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Liliana Garduno

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Kindergarten Social and Emotional Learning Development

Liliana C. Garduno

A Capstone Project for the Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Science

Introduction

My capstone project focuses on Kindergarten students' development of social and emotional skills. Students aren't fully aware of the emotions other peers demonstrate when feeling upset or sad. Alzahrani et al (2019) mention how there have been studies conducted to demonstrate how social and emotional competence influences children's learning outcomes and their ability to engage in good behaviors. Social and emotional learning is not only a foundation where children's success is built but also builds peer relationships. Students who attend Community Partnership for Youth acquire lessons on social-emotional learning because when children had the opportunity to play inside in the multipurpose room they played board games, on their computers or built structures with red cups. Kindergarten students have not fully developed their social-emotional learning skills when it comes to allowing peers to join each other's activities and figuring out the solutions on their own. It is important for kindergarten students attending Community Partnership for Youth (CPY) at Ord Terrace to be able to understand the importance of social and emotional learning. To address kindergarteners' development of social and emotional learning skills at Ord Terrace Elementary School (CPY Program), I created three lessons. Each lesson focuses on conflict resolution, personal space, and empathy.

Needs Statement

“Children must develop many skills in their early years, including the ability to do the following: communicate with adults, interact with peers in the classroom, form relationships with others, express emotions, self-regulate, show empathy, be motivated, and engage socially (Alzahrani et al, 2019, p.2).” As children learn social-emotional skills they are also becoming aware of self-awareness, self-management, interpersonal skills, and decision-making behaviors that relate to the engagement or learning which include attitude and habits related to learning. As children grow they face different challenges that may influence their form of interaction to be able to build friendships with peers or adults. When children face the challenge of social-emotional skills in kindergarten they might have no previous education setting experience where they might be exposed to these skills. Some of the difficulties that children are demonstrating in this area are maintaining positive relationships with peers, understanding others' emotions, and demonstrating empathy to others. The skills acquired during this early age will benefit children to create friendships and academic achievement. The project I created focuses on social-emotional learning with kindergarten children which focuses on the following subtopic; conflict resolution, personal space, and empathy. The project consisted of 6 kindergarten students whose ages ranged from 5 to 6 years old. Throughout the project I will be covering the three subtopics I have mentioned.

Social-emotional skills are composed of self-management, self-awareness, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and social awareness. These skills are developed through children's experiences in their environment. As children manage their emotions and behaviors they achieve their personal goals by recognizing their own emotions, values, challenges, and strengths. Beland (2007) describes social awareness as the ability to recognize what others are

thinking, and feeling, empathizing with people different from themselves, and demonstrating compassion. Self-awareness is recognizing our own emotions and cultivating our strengths as positive qualities. Self-management is managing emotions and establishing and working towards short or long-term goals. Each of these skills is essential to building oneself personality which helps out with relating with others. As mentioned by Alzahrani et al. (2019) in order for children to fully comprehend these skills a good relationship or healthy environment between teachers, peers and students is needed to develop healthy social-emotional competence. In order to acquire the skills it takes time and practice to fully achieve them with everyday work and the creation of various activities. “ Moreover, young children with strong social and emotional skills can recognize and handle their behavior in positive ways (Alzahrani et al. (2019) p.8).” The environment that students grow up with or associate themselves with influences their developmental skills either positively or negatively.

As children build their social-emotional skills in their early years, they experience challenges in peer relationships. Alzahrani et al. (2019) describe how children face difficulty in transitioning and acquiring adult intervention in order for children to overcome difficulties before getting older when behaviors become more challenging. Transitions can influence how children react to changes in the environment from a smaller crowd to a bigger crowd. Children are trying to manage the difficulties they face on a daily basis. It can be difficult to accommodate new friendships which results in children expressing shyness and/ or withdrawal in classroom structure. In March 2020 the Coronavirus pandemic started influencing the world to change and adapt to new forms of living. Symptoms that were experienced vary from person to person from high fever, cough, severe pain in the throat, and shortness of breath. According to Jabali et al. (2021) COVID-19 affected individuals in a geographical location that extended to other

neighboring regions and resulted in people unknowingly being infected with it or contracting it from a place or person. As COVID-19 started in the United States; schools started to close down, making schools transition to remote learning and causing students to further their education through a device; since the increase of people contracting COVID-19 was increasing in the United States. A year of not being physically present in a school setting and then transitioning from online to going back in person has had an effect on how children demonstrate or view their own or other peers' emotions due to COVID-19. According to Jabali et .al (2021) mention how the pandemic has influenced children's interaction with others and their ability to communicate making it a disadvantage to build new or same peer relationships.

