

April 2022

2nd GRADE

# Social-Emotional Learning

Branigan Reed



## Learning Goals

- Build community and teamwork skills
- Practice communication using the Peace Process
- Explore different cultures, traditions, social roles, and experiences through various activities and shared stories
- Develop social skills by building strength in CASEL's core competencies of SEL (Self-management, Self-awareness, Social-awareness, Relationships, Responsible Decision Making)

## Why do we teach this and why do we teach it this way?

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is happening year-round in a Waldorf school. Through stories, games, activities, and discussions students are consistently immersed in a world of encountering others with curiosity, respect, and gratitude. At our school we also take the opportunity to intentionally work with language and skill development that helps

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students not only to navigate their social circles, but to speak about their experiences together in a healthy, full way. SEL activities are woven throughout the curriculum in many different ways; songs and stories often relate to expressing feelings and overcoming obstacles, classroom projects are completed in small groups, daily chores are assigned, class discussions are held, and play performances are prepared.



Second grade performed our class play, *The Cat Who Walked By Herself*, in March, which gave us a chance to play and interact with each other as different characters; “trying on” different personalities and characteristics than those we call our

own. For several weeks we depended on each other to help learn lines and staging cues both encouraging each other at times, and allowing space for individual growth to occur. Not to mention sharing our creativity to bring the story and characters to life! This allows the children to experience something out of their comfort zone in an environment where they can feel less guarded and more free to take risks.

We have also implemented a new daily role of “Recess Leader.” A new child is chosen each day to fill this role for the first 15-minute recess time. The leader may choose an activity for the group to do together, several choices to be voted on, or open it for free play. This allows the students to lead in a way that feels comfortable for them, while having the support of their classmates. For the other children, capacities such as patience, self-regulation, and flexibility are developed and practiced regularly. This is a

gentle way for children to understand that no one person gets their way all of the time, and there is value in knowing when to step up and step back in group situations. While



still a work in progress, this routine has helped facilitate problem-solving and teamwork over the



tendency to bicker or exclude each other when disagreements arise.

Most recently we have been practicing the Peace Process, a practice based on the theories of nonviolent communication, meant to help navigate interactions between individuals. One of the great things about the Peace Process is its ability to be used in both positive and challenging situations. We have talked through a number of examples from our own lives when the process could be helpful, and have even begun to lend our thoughts to the obstacles we hear in our stories and fables.



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Each of these activities is a treasure trove of experience because it allows us to all have the same experience, and share our varied perspectives and opinions on how to move forward

positively in many situations.

Understanding one's place within the social fiber of the group, as well as our individual talents and gifts we offer is so valuable, particularly as



the children approach the 9 year change, and all the interesting realizations that can bring. Being able to speak about, work through, and ask for help with big feelings sets each child up for success when things inevitably feel a little off-kilter. They have firm footing, confidence, and willingness to be vulnerable with each other, leaving space for lots of growth, learning, and compassion for all.

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# Handwork

Heather Colis Puro

## Learning Goals and Classroom Work

Our final project for the year will be a knitted gnome which incorporates more advanced techniques such as separate pieces for the arms, as well as a stockinette stitch head and cap.

We are reading a story about Liputto, a compassionate gnome who has undertaken a



trip to the world of humans with a mission to help others. In addition to hearing stories to spark the imagination, we start each class with a clapping game or stretching. Now that we have completed several knitting projects, including a garter stitch hat with the colorwork designed by each individual student, they can retain all simple directions, memorizing how many stitches and rows they need to complete their project work. By the end of the year, the students will have advanced their knitting skills through learning how to purl, increase and decrease in their work, as well as

change yarn colors. The classroom atmosphere is productive and enthusiastic.

## Why do we teach this block and why do you teach it this way?

Knitting helps build focus and perseverance in the students. There is momentum created in the classroom through all students working with the same skill, even if they are each at a different point in their projects. Mistakes are commonplace, but having your classmates there to support you and cheer you on prevents students from being

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sidetracked for long. Following each knitted stitch and row develops eye tracking which supports the development of reading. Through storytelling, each student's imagination is engaged, which motivates the class through each step of a project. Clapping games develop student understanding of left and right as well as further their hand eye coordination that is activated by knitting. Developing proper hand eye coordination is tied to improvements in fine motor skills, which support handwriting and written academic work, and have been linked to improved student confidence.