

PRINCIPAL'S FORUM

Supporting Positive Friendships

K-2

6:30-7

K-2

Friendships tend to be fluid and open, often based on convenience

What is the best predictor of a relationship?

It can be a great time to try lots of different activities and build relationships

Friendships tend to solidify (and become more complicated) in 2nd grade

K-2

Temperament is really important (and really hardwired)

The pandemic has been very difficult for young children (and their families)

Friendships that don't last beyond early elementary school are common and can be a great learning experience. Most people do not find lifelong (or "best") friends when they are 5 or 6 years old.

K-2

Second Step

Social Emotional Learning Curriculum developed by the Center for Children
Taught weekly in all k-2 classrooms.

4 Units with 5-6 lessons per unit

Skills for Learning, Empathy, Emotion Management, Problem Solving

My major theme

Everyone has comfortable and uncomfortable feelings every day.

Feelings are like the weather- we prepare for them and work with them,
but we can't make them go away.

K-2

How you can help at home / resources

Talk with your children

Read with them

Second Step

3-5

7-7:30

3-5

Panorama

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Questionnaire that measures student mindsets, behaviors, and attitudes and provides an understanding of our students social-emotional competencies and areas of strength and need for support.

Do you have a friend from school you can count on?

Grade 3: 92% responded favorably

Grade 4: 88% responded favorably

Grade 5: 100% responded favorably

Overall, up 5% since the fall

3-5

Building friendship skills:

-Weekly classroom lessons

(Second Step-Emotion Regulation/Kindness,
Size of the Problem/Reaction, Perspective
Taking, Tattling vs. Telling)

-Rotating 6-week lunch groups

3-5

Second step

- Weekly classroom lessons in 3-5 classrooms
- 4 Units with 5-6 lessons per unit
- Skills; Empathy/Kindness, Emotion Management, Problem Solving

Examples of lessons:

3rd-Emotion Regulation: what are emotions?, strengths of emotions (content, happy, excited), strategies; Empathy/Kindness- noticing and doing, strengthening friendships

4th-Systems in the brain: Logic/Emotion-balancing, Rethinking (What happened? What are the facts?); Empathy/Kindness- Understanding different points of view (6/9), screen time, Asking questions

5th-Strong Emotions, Managing by making a plan (morning), What can I change? (stress-speaking in front of the class/taking a test); Empathy/Kindness

3-5

How you can help at home:

- Checking-in with your student (rose/bud/thorn)
- Journal
- Building a “Positive Self-Talk” Board
- Discussing what makes a good friend (kindness, empathy, respect, a good listener, avoiding gossip and negativity, etc.)
- Discuss/have a plan about how to navigate different social situations (“I feel___when you___”, rethinking, asking questions, talking to an adult, etc.)

6-8

7:30-8

6-8: FRIENDSHIPS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Tweens and teens have “a unique drive to find meaning in life and relationships. And no relationship, parents and educators know well, is as central to the moment-to-moment wellbeing of most adolescents as *friendship*.”

3 Types of Friendships:

- Independent
- Discerning
- Acquisitive

<http://www.kqed.org/mindshift/57010/how-understanding-middle-school-students-can-help-students>

6-8: PANORAMA SCREENER

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Questionnaire that measures student mindsets, behaviors, and attitudes and provides an understanding of our students social-emotional competencies and areas of strength and need for support.

Do you have a friend from school you can count on?

Grade 6: 88% responded favorably

Grade 7: 90% responded favorably

Grade 8: 93% responded favorably

Overall, up 5% since the fall

6-8: WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING

In your experience, what is the cause of most conflicts in middle school friendship?

Out of 157 students -

86% reported miscommunication

30% reported other people getting involved

21% reported feelings of jealousy

20% reported different interests

6-8: WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING

What would you like your parents/caregivers to know about friendships in middle school?

- “It's not easy. You can have certain friends you do certain things with and certain friends you don't. Friendships are complicated.”
- “I would like them to know that friendships are more than just a little thing. If you don't commit to a friendship, chances are that your friends won't want to hang out with you when you can hang out.”

6-8: WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING

- “Friendships have their ups and downs- also, my parents have been encouraging me to have a bigger group of friends for a while, but I want them to understand I am happier with a smaller group of friends, and that not everyone wants a huge group of friends like them.”
- “They can be more complicated than most parents/caregivers think they are.”

6-8: WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING

Is there anything that Parents/caregivers do that either HELPS in middle school friendships OR that is not helpful in middle school friendships?

- “I find it helpful when they understand that, though unimportant in the long run, our problems (esp with friendships) are important and impactful right now.”
- “Giving advice for me to handle and fix issues on my own before getting involved. I like knowing that my parents will help me if i need it, but I can also confront situations on my own. I like having space and support at the same time.”

6-8: WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING

- “It is really not helpful when parents get involved unless specifically asked - sometimes I just need to vent.”
- “I think that sometimes my parents try to get a little too involved in who I am friends with or how many friends I have. And sometimes, I don’t know what to answer because there are a lot of people that I don’t entirely know if I am friends with them or not.”

6-8: WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING

- “Giving advice rather than telling us what we do wrong is helpful.”
- “When I tell them something and am feeling sad about it but instead of trying to make me feel better they get “mad” and try to fix it.”
- “Being supportive is helpful and making plans with other kids without telling me is not helpful.”

6-8: CURRENT IN SCHOOL INTERVENTIONS

- Social coaching 1:1 and small groups
- Explicit social pairings and opportunities for students to socialize both during academic and non-academic times
- Providing students with multiple opportunities to share how they are feeling about their friendships and seek out advice
- Explicit teaching of healthy and positive characteristics of friendships through the 7th & 8th Grade Health curriculum

6-8: HOW YOU CAN HELP AT HOME

- Be an active listener and validate your child's feelings
- When your child shares something with you, try asking, "Are you venting, would you like advice or would you like me to step in and help?"
- Give permission for your child to walk away from or take a break from friendships that aren't working for them.

6-8: HOW YOU CAN HELP AT HOME

- Remind your child that friendship churn, especially during middle school, is completely normal.
- Let your child know that every single person, at some point or another, is going to be rejected by someone they want to be friends with, and it's not because there's something wrong with them.