

Gray Elementary

SEL Update November 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Last month, in an email to parents, I introduced a new initiative we have at Gray. Part of our role in your children's lives is to support the development of the whole child: academic, social, physical and emotional. To support Gray students as they move through this 'new normal' during this extraordinary time, we have been intentional in our efforts to develop skills and strategies to support their Social-Emotional Learning (SEL). In the past few months, I have had the privilege of working in many classrooms with two main goals in mind:

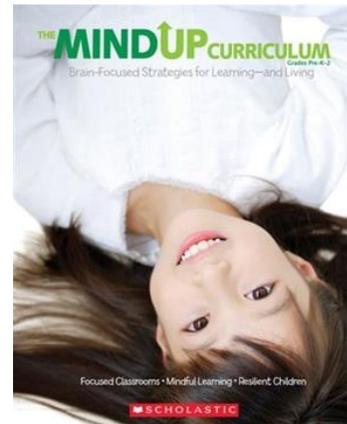
- 1) to explore ways we can express our emotions in effective ways, and
- 2) to develop healthy strategies to cope with 'big feelings' (like frustration, worry, stress).

Using the *Zones of Regulation*, *Everyday Anxiety Strategies for Educators (EASE)*, *Mind Up* and other resources our intent is to help students develop a variety of strategies to manage their emotions in healthy ways.

The ZONES of Regulation®

BLUE ZONE	GREEN ZONE	YELLOW ZONE	RED ZONE
Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly	Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Ready to Learn	Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control	Mad/Angry Terrified Yelling/Hitting Elated Out of Control

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At school, we have explored main concepts through games, videos and role-playing activities. From drawing out their personal 'worry monsters,' to discussing main characters in picture books, students are becoming increasingly confident in identifying ways to express their emotions.



At the home-front, I hear feedback from students that strategies like squared breathing, taking nature walks and listening to music are familiar to them and are ways they and their families stay grounded. Given this, and the number of parents interested in the district hosted session, *Alongside You: Managing Mental and Emotional Wellness During COVID-19*, it is clear that, especially now, we want to support the SEL and mental wellness of the children in our community.

At times, it is challenging for adults to know what to say or do to help children conquer big feelings, especially during times of uncertainty and change. As the most important grown-ups in their world, parents/guardians can help children feel more secure, and lighten the heaviness of whatever is happening to make their worries grow. I hope that the concepts and tools we explore in SEL in the classrooms make their way to informal chats at home. As a mother of three myself, I know how challenging it is sometimes to get the daily scoop about how the day went. Replies of, “Good,” “Not much” and the occasional grunt don’t really provide much insight at all! So, I hope that these prompts help in making some SEL home connections with your kids.

Table Talk / Car Conversations

- What are examples of some red feelings? Green feelings? Which ones have you felt today?
- Can you show me how to belly breathe?
- What is squared breathing?
- What does your ‘worry monster’ look like? What is its name?



Drawing a worry monster can help children externalize a worry that normally takes up space in the form of thoughts in their heads.

SEL Home Connection

To continue to promote mental wellness and practice the SEL tools students have learned in school, we invite families to try some of them together.

This month, we encourage families to find ways that MOVEMENT can be used to reset, ground and relax ourselves. Below are links to K-3 and Gr. 4-7 activities from the EASE program that you can try at home.

K-3

https://healthymindsbc.gov.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/EASE-at-Home-K-3_Movement.pdf

Gr. 4-7

https://healthymindsbc.gov.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/EASE-at-Home-4-7_Movement.pdf

Try one or try them all! We would love to see families in action! Please take a photo and we can share these snapshots of SEL with our Gray community on our school website.

Photos can be emailed to hgonzalez@deltasd.bc.ca

I look forward to seeing how the students connect their SEL growth to home!

Sincerely,

Heidi Gonzalez

Vice-Principal, Gray Elementary

EASE at Home (Grades K-3)

Strategies to help young children cope with anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond

Sometimes it's hard for adults to know what to say or do to ease a child's worries, especially during times of change and uncertainty. As the most important big people in their world, parents and caregivers can help children feel safer and soften the sharp edges of whatever is happening to make their worries grow.

Helping Children Move Their Bodies

What is it?

Moving our bodies has many benefits for our physical, mental, and emotional health. Build in big or small movement breaks throughout the day to decrease stress and increase fun!

How?

When possible, get outside to enjoy the fresh air, remembering to follow [physical distancing guidelines](#) to keep you and others safe. There are lots of ways to get active that don't require a lot of equipment or time. Use your imagination and interests to come up with your own activities or try some of these examples:

 <p>Jump rope, kick a ball, toss a frisbee, play hopscotch, tag, or Red-Light Green-Light. Check out these classic outdoor games.</p>	 <p>Have a family dance party, pump up the music, dress up and let loose!</p>	 <p>Combine screen time and active time with videos like Cosmic Kids Yoga and GoNoodle.</p>
 <p>Go on a scavenger hunt. Look for things like a feather, a y-shaped stick, a flat stone, a rock with a spot on it, five different leaves, something natural and red. See these Scavenger Hunt printables for more ideas.</p>	 <p>Build an obstacle course with stations to cycle through. For example: 1. do 10 jumping jacks 2. jump over a row of canned goods 3. spin around 5 times 4. balance a cushion on your head for 10 seconds 5. pretend to hula hoop (or really hula hoop!)</p>	



EASE (Everyday Anxiety Strategies for Educators) is a collection of classroom lessons that have been adapted for parents and caregivers to help children manage anxiety and worries at home.



EASE at Home (Grades 4-7)

Strategies to help children cope with anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond

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 <p>Observe nature and track observations in a notebook, or try Geocaching.</p>	 <p>Jump rope, kick a ball, toss a frisbee, play hopscotch, tag, or Red-Light Green-Light or check out some classic outdoor games.</p>	 <p>Pump up the music, and dance or follow along with videos like Cosmic Kids Yoga and GoNoodle.</p>
 <p>Go on a scavenger hunt to find things like a feather, a y-shaped stick, a flat stone, a rock with a spot on it, five different leaves, something natural and red - see these Scavenger Hunt printables for more ideas.</p>	 <p>Build an obstacle course with stations to cycle through. For example: 1. do 10 jumping jacks 2. jump over a row of canned goods 3. spin around 5 times 4. balance a cushion on your head for 10 seconds 5. pretend to hula hoop (or really hula hoop!)</p>	



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