

Box Out Bullying Presents:

## FAMILY LETTER - WEEK 1 DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Dear Family,

We are starting a unit on **Diversity and Inclusion** from our BOX OUT BULLYING social-emotional learning program. Throughout this unit, students will discover shared interests, explore how each person is unique and valued, and develop a common classroom identity.

**Getting to Know One Another** lays the foundation for a broad range of solid relationships. During this unit, students will share a bit about themselves with their classmates and work to discover what they have in common with one another. They will also learn that both similarities and differences are valued—and that we may have things in common with those who initially seem different from us.

**Learning Something New** is possible when people appreciate one another's differences. Differences allow us to consider unique ideas and think about alternative perspectives. Students will take turns sharing their own knowledge and unique skills with their classmates, allowing them to experience the benefits of interacting with, and learning from, peers who are different from them.

**Our Classroom Identity** helps students feel welcome, accepted, and connected to others. In this unit, students will discuss what it means to belong to a group and explore the elements that make our classroom a community. They will work to discover what they have in common and then cooperate to find creative ways of expressing our classroom identity.

An important part of this program is for students to continue discussing and practicing concepts outside the classroom. I'm hoping you can reinforce at home what we are learning in class with our HOME ACTIVITIES.

Please contact us if you have any questions!

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## WEEK 1: DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

The ideas below will reinforce what we are learning in school—there are activities to role play, topics to discuss, and behaviors to role-model in the first week.

These are all designed to fit into your daily routine and, provide opportunities to further connect with your child.

- Ask your child about favorite things he or she enjoys doing and could teach a family member how to do (hobbies, crafts, games, sports, math problems).
- Alternatively, seek out opportunities for your child to learn something new from those in your family or community.
- Select a meaningful item to share with your child, explaining why it is important to you and what it says about you.
- Collaborate as a family to create a name and motto. Work as a team to brainstorm a variety of ideas and then decide what best represents who you are as a family.
- Your child's classmates are getting to know one another better by sharing items that are important to them. Ask your child to discuss the items that were shared in class that they enjoyed learning about.
- Students are getting to know what they have in common and how they are different from their classroom Buddies. Ask your child to describe what he or she was surprised to learn about their Buddy.
- Challenge your child to find out something they have in common with someone who is seemingly completely different from them. This could be a relative, friend, or neighbor.

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Box Out Bullying Presents:

## FAMILY LETTER - WEEK 2

# EMPATHY AND CRITICAL THINKING

Dear Family,

We are starting a unit on **Empathy and Critical Thinking** from our Box Out Bullying social-emotional learning program. Throughout this unit, students will have opportunities to learn about feelings, empathy, and stereotypes, and to put that knowledge into practice.

**Thinking Patterns** will be explored in depth in this unit. Students will learn how thoughts influence feelings and behaviors, and they will practice thinking in more positive ways. They will also learn to nurture "caterpillar thoughts," which recognize that people can grow and make positive changes, while avoiding "worm thoughts," which view people as unchangeable. Recognizing change encourages children to persist when faced with academic and social challenges.

**Empathy** is the ability to understand and share another person's feelings. Students will practice recognizing one another's feelings and perspectives and responding in understanding ways. Students will also learn that people can feel differently when faced with the same situation. Fostering empathy helps students create deeper relationships and avoid unnecessary conflicts.

**Stereotypes** can be about people, objects, activities, and roles. They lead to assumptions that prevent us from knowing what other people are like or what alternatives could be open to us. Students will learn how to recognize and challenge stereotypes in the environment and practice thinking in non-stereotyped ways.

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## WEEK 2: EMPATHY AND CRITICAL THINKING

The ideas below will reinforce what we are learning in school—there are activities to role play, topics to discuss, and behaviors to role-model in the second week. These are all designed to fit into your daily routine and, provide opportunities to further connect with your child.

- Ask your child to teach you how to recognize the connection among your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Help your child think, feel, and act more positively in situations.
- Encourage your child to develop empathy by prompting them to recognize other people's feelings and perspectives.
- Encourage your child to focus on change by recognizing his or her process on tasks instead of his or her fixed characteristics. When we focus on children's efforts, strategies, and persistence, we promote resilience and encourage them to persevere when faced with challenges.
  - Say: "You worked really hard on those math problems!"
  - Instead of saying: "You are really good at math!"
- Encourage your child to be a critical thinker by discussing with him or her how stereotypes influence thinking and decisions. Ask your child to share with you the strategies that his or her class developed to think for themselves and not let stereotypes tell them how to think. Point out stereotypes in your environment (on television, in toy stores, in magazines) to increase your child's awareness of stereotyped messages and their influence.

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Box Out Bullying Presents:

## FAMILY LETTER - WEEK 3 COMMUNICATION

Dear Family,

We are starting a unit on **Communication** from our Box Out Bullying social-emotional learning program. Throughout this unit, students will have opportunities to practice effective and healthy communication strategies, as well as increase their awareness of ineffective communication behaviors.

**Communication Boosters** are effective communication strategies.

Students will practice three boosters: listening, supporting, and negotiating. These skills help students create more positive peer interactions and improve their ability to work in groups.

