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Introduction

What Is Social-Emotional Learning?

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) helps students recognize and understand their emotions, cope with emotional situations, and develop empathy. These skills are crucial to students' development and can help them navigate responsible decision-making for the rest of their lives.

According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), SEL involves five areas of competency:

- ✦ Self-Awareness—knowing your own emotions
- ✦ Social Awareness—understanding others' emotions and dealing with social situations
- ✦ Self-Management—regulating your own emotions
- ✦ Responsible Decision Making—solving problems and having accountability
- ✦ Relationship Skills—establishing relationships and communicating with others

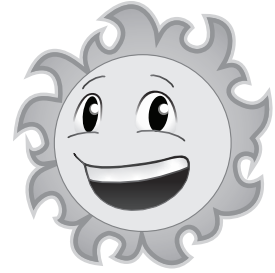
While SEL has become more widely discussed recently, the concept dates back to research that began in the early 1960s. Various studies over the years have found that SEL has proven to help students with:

- ✦ Goal setting and accomplishment
- ✦ Self-assessment and self-control
- ✦ Decreasing physical aggression
- ✦ Improving academic proficiency

When students learn how to cope with their emotions, they are better able to give and receive feedback, bounce back from disappointments, and focus when they need to—all of which can help them excel academically. An emotionally well-adjusted student is a successful student.

Beyond helping students perform better academically, learning social emotional skills early in life can help students thrive throughout their lives. SEL teaches students valuable qualities that will benefit them in their future jobs, academics, and personal pursuits.

Daily Emotional Reflections



Why start the day with SEL? Many successful people start their day with mindfulness: meditation, daily journaling, morning affirmations, etc. That's because centering yourself first thing in the morning gets you focused and ready to tackle whatever your day has in store.

For students, taking a few moments each morning to check in on how they're feeling can start a habit that they can build on for the rest of their lives.

Each of the exercises in this book is designed to help students spend a few moments in the morning to check in with themselves, and to learn a little bit about the spectrum of human emotions.

When your students start their day with emotional awareness, they will be more likely to carry that awareness with them throughout the day, helping them to make good choices and have empathy both inside and outside of your classroom.



How to Use This Book — The Emotions —



Each of the first 16 units explores a different emotion, with two activities each devoted to these fundamental aspects of SEL:

✦ **Defining the Emotion**

Explaining what the emotion is; asking students to reflect on what they already know about it

✦ **Identifying the Emotion in Others**

Asking students to think about what the emotion looks like in other people; helping to develop empathy

✦ **Identifying the Emotion in Yourself**

Detecting how the emotion looks and feels in their own experience; developing self-awareness and self-assessment

✦ **Strategies for Dealing with the Emotion**

Exploring different coping strategies for the emotion; helping to develop self-regulation and encouraging healthy social interactions

✦ **Putting it All Together**

Reflecting on what they have discovered about the emotion; exploring what strategies they will try in the future

Note: You don't have to work through this book in order; you can start or end with any emotion.

Introduction (cont.)

The final unit, All the Feelings, is intended for students to experience once they have learned about all of the different emotions. This unit gives them a chance to reflect on how the different emotions can complement and conflict with each other, and offers ideas on how to manage a mix of feelings.



— The Emojis —

In today's social world, most students are very familiar with emojis and the feelings they represent. In this book they are presented as a simple, visual way for students to identify with different feelings.

In each unit, there are at least two activities that start with an emoji emotional check-in. This is a great and simple way for students to check in with their own feelings first thing.

How do you feel today? Circle each face that matches your feelings. Or draw your own.



Joyful



Disappointed



Frustrated



Calm



— Mindful Moments & Yoga Breaks —

Each unit also offers a meditation suggestion and a breakdown of a simple yoga pose that complements the emotion featured in that unit. Breathing and movement exercises could be done individually, or throughout the week by the entire class.

— Fun Facts, Quotes & Tips —

Throughout the book, you will also find fun facts, quotes, and quick tips about the featured emotion of the unit. These can be interesting discussion starters as you segue into the next part of your lesson plan.

Creating a Kind Classroom

A kind and welcoming classroom is an ideal place for students to learn and discover more about their feelings.

It's important that your students feel encouraged to discuss feelings when they come up, and that beyond these morning exercises, your class is a safe place for them to feel all of their emotions.

Here are some other ideas and activities to expand your SEL teachings beyond morning reflections.

