
- Give students the opportunity to sign-up for a time.
- Pick a medium that is school and family-approved.

Tags: [#Identity](#), [#Relationships](#)

STEP ONE: Ask a question that invites the student to share as little or as much in sharing, such as, "I know things have been unusually busy, how are you keeping up lately?"

STEP TWO: Engage in dialogue that values their perspective, such as, "What do you think our class is getting right so far this year?"

STEP THREE: Set-up the next time to check-in.

AD FOR A FRIEND

Encourages students to think about the qualities that contribute to a healthy relationship that they would like to have in a new friend

Time: 20-30 minutes

Tips:

- Give students a journal prompt to reflect on friendship.
- Group or pair up students to generate a list of qualities of a friend prior to individuals creating their top 5 qualities.
- Analyze what makes an ad convincing to others.

Tags: *#Relationships, #Community*

STEP ONE: Take 2 minutes to create a list of friendship qualities.

STEP TWO: Develop an ad in a creative way to present back to a smaller group of peers.

STEP THREE: Divide students into small groups to share their reasonings and reflect on, “How does this quality contribute to the development of a healthy friendship?”

GRATITUDE CIRCLE

An ideal ritual in a classroom to close the end of the day and/or the end of the week by expressing deep gratitude for others in the same space.

Time: 5-10 minutes

Tips:

- Going around in a circle allows the opportunity for all participants to speak.
- Everyone has the choice to express appreciation and the first person to express gratitude typically sets the tone for the gratitude circle.
- Learn more about how you might teach students about gratitude [here](#).

Tags: *#Relationships, #Community*

STEP ONE: Gather all students into one circle around the classroom.

STEP TWO: Invite all students to express their gratitude. Optional to skip.

STEP THREE: Use the responses from the gratitude circle to follow-up during follow-up conversations such as 1:1 conferencing or 5-minute chats.

STAY KALM

A strategy for gaining insight on what practices the class community values most + what they don't.

Time: 15-20 minutes

Tips:

- This might feel uncomfortable for some to share in this way. Consider providing individual reflection time and multiple ways for students to share.
- This would be a great strategy to leverage with your grade-level teams.
- Learn more about the power of asking students for feedback [here](#).

Tags: *#Honor*, *#Relationships*, *#Community*

STEP ONE: Divide the board into four quadrants and label the following:

Keep: What should we keep doing

Add: What should we do that we aren't?

Less: What are we doing that we should do less of?

More: What are we doing that we should do more of?

STEP TWO: Ask students to share their thoughts and perceptions about each quadrant.

STEP THREE: After everyone has had a chance to have their voices heard, have a class discussion about at least three actions you are going to commit to taking.

SHAKEDOWN

This strategy is a a super quick way to energize the group and get them energized, awake, and unified.

Time: 2-5 minutes

Tips:

- Make sure you are setting the pace so that the group has to keep up with you and invite students to count in any language they speak.
- When you get to 1 on all 4 limbs, let it be a happy celebration dance explosion.
- Learn more about other fun ways to do this [here](#).

Tags: *#Community*

STEP ONE: Have students stand up.

STEP TWO: Start with one hand, shake it high in the air as you count down backwards from 10 to 1, then do the same countdown as you shake the second hand, then the same with one foot, then with the other foot.

STEP THREE: Continue this process, starting from 8, then 7, then 6, then 5, then 4, then 3, then 2, getting faster and louder until you get to 1.

BIGGEST FAN

This is your new favorite go-to anytime you and your students or team need a little celebration!

Time: 5-10 minutes

Tips:

- This can be done in gratitude circles or as a check-in, check-out. You might even consider using in the middle of instruction when you sense the group needs a break.
- Consider coming up with a class cheer or even individual cheers for students.
- Checkout another fun way to keep the celebrating going [here](#).

Tags: [#Honor](#), [#Identity](#), [#Relationships](#), [#Community](#)

STEP ONE: Form a circle by sitting or standing.

STEP TWO: Have students reflect on something they are proud of themselves for.

STEP THREE: As individuals take turns sharing, the rest of the group cheers, claps, and celebrates.