

INCOPORATING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING INTO A PRESCHOOL  
CURRICULUM

A RESEARCH PAPER

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## Abstract

CREATIVE PROJECT: Incorporating Social-Emotional Learning into a Preschool Curriculum

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This Creative Project addresses the problem of a local preschool that is expanding their program from three to five days per week and lengthening each day by 30 minutes. The goal of the project was to assist the director of the preschool in the expansion of their program by reviewing the early childhood education literature and providing suggestions for a revised curriculum. From my review of the literature, I developed a revised, five-day curriculum spanning four weeks, which is based on the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum. The activities I developed are meant to enhance children's social and emotional development, and will be implemented each day during the art and story time sessions in their revised curriculum.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

The benefit of a preschool education has been well documented. Data from the NICHD Study of Early Child Care suggest that the quality of children's early education is related to their cognitive development and academic performance when they begin kindergarten (NICHD ECCRN & Duncan, 2003). The foundation for a high quality preschool is their curriculum.

Directors of preschools are faced with the arduous task of selecting from a number of different curricula geared toward early childhood development. One challenge for today's preschools is to devise a curriculum that meets the needs of children from diverse backgrounds. For example, in addition to implementing a developmentally appropriate program, a preschool may serve children who lack social and emotional skills, have experienced mental-health issues, or do not have the support needed at home to help them with problem. A curriculum that includes activities which focus explicitly on social and emotional development better prepare children for later academic achievement and may help to offset less than optimal life experiences by promoting prosocial behavior, problem solving and positive coping skills.

### Problem Statement

A local preschool is extending their hours from three days a week, three and one-half hours per day to five days a week, four hours per day. This expansion of hours

requires the directors and teachers to reevaluate their curricula, which includes identifying areas for expansion or change. The goal of a high quality preschool program is to prepare the students for kindergarten. A researched-based and developmentally appropriate curriculum is the foundation to reach this goal. The focus of this creative project is to expand the current curriculum by incorporating activities specifically designed to promote social and emotional development.

#### Purpose/Significance of the Project

One major component of a high quality preschool program is their curriculum. Generally speaking, educators play a key role in guiding children's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development. Although some curricula are comprehensive (emphasizing all aspects of development) other curricula focus on one aspect of development. The main purpose of this project is to make suggestions for how to expand their current curriculum to meet the increase amount of time available and foster school readiness amount preschoolers. One way to do that is to incorporate more social and emotional learning activities into the current curriculum.

#### Rationale

Studies have identified social and emotional learning activities for improving children's academic achievement during childhood and adolescence. "SEL (social and emotional learning) curricula directly teach children appropriate actions and provide a safe environment for them to practice what they learn" (Gunter, Caldarella, Korth, & Young, 2012, p. 151.). The main focus of a social and emotional learning program is to

“promote positive behaviors such as success, kindness and caring and to prevent bullying, violence, and later emotional and behavioral problems” (Gunter, et al., 2012, p. 152). By giving the students the tools necessary to cope with the emotional and social aspects of life, we are setting the stage for positive behaviors in adolescence and adulthood. Schultz, Richardson, Barber & Wilcox (2011) found that around the age of eight, children’s behaviors tend to stabilize. If children are taught how to deal with their emotions and engage socially with others, the risk of developing academic, behavioral and mental health problems decrease.

#### Assumptions of the Project

During this project I will provide recommendations to the directors and teachers for different activities and ideas that will encourage social and emotional learning for their students. My hopes are that they will incorporate them into the new curriculum for 2012-2013 school year. It is assumed that these activities will have a positive impact on the children’s social and emotional development.

#### Summary

A local preschool is encouraging their students to participate in an expanded week-long preschool program. By adding days and hours to their existing program, they are hoping to improve school readiness for the preschoolers attending their program. The preschool director is faced with the challenge of adjusting their curriculum to fit the new time frame. My role is to research different types of curricula available for preschool programs and suggest which will fit their goals. After researching, I discovered social and

emotional learning activities to incorporate into their current curriculum. Research suggests that encouraging children's social and emotional development will help them to become more prepared for adolescent adolescence and the realities of a school setting. By adding these activities to their everyday curriculum, they will not only fulfill the time commitments of an expanded preschool program, but also foster children's social and emotional development at the same time.

## Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Due to the expansion of hours, a local preschool has to adjust their curriculum. I will suggest to them to add more social and emotional learning activities to their current curriculum. In this chapter, I review empirical literature around children's social and emotional development within the context of preschool education. Specifically, I discuss the importance of social and emotional skills and how they are connected to later academic achievement, importance of social and emotional skill development in a preschool program, and provide a description of a social and emotional learning program.