- ✦ Create a Mindfulness or Calm-Down Corner that is a quiet space for students to reflect; a few pillows and a yoga mat can create a welcoming place for breathing or journaling.
- ✦ Watch the movie *Inside Out* as a class, and invite a discussion afterward about the emotions featured in the film.
- ✦ Incorporate yoga and/or breathing and meditation as part of your daily or weekly lessons, maybe creating regular events like Meditation Monday or Yoga Friday.
- ✦ Model good emotional behavior—talk about how you're feeling, and point out the feelings and emotions of characters in stories featured in your class.
- ✦ Play a feelings game such as Emotional Charades, in which students are given an emotion to act out for others.
- ✦ Create a classroom poster of coping activities that students can choose from when their emotions are distracting them from focusing.
- ✦ Have the class make a collage of positive affirmations that can be referred to throughout the year as needed.
- ✦ Encourage and reward random acts of kindness both inside and outside of the classroom.

“There's no ‘should’ or ‘should not’ when it comes to having feelings. They're part of who we are and their origins are beyond our control. When we can believe that, we may find it easier to make constructive choices about what to do with those feelings.”
—Fred Rogers





Name: _____ Date: _____

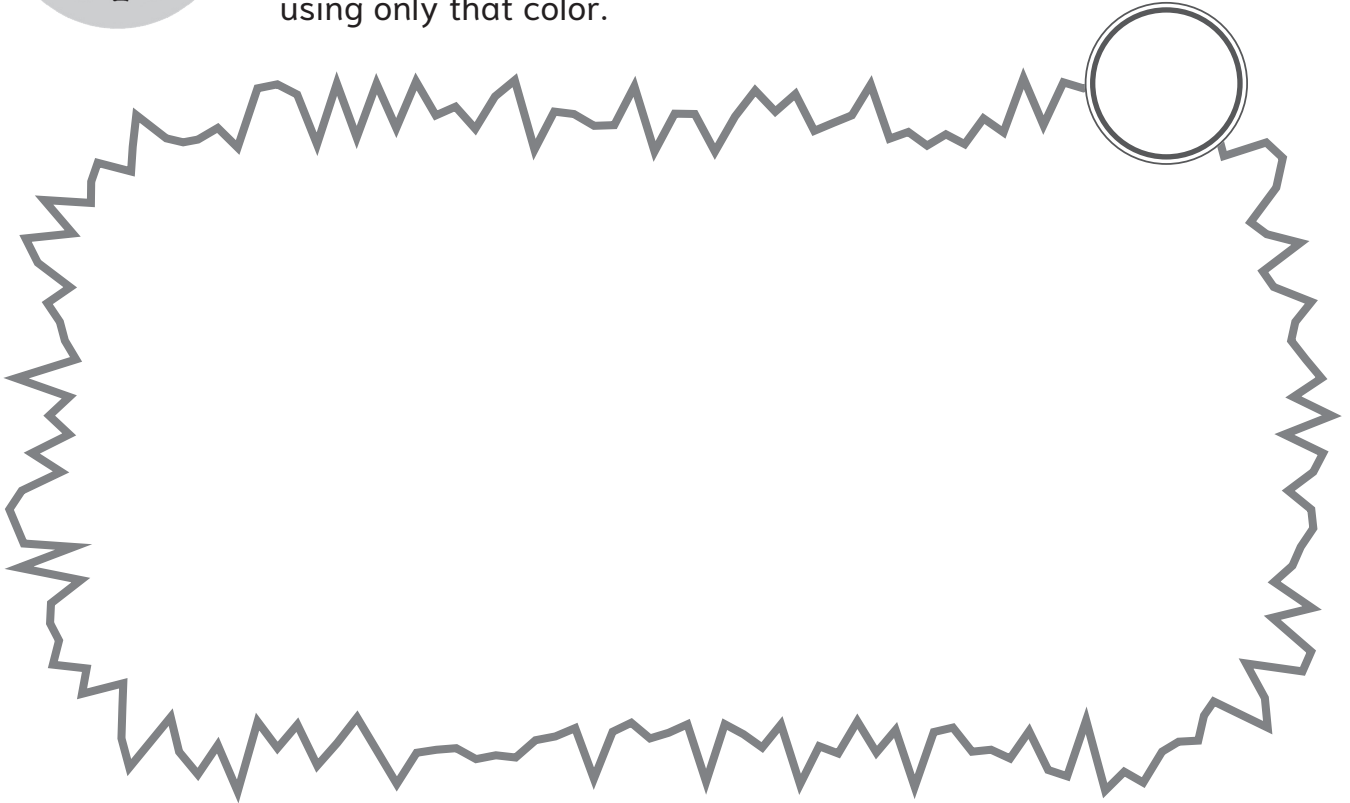
What is fear?



Fear is an emotion we feel when we think we are in danger.

When we feel fear, we say, **“I feel afraid.”**

What color would you choose for fear? Color in the circle with that color. Then, draw a picture about feeling scared using only that color.



