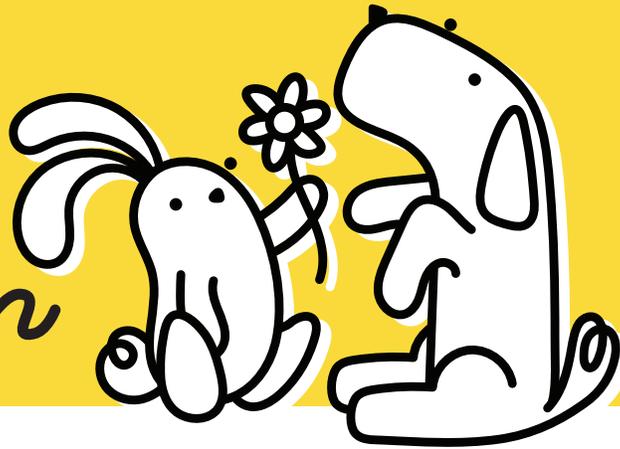


Compassion

EDUCATOR GUIDE



Grade
Level
K-5

UNIT INTRODUCTION

This collection of activities and lessons is designed to help your students

- 1) understand kindness and compassion and
- 2) build skills in order to take action to develop a culture of kindness in the classroom and beyond.

Background Information

THE IMPORTANCE OF KINDNESS

We have all experienced kindness. We know how important it is. Scientific studies have shown that being kind is good for our health.¹ Kindness improves our life satisfaction by increasing our sense of belonging and self-worth, and it improves our health by decreasing anxiety, depression, and blood pressure. And here's the best (and perhaps, most surprising) part – these benefits apply to the giver of kindness, the recipient of kindness, and anyone who witnesses the act! So, every act of kindness improves the lives of at least three people!

TEACHING KINDNESS IN SCHOOL

Can we teach kindness? The short answer is "yes"! Social and emotional skills are critical to being a good student, productive citizen, and successful worker. Many risky behaviors (e.g., drug use, violence, bullying, and dropping out) can be prevented or reduced when social and emotional skills are taught. Additionally, social and emotional learning (SEL) can improve academic scores. In fact, one study shows that students who have been in directed SEL programs can increase their scores on standardized tests by up to 11%!²

Researchers at the University of Wisconsin conducted a study to find out what happens when schools deliberately teach kindness skills.³ It shows that a kindness program "can improve grades, cognitive abilities, and relationship skills." In addition, the researchers found that teaching kindness can enhance students' ability to better calm themselves in stressful situations and help them be more flexible in their thinking.

THE KINDNESS LOOP

The Random Acts of Kindness (RAK) Kindness in the Classroom Pedagogy⁴ focuses on inspiring and empowering students with kindness skills that prompt them to act kindly toward others and share kindness.

This loop is incorporated into the RAK lesson plan activities for Kindergarten through 12th grade; the activities are designed to inspire, empower, promote action and provide opportunities for sharing.

KINDNESS DEFINITION

For the Teacher:

RAK defines kindness as a natural quality of the heart, expressed through an act of good will and reflecting care for self and others.

For the Students:

Kindness means being friendly, generous or considerate to ourselves and others through our words and actions.



KINDNESS CONCEPT: COMPASSION

For the Teacher:

The core of kindness, compassion is caring about someone else's feelings (and offering to help them out when they need it).

For the Students:

Caring about someone else's feelings, and offering to help that person.

- **INSPIRE** students to explore various concepts of kindness through video clips, role-plays, books, games and other hands-on activities.
- **EMPOWER** students to be kind in their daily lives.
- **ACT** kindly through a research project, community service project or another activity that provides students with a chance to demonstrate kindness.
- **SHARE** and reflect on acts of kindness as a class, either by having students verbalize their knowledge and actions (e.g., "I donated blankets to an animal shelter"), write about their response to those actions (e.g., "I learned that animals need our help") and/or produce a product (e.g., contributing to a "wall of kindness" in the classroom by drawing a picture of their latest kind act).

RAK believes that when students participate in all four steps of the RAK Kindness Loop multiple times; it will help them to build skills, internalize kindness, and then engage in inspired action.

Overarching Questions for this Unit

1. What does it mean to be compassionate?
2. What does kindness look like?
3. How can I demonstrate compassion for others?
(Tip: Ask students to use real life scenarios in order to evaluate skill development.)