### *Importance of Social and Emotional Development among Preschoolers*

It has been estimated that approximately five percent of all U.S. children and adolescents have emotional problems (Hansen & Zambo, 2007). The value of a preschool education for children's development has been well researched and documented. Children who complete a high quality preschool program generally display a readiness for kindergarten, more so than their peers who have not attended a preschool program. Furthermore, a high quality preschool program may help to close achievement gaps between children from advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds. For example, positive coping skills fostered through a high quality preschool program may protect disadvantaged children from developing emotional and behavioral problems.

According to NAEYC standards, one aspect of a high quality preschool program is their curriculum. A well-articulated curriculum helps ensure that teachers are planning a daily schedule that maximizes children's learning. The standards that determine the content of what children learn is ever changing, especially during kindergarten and first grade years. Children are expected to know and understand many different concepts before they reach first grade. Standards for English, math, science, and social studies have been developed in Indiana for kindergarten classes. These standards will have an impact on preschool programs to create a more demanding curriculum. Some scholars have questioned if academics need to be the focus of a preschool program. Marcon (2002) noted that "children whose preschool experiences had been academically directed earned significantly lower grades compared to children who had attended child-initiated preschool classes" (p. 2), and that "Children's later school success appears to have been enhanced by more active, child-initiated early learning experiences" (p. 20). Examples of these experiences may be hands on learning or free play.

Sun Lee (2006) interviewed and studied 18 preschool teachers. She inquired what a preschool curriculum should include. In her study, the teachers unanimously agreed that "preschool education should foremost be a fun experience for young children" (p. 439). The teachers listed 10 main themes that should be included in all preschool curricula:

1. Preschoolers should have fun
2. Preschoolers should be attentive and engaged
3. Preschoolers' interests and their everyday lives should be the basis for curriculum

4. Preschools should provide choices
5. Preschoolers should learn through play, exploration, and discoveries
6. Preschoolers should not be pressured or stressed
7. Preschoolers' academic learning is not so important
8. Preschoolers' social development is important
9. Preschoolers' physical development is important
10. Preschoolers' individual differences should be considered

“Kindergarten teachers are much more likely to name these social and emotional skills as very important to early school success than they are to name academic skills such as letter recognition or numerical knowledge (Lin, Lawrence, & Gorrell, 2003, p. 226).

Within the preschool setting, children learn how to socialize with their peers and their teachers. They also may learn how to express their emotions in a positive or negative way. How children regulate and express their emotions has an effect on how they perform academically in school. With a sample of 200 full-day kindergartners, Ladd, Birch, and Buhs (1999) discovered a relationship between children's behaviors (i.e. classroom participation) at the beginning of kindergarten and the extent to which they engaged in relationships with their peers and teachers throughout the school year. In addition, a positive association was found between classroom participation and achievement, as assessed with the Metropolitan Readiness Test (an indicator of academic skill). This relationship explained children's end-of-year academic skill. These findings suggest that children with stronger social skills will perform better academically. This may be due to the positive relationship that the student had with the teacher and their

peers. This discovery parallels Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. He believed there is a transaction between people a child interacts with and that child, they have influence on each other.

*A description and the importance of social and emotional skill development in preschool programs*

Social and emotional learning is a concept that was first recognized in 1994 by the Fetzer group (Elias, Zins, Weissberg, Greensberg, Haynes, Kessler, Schwab-Stone & Shriver 1997). They devised a framework to address the emotional needs of children and adolescents, and how schools responded to those needs. "Social and emotional learning is the process whereby children are able to acknowledge and manage their emotions, recognize the emotions of others, develop empathy, make good decisions, establish positive friendships, and handle challenges and situations effectively (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL] Benefits of SEL (2011)). The main goal of social and emotional learning is to improve social and emotional skills, improve the attitudes about themselves and others, and to improve social interactions. By doing so, hopefully the level of emotional distress and behavioral problems will decrease.

It is a challenge for the twenty-first century school, "they are serving a large number of students who lack social and emotional competences, experience mental-health problems, and engage in health-damaging behaviors" (Weissberg and O'Brien, 2004, p. 87). Parents want schools to produce children who are not only academically ready for the world, but also emotionally ready. "Schools will be more successful in their

educational mission when they integrate efforts to promote children's academic, social, and emotional learning" (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg 2007, p. 192).

Preschool teachers list disruptive behavior as one of their biggest challenges in the classroom. "Young children who lack social and emotional competence frequently demonstrate discipline problems in school and are at risk for not achieving future academic success" (McClelland 2006, p. 475). It is important to teach children early, in a preschool setting, how to verbalize and express their emotions in a socially acceptable way. Social and emotional learning can help children achieve this by using hands-on and child initiated approaches.