What do you know about feeling afraid? _____

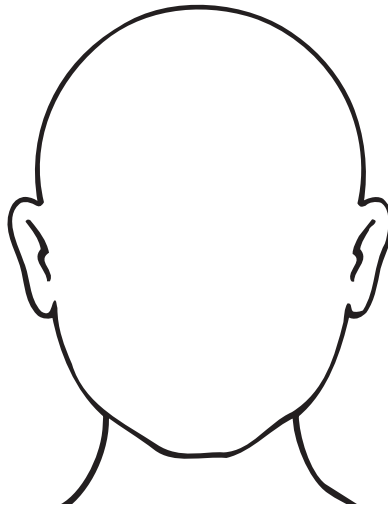
Fear is just an emotion, just like feeling happy or sad or mad. By understanding what makes us feel afraid, we can learn how to deal with it. That doesn't mean we'll never be afraid again! But maybe we can learn how to work with our fear.



Name: _____ **Date:** _____

When someone is afraid, what does their voice sound like? _____

What does their face look like? Draw a picture of someone who is scared.



How do they act? What do they do with their body? _____

How else do you know someone is afraid? _____

Find a partner and ask them: “What do you do when you feel afraid? What makes you feel better?” Compare your answers. Everyone has their own way of dealing with feeling afraid. You might learn a new way to help yourself feel better when you’re scared.

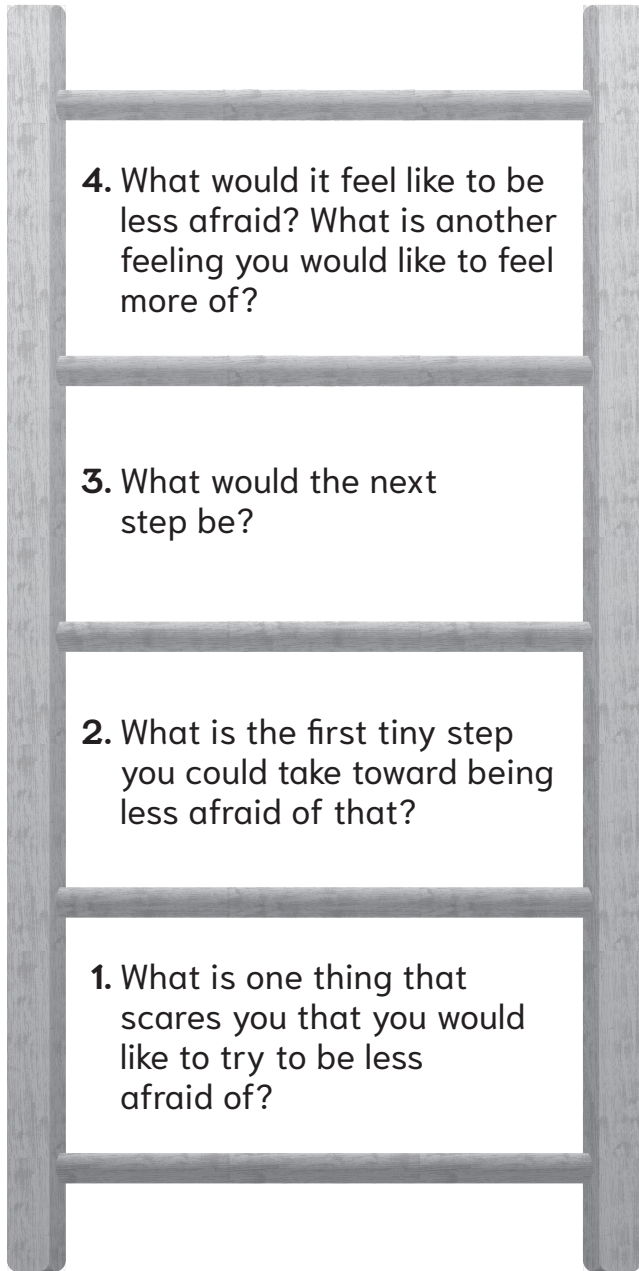


Name: _____ Date: _____

One Step at a Time

One way to deal with feeling afraid is to think of a stepladder. We can take tiny steps toward being brave about what we're scared of.

Start at the bottom of the ladder and answer each question to move up to the top.



4. What would it feel like to be less afraid? What is another feeling you would like to feel more of?

3. What would the next step be?

2. What is the first tiny step you could take toward being less afraid of that?

1. What is one thing that scares you that you would like to try to be less afraid of?

“Never let the fear of striking out stop you from playing the game.”
–Babe Ruth, Hall of Fame baseball player who hit 714 home runs in his career