¹ From the Random Acts of Kindness website document:

http://downloads.randomactsofkindness.org/RAK_kindness_health_facts.pdf

² From the American Psychological Association's Monitor on Psychology:

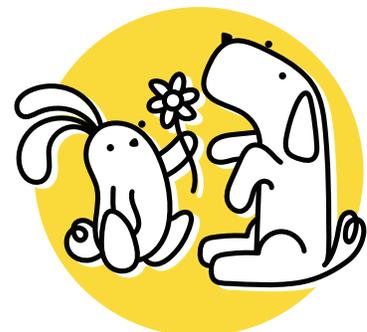
<http://www.apa.org/monitor/2010/04/classrooms.aspx>

³ From the Center for Healthy Minds at the University of Wisconsin, Madison

http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/what_if_schools_taught_kindness

⁴ From Random Acts of Kindness Educator Guide: Kindness in the Classroom, page 4.

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/rak-file-uploads/RAK+Educator+Guide+2015.pdf>



Part One: Inspire

LESSON DURATION

Two, 30-minute sessions

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How can we care for others in our community?
- How can you show care, respect, and kindness every day?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Identify positive ways that peers and family members show support, care, and appreciation for one another and their community, including learning to work as a team
- Identify ways to show respect, consideration, and care to others in various situations in their lives — and yours

MATERIALS

- [Kind Kids Club](#) video
- [What is the Kind Thing to Do?](#) Kindness Scenarios
Be sure to cut apart scenarios in advance
- Large, self-adhesive poster sheet with “Ways to Be Kind” written at the top
- [Scenarios Worksheet](#) (included with this guide)

Optional:

- [One Girl, on a Mission to Spread Love](#) video

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students are inspired to build understanding of kindness and compassion and begin to add kind and compassionate acts to their daily lives. Students analyze a video, read scenarios and evaluate the actions taken looking for ways that compassion can play a role in their lives. Their interactions with the material lead them to know they can be compassionate too.

VOCABULARY

Caring: Showing care and concern for others

Gratitude: Being thankful

Respect: Treating others as you would like to be treated

DAY ONE

1. Ask students to draw a picture or write about a time that someone was kind to them. After several minutes, discuss how they felt when they were treated kindly. Make a list of key words used in the descriptions, such as happy, important, pleased, glad, friendly, grateful, relieved, and so on.
2. Share the definitions for kindness and compassion with your students.
3. Show the video, [Kind Kids Club](#). While viewing, have students write down (or draw pictures of) three things from the video they think are important and related to the concepts of compassion and kindness. The following are some examples:
 - When someone is kind, it makes someone happy
 - People invite the lonely kids to play
 - If people see us being nice, maybe they will go do it
 - Kindness is an everyday thing
4. Have students share what they found out and what they think about what they saw in the video.

DAY TWO

5. Ask students to recall the video from Day One. You might want to call on some students to orally summarize a moment from the video. Then ask if they think they would like to learn about being kind and participate in activities like the ones they saw in the video.
6. Following the guidelines in the [What is the Kind Thing to Do?](#) document, have students read and discuss the scenarios and engage in the Evaluation discussion.
7. After the Evaluation discussion, have students fill out the [Scenarios Worksheet](#) to record some of the thoughts they had about kindness while completing this activity. Consider sharing this information with parents and guardians at a conference or as part of a student status update!

Evaluation

Formative evaluations, in the form of discussions and evaluation questions, are included with this lesson (as outlined above). In addition to these options, you can assess how your students have internalized the information in the lessons by asking them to respond to the following question: *What do you think it means to care for or be kind to another person?*

Optional Classroom Extensions

8. If time permits, show the class the video, [One Girl, on a Mission to Spread Love](#). Ask students to discuss how being compassionate has changed the life of Hannah Brencher and all of the people she has touched with her letters. Encourage students to think of ways they could add compassionate acts to their lives as well.
9. Have students write a letter to someone they know who is in need of compassion. Maybe they have a friend who lost something important, didn't do well on a test, or didn't perform well in an activity. What could they say to show this person that they care?