A study done by Gunter, Caldarella, Korth, and Young (2012) compared a preschool classroom that implemented one social and emotional learning curriculum to one that had not. Specifically, the preschool that implemented a social and emotional learning curriculum used *Strong Start Pre-K* that is part of the *Strong Kids* program. "Previous studies of the Strong Kids curricula have demonstrated significant increases in students' emotional knowledge and prosocial behavior along with decreases in their negative emotional symptoms and internalizing behaviors" (Gunter et al., p. 152). The main goal of this particular curriculum is to "help prevent emotional and mental health problems and develop a vocabulary to express feelings" (Gunter et al., p. 152). In this study, two teachers taught the curriculum and two did not. All four teachers were female. Eighty - four students completed the study. The study was completed during a one year time span. After the program was implemented and reviewed, the teachers noticed an increase in the students' ability to regulate their emotions. Teachers also noted a decrease

in students' internalizing behaviors and the "perceptions of the student-teacher relationships improved" (Gunter et al., p. 156). As shown by this study, social and emotional learning curriculum can have a life-long affect on a child. When a child learns to identify and deal with emotional and social problems they have the ability to then focus better in a school setting.

### Chapter 3: Methods

A local preschool is extending their hours from three days a week, three and one-half hours per day to five days a week, four hours per day. This expansion of hours requires the directors and teachers to reevaluate their curricula, which includes identifying areas for expansion or change. To assist the director in expanding their curriculum, I met with her to discuss her goals and expectations. Next I researched the various types of curricula available for preschools that may help meet those goals. Finally, I drafted a 4 week example of activities. Based on my review of the literature, I recommended incorporating the social and emotional learning curriculum into their current program. This chapter will describe the steps made to incorporate the curricula into the preschool's day of activities.

To incorporate social and emotional learning into the curriculum, a meeting with the preschool director was set up. At the meeting, goals and expectations were discussed. One of the main goals the director had was to incorporate new activities into the program. This year marks the eighth year this particular director had been in charge. She wanted to incorporate new and fresh activities into the curriculum in addition to adjusting to the expansion of time. A schedule of when activities would take place during the school day was already devised (see Appendix). We came to the conclusion that I would begin my research for activities and come back with ideas and recommendations.

At our next meeting, we discussed social and emotional learning. I shared with her some of the research that was available on this topic and the core concepts of social and emotional learning, which include:

- Self-awareness
- Social awareness
- Recognition and self-recognition of emotions
- Relationship skills
- Empathy
- Responsible decision making (Buchanan, Gueldner, Tran, & Merrell, 2009)

After reviewing books that dealt with social and emotional learning in a preschool setting, searching online for example of activities, and reviewing ideas with my personal babysitter, I drafted a 4 week (in this case the month of September) sample curriculum to present to the director. Many of the activities I found dealt with drawing and art work. It only made sense to incorporate these activities during the time period specifically designated for art activities. I also discovered many books that dealt with emotions. By reading to the children during story time, they not only learn lessons from the characters but also benefit from “real-life” discussions (see Appendix) after the book is read. One of the benefits of the chosen activities is the ease of incorporating them into the current curriculum. They have been adapted to fit into the established themes. This will increase the chances that the director will use my suggestions.

I felt that incorporating social and emotional learning activities would be a benefit for this preschool. Based on my research, social and emotional development is a good

foundation for academic achievement. Schultz, Richardson, Barber & Wilcox (2011) found that when social skill lessons were implemented in preschool classrooms, children demonstrated “increases in desirable social and emotional behaviors and decreases in more problematic behaviors” (p. 146) occurred. I have a personal investment in the quality of this program as well. My children attend this preschool and I want them to have the highest quality of preschool education possible. I strongly believe that adding these activities will make that happen.

The main challenge to the development of the activities, however, was linking them to the already established themes. The themes that I was given to work with included apples, shapes, fall colors and, Forest Friends. The apple theme was probably the most difficult. One activity that I thought of was making a Kindness Apple Tree. The students say something nice about another student, write the kind word on an apple, and tape it to a cut out of a tree on the wall. By doing this the children are recognizing their peers good traits, having the sense of accomplishment putting their completed apple on the tree, and realizing how they are viewed by others. Social and emotional connections are made throughout the four-week lesson plans (see Appendix).

## Chapter 4: Results

The goal of this project was to assist a local preschool in reevaluating their curricula because of an expansion of hours. To accomplish this goal I met with the director to discuss her goals and then researched the different types of preschool curriculum. The final product of my research and collaboration with the director of the preschool was a curriculum that included social and emotional learning activities during the art and story time periods of the preschool day.