**Communication Bloopers** are ineffective communication behaviors which prevent us from working well in groups. Common bloopers include interrupting, ignoring, and withdrawing. When students become aware of Communication Bloopers, they can catch themselves when they “bloop” and instead use effective communication strategies

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## WEEK 3: COMMUNICATION

The ideas below will reinforce what we are learning in school—there are activities to role play, topics to discuss, and behaviors to role-model in the third week. These are all designed to fit into your daily routine and provide opportunities to further connect with your child

- Ask your child to name the Communication Bloopers discussed in class. As a review the Communication Bloopers are 1. interrupting 2. ignoring and 3. withdrawing. Have a discussion about which Blooper is most difficult to avoid. Share the Blooper you have trouble avoiding.
- Describe the three types of Communication Boosters: listening, supporting, and negotiating.
  - Which is easiest for your child to use?
  - The most difficult?
  - Share the Boosters you find the most challenging to use.
- Watch your child's favorite TV show together and record how often specific characters display Bloopers or Boosters. Discuss how they influence the way the characters think, feel, and behave, and how they affect their interactions with others.
- During a family meal or activity, have at least one member of your family keep track of the number of Bloopers and Boosters that occur during the discussion. Do this at least once a week and see if your family improves their score.

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Box Out Bullying Presents:

## FAMILY LETTER - WEEK 4 COMMUNICATION

Dear Family,

We are starting a unit on **Problem Solving** from our Box Out Bullying social-emotional learning program. Throughout this unit, students will learn different approaches to resolving conflict and practice a step-by-step approach to problem-solving.

**Conflict** is a necessary part of life. It occurs in the classroom, on the playground, at home, and in the neighborhood. Unfortunately, children are often ill-prepared to manage the conflicts they face in these settings. When this occurs, interpersonal relationships and academic progress suffer. This unit provides students with the knowledge and tools to resolve conflict successfully.

Students will learn about the three different approaches to conflict:

- **Disengaged Onlooker** (conflict avoider)
- **Possible Defender** (conflict controller)
- **Defender** (solution finder).

Once students become familiar with these concepts, they will practice S.T.E.P, an approach to conflict resolution that uses the following four steps:

- (S)TOP, think, and cool off
- (T)ALK it out.
- (E)VALUATE possible solutions and consequences.
- (P)ICK a realistic solution and try it out.

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## WEEK 4: PROBLEM SOLVING

The ideas below will reinforce what we are learning in school—there are activities to role play, topics to discuss, and behaviors to role-mode; in the fourth week. These are all designed to fit into your daily routine and provide opportunities to further connect with your child.

- Ask your child to explain the disengaged onlooker, possible defender, and defender approaches to resolving conflict.
  - When watching TV or movies with your child, discuss the different conflict strategies illustrated. Ask your child if the approach was successful, and why or why not.
- Discuss the approach that different family members have used to resolve conflict, and the costs and benefits of each approach.
- Ask your child to explain the STEP approach to conflict resolution.
  - When problems or conflicts occur at home, help your child practice using the Step approach.
    - Stop, Think, and Cool Off
      - Take a break and regulate your emotions before you try to resolve the conflict.
    - Talk It Out
      - Engage in respectful dialogue and put both sides of the story out on the table.
    - Evaluate the Possible Solutions
      - Come up with solutions that are satisfactory to everyone involved.
    - Pick a Realistic Solution
      - Pick the solution that is best for everyone and try it out!
- Prompt your child to teach other family members and friends how to Step It Up

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Box Out Bullying Presents:

## **FAMILY LETTER - WEEK 5**

### **PEER RELATIONSHIPS**

Dear Family,

We are starting a unit on **Peer Relationships** from our Box Out Bullying social-emotional learning program. Throughout this unit, students will identify the qualities important to friendship, learn about cliques, practice providing their classmates with support, and implement tools for dealing with bullying.

**What Makes a Friend** is different for everyone, but positive relationships have certain elements in common. Since children's learning occurs within the social context of the classroom, the quality of those relationships influences their academic functioning and attitudes toward school. In this unit, students will identify characteristics that help people make and maintain friendships, discuss how friends can be both similar and different, and explore the differences between inclusive friend groups and hurtful cliques. Being Supportive helps create a positive classroom environment. Students will explore ways to provide support to one another and identify specific situations in which they can do so. They will practice these behaviors on a regular basis to help create a community where all students feel supported.

**Helping Students How Are Being Bullied** is everyone's responsibility. Children who are bullied can experience significant psychological distress and, as a result, perform poorly in and avoid school. In this unit, students will learn about the roles that take place in a bullying situation and will also practice strategies for responding to bullying and for providing support to those that experience bullying incidents.

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## WEEK 5: PEER RELATIONSHIPS

The ideas below will reinforce what we are learning in school—there are activities to role play, topics to discuss, and behaviors to role-model; in the fifth week. These are all designed to fit into your daily routine and provide opportunities to further connect with your child.

- Encourage your child to make friends with diverse peers. Interacting and building relationships with a diverse peer offers children the opportunity to broaden their perspectives, learn new skills, challenge existing stereotypes, and practice diverse interaction styles.
- Ask your child about the strategies he or she has identified for preventing cliques in the classroom and school. Reinforce these positive behaviors when your child is interacting with his or her peers in your neighborhood and community.
- Meet with your family to identify ways you can support each other and distribute “I’ve Got Your Back” tickets (or tokens, marbles, etc.) when you observe one another engaging in these behaviors. Once you reach a certain number of tickets, celebrate with a special activity.
- We will learn about effective strategies for handling bullying situations at school. Discuss the negative consequences of bullying with your child and encourage him or her to speak up if he or she, or someone he or she knows, is being bullied. Encourage and reinforce positive and inclusive behaviors toward peers.

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