Part Two: Empower

LESSON DURATION

Two, 30-minute sessions

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What does it mean to fill someone's bucket?
- Why is it important to be compassionate?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Describe positive ways to communicate that show care, consideration, concern, and empathy for others.
- Give examples of pro-social behaviors, such as helping others, being respectful of others, cooperation, consideration, self-control, and not teasing others.
- Practice filling each other's buckets

MATERIALS

- Caring for Others: [How Full Is Your Bucket? Lesson \(Page 2\)](#)
- [How Full Is Your Bucket? For Kids](#) book or video
- Expressing Empathy: [Empathy Images and Discussion \(Pages 1-3\)](#)
- 15 to 20 age-appropriate newspaper, magazine, or internet images of people in challenging situations
- Large, self-adhesive poster sheet
- [Bucket Filling Activity](#) (included in this document)
- [Expressing Empathy Home Extension Activity \(Page 5\)](#)

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students explore strategies for adding compassionate acts to their lives. Students use a picture book to find ways that kindness and compassion can be important in their lives. They build understanding using the metaphor of a bucket that fills and empties when people are kind or not kind to each other. They look at images from the news or other sources and describe positive and negative ways to react to what they see. They analyze how their reactions show compassion or a lack of compassion. Learning to analyze and identify strategies for responding with compassion empowers students to engage in building positive relationships.

VOCABULARY

Respect: Treating people, places and things with kindness

Consideration: Showing thoughtfulness for others

Helpfulness: Assisting or serving in a kind way

Caring: Feeling and showing concern for others

DAY ONE

1. Display this quote to your students and read it aloud:
[If the world seems cold to you, kindle fires to warm it.](#) – Lucy Larcom
2. Have students share their ideas about the quote's meaning.
3. Remind students of the definitions of kindness and compassion from Day One.
4. Conduct the Read Aloud and Discussion activities on page 2 of [How Full Is Your Bucket? For Kids](#). (If the book is not available, conduct an internet search to find a video of the story, such as the video posted [here](#).) Use the questions on page 2 to hold a discussion. Encourage students to examine the compassionate acts and how they make people feel.

DAY TWO

5. Tell your students that you are going to continue learning about being kind today. You are going to find out how to help someone when he or she is feeling sad or angry.
6. Conduct the [Empathy Images and Discussion](#) on pages 1-3.
7. Ask students to complete the [Bucket Filling Activity](#) included in this document. In the activity, students propose a way they could fill someone's bucket sometime during the week ahead.

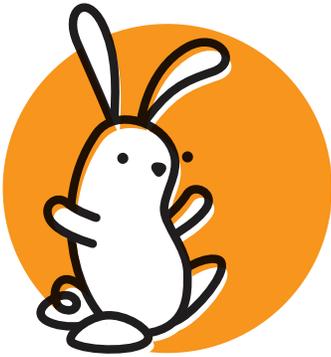
Evaluation

Formative evaluations, in the form of discussions and evaluation questions are included with this lesson as outlined above. In addition to these options, you can assess how your students have internalized the information in the lessons by reviewing the ideas they have placed on their drops of water in the *Bucket Filling Activity*.

To reinforce their learning in the coming weeks, remind children to continue to fill each other's buckets with more compliments and kind actions.

Home Extension Activity

Distribute to students page 5 of [Expressing Empathy](#) and encourage them to complete the activity with their families.



Part Three: Act

LESSON DURATION

Two, 30-minute sessions
(plus additional time to work on
implementing their projects)

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- How can I show compassion?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Design a project to show compassion to others.
- Implement their compassion projects.

MATERIALS

- [A Book Drive](#) video
- [Grade K-2 Project Ideas](#)
- [Grade 3-5 Project Ideas](#)
- [RAK Kindness Ideas](#)
- [Project Planning Sheet](#)
(included in this document)
- [Kindness Project Evaluation](#)
(included in this document)
- [Showing Kindness to Others Home Extension Activity](#)
(Page 4)
- Other materials as needed depending on the projects selected

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students review kindness projects and design a project of their own to share compassion with others. Students watch a video showing a class collecting books for a school in need. Using information from Days One and Two, students work in groups to design a kindness project that they will undertake to show compassion for others.

PROCEDURE

NOTE: If you do not have time for a kindness project or your class cannot commit to a kindness project, have students follow through with their compassion ideas from Part Two and share their results with the class. Have them discuss how being compassionate made them feel and how the recipients felt.

DAY ONE

1. Show the class the [A Book Drive](#) video.
2. Have students discuss what happened in the video, how the project was started, and how the students (at both schools) felt about the project.

Tell students they are now going to design a kindness project for themselves! Go to the RAK website and show students the project ideas for grades K-2 or 3-5 (whichever is suitable for your classes.) Discuss some of the compassion and caring projects you find there.

- [Grade K-2 Project Ideas](#)
 - [Grade 3-5 Project Ideas](#)
 - You can also show students some of the ideas RAK has gathered [here](#).
3. Ask students to share ideas of places that need help, such as a homeless shelter, a family who just lost their home in a fire, or an animal sanctuary. Make a list on the board or overhead or the students' ideas. (Be sure to save the list for Day Two).