The result of this Creative Project is a series of lesson plans, spanning four weeks, which include activities geared toward children's social and emotional development and inspired by the social and emotional learning curriculum. The majority of these activities take place during the art or story time portion of the preschool daily schedule. All of the new activities incorporate learning that deal with how to express emotions (both verbally and nonverbally) and how to get along socially with peers. Instructions for how to implement each activity and additional information about the materials used (e.g., book titles) are included in the lesson plan.

The social and emotional learning activities I chose are meant to encourage social and emotional development and be easily incorporated into the predetermined themes. Each activity connects hands-on and interactive activities to social and emotional skill development. For example, an art activity was to create "A Kindness Apple Tree".

During this particular week, the children are learning about apples. For this particular activity the children would list ways they could be nice to each other. The teacher would ask questions like. “What can you say to make someone feel better when they are sad?”, “How can you help each other every day?”, and “What are special things you could do to show a friend you like them?” When the children have shared their responses, the teacher would pass out blank red apple forms. On each apple the child would write how they have been kind or helpful to a friend that day. When everyone has something written down, they could share their answer with one another and then tape it on the blank “apple tree”. By doing this activity children will learn what socially appropriate activities they could do to show kindness towards others. They would also be learning from their peers about how to act around others.

An example of a social and emotional learning activity through story time is “Hey, Little Ant” by Phillip and Hannah Hoose. This book is about a little boy who is about to squish an ant because he is useless and steals picnic food. The ant tries to convince the boy not to squish him. This book gives the children an opportunity to learn how others might be feeling, which promotes perspective-taking skills. It also helps them recognize the consequences of their decisions on others. After reading the story, the teacher would lead a discussion on how they would feel if someone was trying to squish them. What would they say or do to try to stop it? How did they think the ant felt? These types of questions will get the child thinking about the feelings of others and to encourage them to think before acting.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

A local preschool made the decision to expand their current program from three days a week, three and one-half hours per day to five days a week, four hours per day. This expansion required the directors and teachers to reevaluate their curricula, which included identifying areas for expansion or change. For my creative project, I assisted the director and teachers in achieving this goal by researching preschool curriculum and implementing social and emotional learning activities into their current program.

A central goal of a high quality preschool program is to prepare the students for kindergarten. Although there are many indicators of quality when it comes to early childhood education, a researched-based and developmentally appropriate curriculum is an essential component to high quality preschool programs. My review of the research suggested that a focus on children's social and emotional development is beneficial in terms of promoting school readiness and potentially protecting at-risk children from developing emotional and behavioral problems. Based on my review of the literature, I recommended adding activities that focus on children's social and emotional development, which were grounded in the social and emotional learning curriculum. This chapter will discuss my completed project and the acceptance of it.

The standards of what needs to be taught during the elementary years are changing what is being taught in preschools (Marcon, 2002). The current academically focused curriculum used in some preschools may not be suited for children of the twenty-

first century. Research suggests there is a link between social and emotional learning and higher achievement in adolescence. This association emphasizes the need for social and emotional learning needs to take place during the preschool years. Thus, the activities I included in the revised curriculum focuses on social and emotional development. By exploring different ways to display emotions, how to accept your own and others' feelings, and how to behave in a socially acceptable manner, the curriculum is helping children develop emotionally and socially.

In talking with the director of the preschool, she was very excited about the impact this project will have on her students. After reviewing the project, she will be implementing more social and emotional learning activities throughout the entire school year.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion, Limitations, and Recommendations

For this creative project I assisted a local preschool in revising their current curriculum. The activities I developed were grounded in a pre-existing curriculum that has been shown to improve children's later academic performance by strengthening social and emotional skills in preschool. Although my final project, a four-week lesson plan, has many strengths, it is not without limitations. The main limitation involved in this project is the application. After presenting my project to the director and staff, I have no documentation how the activities and lessons were received by the students. Nor do I have any evidence that social and emotional learning did actually fulfill the goals of helping children become more socially and emotionally developed.

A formal assessment could be created and given to the child both at the beginning of the year and the end to record the growth of both social and emotional development throughout the year. The teacher could also assess the child by observation throughout the year to note any growth in their development.

There are a few important concepts that stand out to me as I conclude this project. The first is the ripple effect that a preschool education has on a person's life. What knowledge a young child gains during preschool can greatly affect how they act and how they are treated during middle childhood and adolescence. The importance of social and emotional learning is another concept that I did not fully understand until completion of

this project. Learning how to deal with our emotions and how to behave in a socially acceptable way is best learned at a young age. The most effective activities used to develop children's skills in these areas are interactive and hands on. Reading books about emotions and learning to express yourself also will support the development of social and emotional skills.

Social and emotional learning deal with “the skills need to handle ourselves, our relationships, and our work, effectively and ethically” (CASEL 2011). Based on the research I found, the more developed children's social and emotional skills the more prepared they will be to meet the challenges of middle childhood. These challenges may be in a school setting or in the family dynamics. A preschool curriculum that includes activities that develop children socially and emotionally are giving them the skills needed for later life.

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## Appendices

The following is an example of a typical day at the preschool. The director gave me a general activity for each time slot. A brief explanation is given about what should occur during each activity. The specific activity will change based on the theme of the week. The director suggested for social and emotional learning activities to take place during the Art or Story Time slot.

### Month of September

#### Class Schedule

8:30-9:00	Exploration Time
9:00-9:10	Pick up toys and play things
9:10-9:30	Art
9:30-9:45	Calendar/Pledge of Allegiance
9:45-10:00	Story Time
10:00-10:25	Restroom/Snack
10:25-10:30	Independent Reading
10:30-10:50	Alphabet and number work
10:50-11:15	Recess outside or inside gym
11:20-11:25	Prepare to go home

**Exploration time** = This is a time for free play. The children have just arrived at school. They are using this time to put away their jackets and folders as well as socializing and

interacting with their classmates. This time also gives the teachers a chance to observe the children and see who they are interacting with on a daily basis.

**Art** = A time for structured and unstructured expression. Depending on the activity, a child may be cutting, gluing, coloring, painting, working in groups or individually, and following directions.

**Restroom/Snack and Independent Reading** = This time slot will vary depending upon how long the child takes eating their snack. One day a child may take longer eating and will get a shorter Independent Reading time than another. Children are allowed to set on the carpets and “read” or look through the books available in the library section of each classroom. This is time for the students to sit quietly by themselves to look through books or interact with other children by “reading” to them.

**Alphabet and number work** = Each week a different number and letter of the alphabet will be the focus. During this time, the students will work on tracing or writing the letters and numbers. They will also be doing various worksheet activities that will review and emphasize the letter or number.

The following chart is the block plan created with the incorporation of social and emotional learning activities during the four-week period. The \* indicates the social and emotional learning activities for that day. Following the block plan are the lesson plans dealing with those activities.

<b>Week: 1</b> <b>Theme: Forest Friends</b>	<b>Art</b>	<b>Story Time</b>
Monday	Create a Mouse	*"Mouse Was Mad" by Linda Urban
Tuesday	Create an Owl	**"Little Owl Lost" by Chris Haughton
Wednesday	Field Trip to Mounds State Park	
Thursday	*Memory Book	*"Hey, Little Ant" by Phillip and Hannah Hoose
Friday	Make a bat	**"Monsters in the Bathrooms" by Bill Harley

<b>Week: 2</b> <b>Theme: Apples</b>	<b>Art</b>	<b>Story Time</b>
Monday	"All about Apples" Book	**"My Many Colored Days" by Dr. Seuss
Tuesday	Paint apple	**"How are you Peeling?" by Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers
Wednesday	Put together painted apples	**"Eggbert, The Slightly Cracked Egg" by Tim Ross
Thursday	*Apple Kindness Tree	"The Apple Pie Tree" by Zoe Hall
Friday	Apple Chalk Board	**"I Can Share" by Karen Katz

<b>Week: 3</b> <b>Theme: Apples and Colors</b>	<b>Art</b>	<b>Story Time</b>
Monday	Prints with apples	**"My Many Colored Days" by Dr. Seuss
Tuesday	*Ants in a Line	"Apple Picking Time" by Michele Slawson
Wednesday	Field Trip to Apple Orchard	
Thursday	Apples Big/Small	**"The Rainbow Fish" by Marcus Pfister
Friday	*Paint a classroom Apple Tree	"Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See?" by Bill Martin and Eric Carle

<b>Week: 4</b> <b>Theme: Fall Color and Shapes</b>	<b>Art</b>	<b>Story Time</b>
Monday	*Color a large leaf cut out invitation for a "Fall Tea"	"What Do You Say, Dear?" by Seslye Joslin
Tuesday	Indian Corn	**"Hands Are Not For Hitting" by Martine Agassi
Wednesday	*Color different shapes and place them on a large piece of paper to create a classroom quilt	"Autumn Orange" by Christianne Jones
Thursday	*Place large boxes around the room for the students to color and practice drawing their shapes on. When finished, create a train.	"The Little Scarecrow Boy" by Margaret Wise Brown
Friday	Number book	**"Today I Feel Silly And Other Moods That Make My Day" by Jamie Lee Curtis

**Week 1****Monday**

Story Time: “Mouse Was Mad” follows a mouse through the forest that is looking for different ways to express himself. As he encounters different animals, they try to teach him the “right” ways to be mad. In the end, he learns his own way of expression.