DAY TWO

4. Review the list students created on Day One.
5. Divide students into groups of three or four students. Have students work in teams to brainstorm and list compassion project ideas. Remind students that projects do not need to cost money; they can also donate their time, skills, or other services for the project.
6. Have teams share their favorite ideas. As a class, decide if you want to complete a whole-class project or have the groups each complete projects of their own.

7. Each group (or the whole class) should complete the [Project Planning Sheet](#).
8. Implement the project(s).

Evaluation

Lesson evaluation should occur at the end of the project timeline. As the students complete their projects, have them (individually or in their teams) complete the [Kindness Project Evaluation Sheet](#). Alternatively, students could work in groups to create a video of their projects, the process they went through, and answering the questions on the evaluation sheet.

Home Extension Activity

Distribute to students page 4 of [Showing Kindness to Others Home Extension Activity](#) and encourage them to complete the activity with their families.



Part Three: Share

LESSON DURATION

Two, 30-minute sessions

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- How can I show others how to be compassionate?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Present information about compassion projects to others
- Identify people who need compassion
- Create compliments for those people that show compassion
- Reinforce what they have learned through sharing and communicating in kind ways

MATERIALS

- Paper
- Pens, pencils, crayons, markers
- Age-appropriate magazines
- Caring for Others: [Kindness Bucket Book Activity](#)
- Complimenting Others: [Creative Compliment Cards Activity](#)

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson, students share the results of the first three days of this unit with the greater community. Students create a Kindness Bucket Book to share what they have accomplished. They also continue to practice showing compassion for others by creating Compliment Cards to give to others.

VOCABULARY

Compliment: When you give someone a real compliment, you comment on his or her abilities or talents. While it's nice to tell a person that you like his shirt or her new backpack, a compliment notices a deeper part of a person.

DAY ONE

1. Show the quote below to your students. Have students discuss what this means and how sharing their acts of kindness can then help encourage others to commit random acts of kindness.

Goodness spurs goodness... A single act can influence dozens more.

Source: <http://www.wired.com/2010/03/kindness-spreads/>

2. Conduct the [Kindness Bucket Book](#) activity. In this activity, students create a page for a Kindness Bucket Book that shares the project they designed (in teams or as a whole class). If students are not yet finished with their projects, they can describe their project plans. Encourage students to include illustrations about the project and the compassion shown.
3. After completing the pages and creating the Kindness Bucket Book, arrange opportunities for the class to share the book with others. The following are some suggestions:
 - Students take turns taking their book home to share with their families.
 - The class shares their book at a School Board meeting.
 - Students share their book with the people impacted by the project (depending on the type of project completed).
 - Students share their book with other classes and encourage their peers to try a project of their own.

DAY TWO

4. Give the class compliments on their kindness projects and Bucket Book pages.
5. Discuss with the students what a compliment is. Be sure to differentiate between superficial compliments and genuine compliments using the following definition:

- When you give someone a genuine compliment, you comment on his or her abilities, talents, or positive character traits. While it is nice to tell a person that you like his shirt or her new backpack, a compliment notices a deeper, more enduring aspect of a person.
6. Ask for volunteers to compliment their peers on their projects and Bucket Book pages.
 7. Conduct the [Creative Compliment Cards Activity](#). Have students deliver their cards to the intended recipients. Since students may be new to this kind of activity, it may be necessary to review their cards before they are distributed to ensure that students have written appropriate compliments.

Evaluation

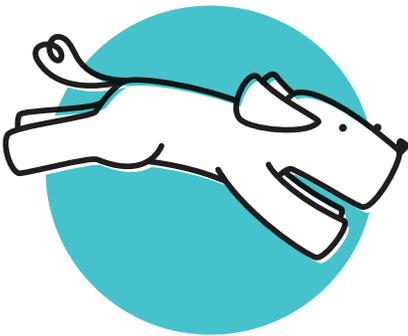
To help students internalize the idea of compassion (and to demonstrate compassion without planning for it), revisit the concept of compassion a few weeks after this lesson. Ask students to share any random acts of kindness they have done and to explain how compassion may have changed the way they look at and feel about others. Encourage students to describe compassionate acts they have seen in the news or in the neighborhood.

Home Extension Activity

Encourage students to make compliment cards with or for their family members.

Additional Resources

[Helpful Links for Educators](#)



Scenarios Worksheet

Using the scenarios we discussed in this lesson as a model, make up a scenario of your own.