Teacher Instructions

- Before reading the story, ask the children how they express themselves when they are upset or mad? Ask them how they think a mouse would show his anger?
- After reading, explain that it is alright to feel mad. Ask them to share what they do to help a mad feeling go away. How did the mouse in the story make his mad feelings go away?
- During recess outside, the children could practice some of the way that the mouse made his mad feelings go away (stomp, hop, roll, etc.)

Rationale: The main purpose of this activity is to educate children on the feeling of anger. By reading them the story, they listen to how the mouse expressed his anger in an appropriate manner. The theme for this week is Forest Friends, so a story about a mouse ties into it.

**Tuesday**

Story Time: “Little Owl Lost” is about a baby owl that has fallen out of his nest and must find his mother. He gives descriptions of his mother to a variety of animals in hope that they will help him find her.

Teacher Instructions:

- Review with the children the different feelings felt by Little Owl as he is looking for his mother throughout the story. What type of feeling do they think he felt when he finally found his mother?
- How would they feel if they were separated from their mother? Review with the children the safety steps when separated from a loved one.

Rationale: Learning about the feelings of being alone and lost are the main focuses of this story. By listening what the Little Owl did, some students may realize they had the same feelings when they began school. They will connect with the Little Owl and understand that others have those feelings as well. Reviewing the steps for children to follow when separated from a parent or guardian is also a main focus of this story.

**Thursday**

Art: Create a Memory Book

Teacher Instructions:

- Teachers will distribute art supplies (paper, crayons and markers). Instruct the children to illustrate their favorite memories of the field trip to Mounds State Park. Remind the children about the bus ride, seeing the different animals at the nature center, and going on a trail to boost their imaginations. If needed, help the children dictate captions to go along with the pictures.
- Once they are finished, use a three-hole punch to punch holes. Use paper fasteners to attach the pages together. The teachers may also want the children to create a title page.
- Encourage the children to share their creations during Independent Story time and their family and friends

Rationale: This activity will encourage a child's social development by encouraging them to share their creations. They could also use this type of activity at home to create a memory box/story of other activities in their lives.

Story Time: "Hey Little Ant" is about a little boy who is about to squish an ant because he is useless and steals picnic food. The ant tries to convince the boy not to squish him, he is just getting from for his family and there are other similarities between the two. In the end, it is left up to the audience if the boy should squish the ant or not.

Teacher Instructions:

- Ask the children about their field trip, did they see any ants? What were the ants doing? Read the story

- When the story is complete, ask the children how each of the characters were feeling? What would they say to someone who was trying to squish them?

Rationale: This book is giving the students the opportunity to learn how others might be feeling and allows them to reflect on how their actions may impact others.

## **Friday**

Story Time: “Monsters in the Bathroom” is a song written by Bill Harley. It is about a child who thinks there are monsters in his house and describes what he did to get over his fears.

### Teacher Instructions:

- Inform the students that instead for reading a story today, they will be listening to one.
- Ask the students if they are afraid of the bats they made. What things are they afraid of? Were they afraid of any of the animals they saw on the field trip?
- After the story played, teachers will tell children about something they were frightened by. Then ask for their advice: What could I have done to make myself feel less afraid?
- Ask the children how they manage their fears?

Rationale: We all have fears. Learning how to deal with fears can be very difficult for children. Discussing what they are afraid of, how to deal with it, and that even adults

have fears can be comforting to a child. It will let them know that they are not alone in their feelings.

**Week 2****Monday**

Story Time: “My Many Colored Days” In this story, each day is described as a particular color, which in turn is associated with a specific emotion.

Teacher Instructions:

- Before reading the story, ask or show the children the different colors of apples. Just like there are different colors of apples, we all have different “colors” of emotions. Explain that sometimes colors can go with our emotions. Blue may be associated with sadness, red may be associated with anger.
- As the teacher is reading the story, they may ask the children for an example of when they felt that specific color.
- When finished, ask the students for a specific color that represents their feelings right now.
- Ask the students, even though apples are red, do they think that red apples are angry? What emotion do yellow apples “feel”?

Rationale: This story and discussion will help children to identify different emotions. Most preschool children know their colors, but they may not be able to identify the emotion they are feeling. By giving an emotion a color representation, they may find it easier to express themselves to others.

**Tuesday**

Story Time: “How are you Peeling?” Showing the illustrations and reading the words describing different emotions, the children will learn that they can tell how a person is feeling by looking at them.

Teacher Instructions:

- Make sure the children know where the peeling of a fruit or vegetable is located.
- Ask them if they can show emotions with their face. Make a happy face; make a sad face, etc...
- Write the word “Feeling” on a large piece of paper. Work with the students to come up with a definition of feelings. Example, “a reaction to something that happens around me” or “something that makes me warm inside”.
- After reading the book, ask the children if they discovered any new emotions. If so, list them and discuss.

Rationale: This story and discussion will help children identify nonverbal expression. They will begin to understand that you can show people how you feel without using words.

**Wednesday**

Story Time: “Eggbert, The Slightly Cracked Egg” Eggbert is forced to leave his refrigerator home because he has a crack in his shell. He tries to disguise the crack and

tries to blend in with everyone else, but it doesn't work. In the end, he realizes he has to be true to himself and learns to love his crack.

Teacher Instructions:

- Before reading the story, point out to the children, just like apples other foods have an exterior for protection. Eggs have a shell. You can demonstrate the strength of the shell (try to break it in your hand) and the fragileness (poking at it with a sharp object).
- After reading, how did Eggbert demonstrate his strong exterior? How did he demonstrate his fragileness?
- Give students a cracked egg worksheet, allow them to draw a face on the egg that corresponds to a time they felt like Eggbert. Let them share their stories.

Rationale: By reading and doing the drawing activities that go along with this story, children will gain a better understanding that their words may hurt others. They may identify with a time that someone said something to them that hurt their feelings. By understanding this concept, children will begin to think before they speak.

**Thursday**

Art: Kindness Tree; The teacher will need to cutout and tape to the wall or other flat surface in the room a bare tree. Include the trunk and lots of branches.

Teacher Instructions:

- Students will write something nice about 3-4 of their classmates on a drawing of an apple. The teacher may want to pre-assign classmates so everyone will have something written about them.
- Once they have written something, they will cut out each apple and tape them onto a large tree cut out hanging in the classroom. Review the nice things said about each child.

Rationale: By having the children participate in the Kindness Tree activity, they will learn to recognize how others view them. They will also begin to understand the joy that is received when someone says something nice about you. By complementing others, they will learn to pick out the good traits in their peers.

**Friday**

Story Time: “I Can Share” Each page of the story shows a different scenario that is solved by sharing.

Teacher Instructions:

- As you read through the story, have the children help you identify the problem and how sharing solved that problem.

- Once the story is complete, have a time for show and tell. Each child will bring in a favorite toy from home. Have each child tell where they got the toy and why it is so special to them. Pair students up to share their toys with one another.

Rationale: From this story and activity, the students will begin to realize that some problems can be solved by sharing and working together. By bringing in their favorite toy, they are not only sharing something special with the entire class, but they are also learning to share that special toy for a short time period. Sharing and letting others play with a special toy can be hard for preschoolers. By practicing this, they will be developing those important social skills.

### Week 3

#### Monday

Story Time: “My Many Colored Days” In this story, each day is described as a particular color, which in turn is associated with a specific emotion.

Teacher Instructions:

- Once again read the book by Dr. Seuss.
- After reading the book, play Simon Says with feelings/moods from the story. For example, say: “Simon says, be busy like a bee.” Hold up colored paper to match the emotion from the story. Have the students take turns giving other emotions to say in the game and write them down on specific colors of paper. Make a note to remind the children that not all of us have the same feeling with a particular color.

Rationale: Even though the students have heard the story once before, there is a different lesson to be learned. By playing Simon Says, children are learning that everyone has different colors for different emotions. They are also learning that some children may not feel the same emotions that they feel.

#### Tuesday

Art: Ants in a Line

Teacher Instructions:

- Using Styrofoam balls, the children will create apples. They may paint them or just use markers to color them.
- After the “apples” are dry they will play “Ants in a Line”. Explain to children that they are going to be pretending they are ants trying to move the “apples” back to their hill. Pile the “apples” on one side of the room (opposite that of the hill).  
Have the children (one at a time) first try to move all the apples in one trip. When that is too difficult for them to accomplish, have them work together by lining up and passing the apples from ant to ant. Which way was easier?
- When complete, discuss teamwork with the students. What everyday task would be easier if you worked with someone to help you finish it?

Rationale: This is a cooperative game that will improve their social skills. Children will see it is easier to “move the apples” when working together. Through the discussion they will also learn what other tasks could be completed easily by working together with family members or peers.

**Thursday**

Story Time: “The Rainbow Fish” The Rainbow Fish thinks he is the most beautiful fish in the ocean because he has sparkling scales. His scales are so special, he refuses to share them with anyone. Because of this, his friends begin to ignore him. After talking to other

friends, the Rainbow Fish decides he was much happier when he shares his scales and has friends.