Has there ever been a time when you could have been nicer to someone?

Has there ever been a time when you saw someone being treated unkindly?

Describe the Scenario or Situation:

What questions could be discussed by the class if they were to read your scenario?

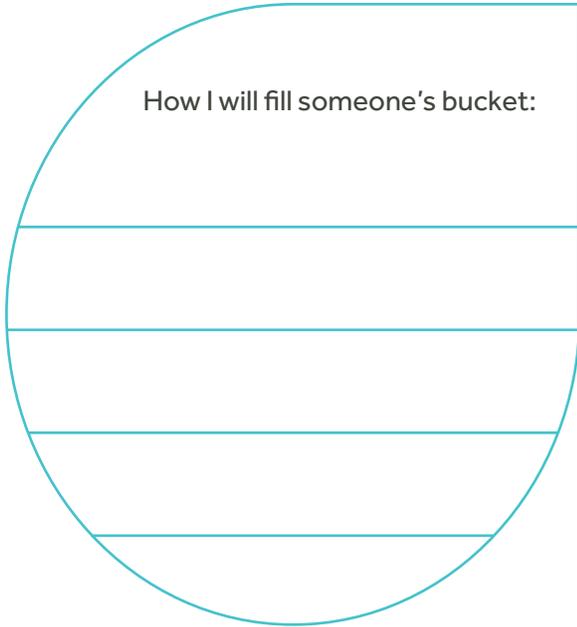
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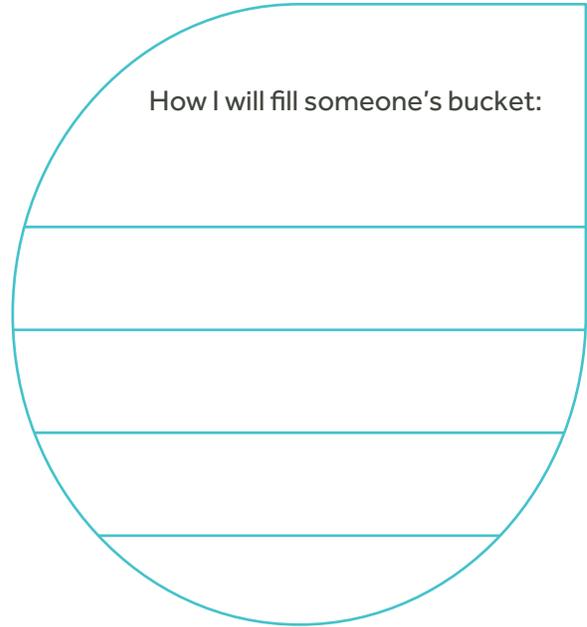
Bucket Filling Activity

In one or more of the drops of water, write down or draw a picture of a way you might do something to fill someone's bucket this week.

How I will fill someone's bucket:



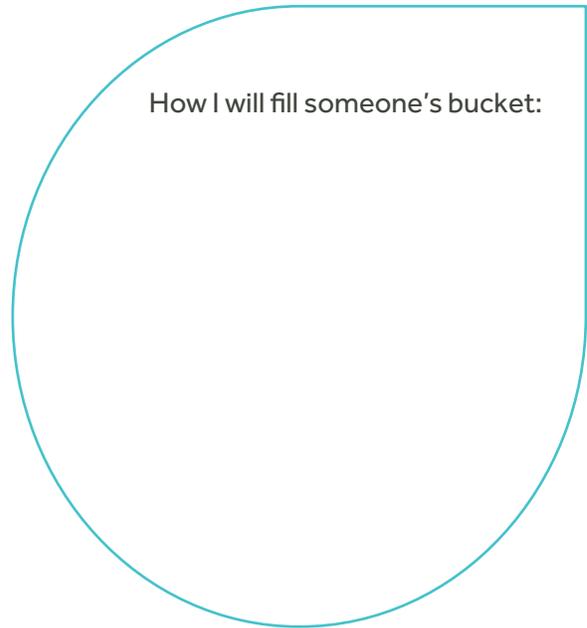
How I will fill someone's bucket:



How I will fill someone's bucket:



How I will fill someone's bucket:



Project Planning Sheet

page 1

Project Name:

Team Members:

Describe your Compassion Project idea:

Project Timeline:

Goals: What do you hope the outcome of your project will be?

Objectives: What results do you hope to see from your project?

Tasks:

What Needs To Be Done	Who Is Responsible	When It Will Be Done

Project Planning Sheet

page 2

Tools: What materials and tools do we need to help us design the project?

Item Needed	Why It Is Needed	Who Will Get It	From Where

Resources: What other resources will we need? Think about people who could help, research you might need to do, and any other support you might need to help you accomplish your goals.

Any Additional Information Needed for the Project:

Kindness Project Evaluation

Describe your project:

Were you able to complete the project?

Did you have any problems implementing or completing the project?

Would you do this again?

If so, what changes would you make to the project?

How did you feel while you were working on this project?

How did you feel after you completed the project? What did you learn?

How has this project changed how you think about kindness and compassion?

Standards

Common Core State Standards⁵

English Language Arts Standards » Writing » Grade 3

Research to Build and Present Knowledge:

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8](#)

Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories

English Language Arts Standards » Reading: Literature » Grade 3

Key Ideas and Details:

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3](#)

Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events

English Language Arts Standards » Speaking & Listening » Grade 3

Comprehension and Collaboration:

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1](#)

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly

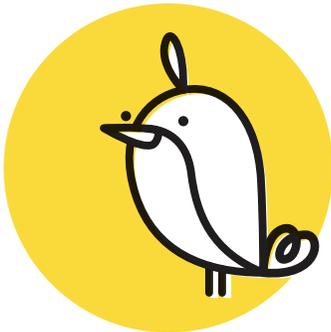
[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1.D](#)

Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas:

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.4](#)

Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace



21st Century Skills⁶

LEARNING AND INNOVATION SKILLS

Creativity and Innovation

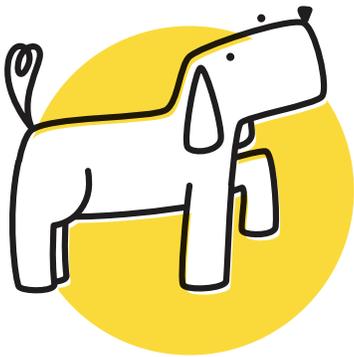
- Work creatively with others
- Be open and responsive to new and diverse perspectives; incorporate group input and feedback into the work

Think Creatively

- Use a wide range of idea creation techniques (such as brainstorming)
- Create new and worthwhile ideas (both incremental and radical concepts)

Work Creatively with Others

- Develop, implement and communicate new ideas to others effectively
- Be open and responsive to new and diverse perspectives; incorporate group input and feedback into the work



CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

Make Judgments and Decisions

- Interpret information and draw conclusions based on the best analysis

Reason Effectively

- Use various types of reasoning (inductive, deductive, etc.) as appropriate to the situation
- Interpret information and draw conclusions based on the best analysis

COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

Collaborate with Others

- Demonstrate ability to work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams
- Exercise flexibility and willingness to be helpful in making necessary compromises to accomplish a common goal
- Assume shared responsibility for collaborative work, and value the individual contributions made by each team member

Communicate Clearly

- Articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written and nonverbal communication skills in a variety of forms and contexts

SOCIAL AND CROSS-CULTURAL SKILLS

Interact Effectively with Others

- Know when it is appropriate to listen and when to speak
- Conduct themselves in a respectable, professional manner

PRODUCTIVITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Manage Projects

- Set and meet goals, even in the face of obstacles and competing pressures
- Prioritize, plan and manage work to achieve the intended result

Illinois Social Emotional Learning Standards⁷

GOAL 1: Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success.

B. Recognize personal qualities and external supports.

1B.2b. Explain how family members, peers, school personnel, and community members can support school success and responsible behavior.

GOAL 2: Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships.

A: Recognize the feelings and perspectives of others.

2A.2a. Identify verbal, physical, and situational cues that indicate how others may feel.

2A.2b. Describe the expressed feelings and perspectives of others.

GOAL 3: Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.

A: Consider ethical, safety, and societal factors in making decisions.

3A.2a. Demonstrate the ability to respect the rights of self and others.

B: Apply decision-making skills to deal responsibly with daily academic and social situations.

3B.2b. Generate alternative solutions and evaluate their consequences for a range of academic and social situations.

⁵ Common Core State Standards

<http://www.corestandards.org/read-the-standards>

NOTE: Grade 3 standards were used for the purposes of this document. Similar grade level standards can be found for K-5 in the CCSS document

<http://www.corestandards.org/read-the-standards>

⁶ Partnership for 21st Century Learning

<http://www.p21.org/index.php>

⁷ Illinois was the first state to incorporate stand alone SEL standards.

http://www.isbe.net/ils/social_emotional/standards.htm