Teacher Instructions:

- Discuss with children the importance of friendship.
- Ask the students what it means to be a good friend? Write down their responses on a sheet of paper that has been decorated with very colorful sea creatures.

Rationale: After reading the story and doing the activity, the children will begin to understand the need for friends. Through the discussion they will understand what traits a good friend has and how to be good friend to others

**Friday**

Art: Paint a class apple tree

Teacher Instructions:

- Each student will have a small saucer of paint in front of them.
- Before the children begin to paint, have a discussion about the importance of being an individual and how our thumb prints are different from everyone else's. Just like we all have different prints, we are all unique. This will be represented by the individual paint color and their thumb print. Go around the classroom and have each child describe a talent that is unique to them.

- A bare apple tree picture will be passed around. Using their thumb, each individual student will add their own leaf to the apple tree. They may add as many or as few leaves as they wish, this is the classroom apple tree.
- As they are doing this, the teacher needs to emphasize how bare the tree looks with no leaves. As each child paints on their own leaves, the tree is getting more and more beautiful. Just like the classroom, the more talents/leaves the tree has, the better it will be.
- When the children are done, hang it up in the hallway or classroom. The teacher should comment on how many leaves/talents the entire class has and what a wonderful thing it is.

Rationale: During this activity the students will be encouraged to learn individualism and group skills. They will share with one another their talents. By doing so, they are learning about one another and gaining the confidence to be an individual.

## Week 4

### Monday

Art: “Fall Tea”

Teacher Instructions:

- The students will decorate blank leaves of all different colors. They will write on the finished leaf an invitation to a “Fall Tea” party to be held during snack time.
- After reading “What Do You Say, Dear?” encourage the students to use their manners during the tea party.
- Have the students get the table ready, lay out a table cloth and set out nice cups and saucers. Welcome the students to the party. Have them engage in “polite” conversations “Would you like some tea?” “Yes, Please.” “No Thank-You”. All based on what they learned from the story.

Rationale: A party is an excellent way to show children how to behave in a socially acceptable manner. By having a “Fall Tea” children will learn to use manners and engage in conversations with one another.

### Tuesday

Story Time: “Hands Are Not For Hitting” Discusses different actions and activities that children and adults can do with their hands instead of hitting.

Teacher Instructions:

- As the teacher reads the story, have children practice the different things they can do with their hands: handshaking, clapping, blowing kisses, pointing, etc.
- After reading the story, give children different scenarios and discuss what they could do in each scenario instead of hitting.
  - o Someone took the car you were playing with, what could you do?
  - o Someone knocked over your blocks, on purpose, what could you do?
  - o You want to be the first in line, what could you do?
  - o Someone picked up the necklace you were making and all the beads fell off the string, what could you do?

Rationale: After reading the story and doing the activities, children should have a better understanding of alternative activities other than hitting someone when they are mad. They now have an example of other ways of handling the feeling of anger.

**Wednesday**Art: Classroom QuiltTeacher Instructions:

- To begin this art activity, show the students different mosaic pieces of art. Make note of all the different colors and shapes that come together to make one beautiful masterpiece.

- Allow the students to color and cut out different shapes. Using glue, have them stick their colored shapes on a large piece of paper to make a classroom quilt.

Rationale: Once again, the goal of this activity is to demonstrate individualism, but at the same time coming together as a group for a common goal. Everyone's shapes will be different, but that will make the quilt special. Displaying the quilt in the classroom will also give the children a sense of pride and accomplishment.

## **Thursday**

Art: Shape Train

### Teacher Instructions:

- Give the students different colors of construction paper with shapes drawn on them. Each child will chose what shapes they want to cut out and glue on different boxes. Once the children have put their shapes on the boxes, they will put the boxes together to form a train.
- Teachers should point out to the children that the train will not work with just one car, it needs all the cars in order to get where they need to go.

Rationale: This is a cooperative learning activity. Just like a train, the boxes will not be able to go unless they are hooked together. The main focus is to encourage teamwork to accomplish a goal.

**Friday**

Story Time: “Today I Feel Silly and Other Moods That Make My Day” This is a story about a girl whose mood changes. During the story, the girl will identify her different moods and what causes them.

Teacher Instructions:

- Questions to be asked during or after the reading
  - o What, if anything, surprised you about this story?
  - o Where do you feel your feelings begin in your body?
  - o Is it easy for you to name your feelings?
  - o What were some of the things that made the main character’s mood change? What makes your mood change?
  - o How long do your moods last?
- Play an “exciting” song and a “sad” song. Have students draw how it makes them feel.

Rationale: Having children identify and realize that their mood will affect others around them is the main focus of this story. Also learning that there are things, like music, that can change or affect your mood is an important concept for children to understand.