Adult intervention is necessary when resolving a disagreement between children who can't find the solution on their own. In the early stages of development, children have different perspectives and points of view when disagreeing with one another which then turns into arguments. According to Halmatov (2018) children experience conflict situations with other peers when there are contradictions between the demands of peers and the objective capabilities of the child in the game. With the arousal of conflict between children and peers, both can express their emotions or feelings with one another in different forms. Smith et al. (1995 as cited in Longaretti and Wilson 2006) found that conflict management tactics used by children are physical and verbal tactics: imposing one another's solution (64%), yielding (9%), and problem-solving (2%). Children have not fully developed the form of how to navigate conflict with one another, but with the use of conflict resolution, children are able to learn how to approach a conflict in a constructive manner. Children who understand how to resolve disagreements are able to communicate their interests, rather than their positions. This way both sides are able to take the opportunity to reach the desired outcome.

Being aware of the space that is given to a person is an important aspect of keeping one another feeling like their surrounding space is respected. Personal space is maintaining a distance between two or more people where there is no physical contact. Children should become aware of how invading someone else's space may make them feel. Having limited space to move around freely can influence how a person may feel. Schenle and Schwab (2019) mention how zones have different magnitudes there are to be considered to be four different zones; intimate (0-2ft), personal (2-4ft), social (4-12ft), and public (more than 12ft) which influences several characteristics when approaching an individual or vice versa when an individual is approaching. Depending on how children see their peers they may limit themselves or find different forms on how to approach someone. It can be depending on the circumstances of an individual.

Emotions are essential in order to express our emotions like feeling sad or happy. When children start becoming aware of their own emotions they are then able to relate to other peers. Lam et. al (2012) mention how empathy is important in young children because it's a motivation for prosocial actions. Children who are able to demonstrate empathy to their peers are more likely to demonstrate prosocial behavior, such as helping, sharing, and volunteering their time. According to Alzharani et al. (2019) children who experience emotions in a situation and are aware of empathy are able to properly express their emotions like happiness, sadness, nervousness, and anger helps children determine and express how to act when they feel one of these emotions. Children having an understanding of emotions influences how they relate to their peers and how their emotions can influence how those around them react to or express it.

Children who enter a school setting without sufficient social and emotional learning skills may encounter a harder time building peer relationships and harder time learning. McClelland et. al (2017) mentions how there are positive interventions that benefit children like training or

professional development for early childhood education teachers, embedding direct instructions, the practice of targeted skills into daily activities, and engaging children's families in order for children to practice at school and at home. Teachers and parents demonstrating prosocial skills to children are able to relate more to them and build positive relationships. When parents learn new techniques/ strategies they are able to implement and support their children's social-emotional learning skills which benefits them at home, but as well as in school In accordance with Durlak et. al (2011) social-emotional learning activities associated with positive results that not only improve the attitude about self but as well as others. There is an increase in prosocial behavior, academic improvement, and lower levels of behavior problems and emotional distress. Programs that are provided in school settings support children's social-emotional skills in different forms for their well-being. Halmatov (2018) states how the involvement of teachers influences children's playing skills, building relationships with peers, combined with the reorientation of current peer opinion, further organization of gaming interactions can restore faith in children; like joyful mood and increase initiation. Teacher involvement can influence how children are able to learn different forms to approach

Social-emotional learning skills is important for the developmental years like kindergarten. In order for kindergarteners to achieve successful peer relationships they need to understand the importance of giving space to peers, relating their emotions to others, and being able to resolve conflict in a constructive manner. Having a positive- healthy teacher-student relationship influences the support is valuable for the cause of influencing good behavior and positive attitudes. Social-emotional learning skills are important in the growth of children.

Theory

Erik Erikson's theory of Psychosocial development focuses on the development of social competence, from infancy through adulthood. The psychosocial development theory is an eight-stage theory. Each theory explains how each individual matures and the developmental challenges that are faced at various points in life. Initiative vs guilt is the third stage of the psychosocial development stages created by Erik Erikson. According to Batra (2013) initiative vs guilt is the play age of a child in the age range of 3 to 6 years old. Initiative vs guilt is the learning stage of a child who learns to interact with other children their age. In playgroups, children start to have a sense of others having a role and making sense between reality and play. This allows children to take initiative to start creating their own games and playing. As well as constructing a sense of purpose improves the quality of initiative.

In the third stage of psychosocial development children know how to initiate games, but don't know how to incorporate others which results in guilt. Batra (2013) states when initiation is denied psychological, social, and physical space can lead to a sense of guilt which can grow into an obsession, leading the child to a perpetual state of self-doubt. When the child is not trusted to identify their own ways to resolve conflict with peers or deal with fantasies, the desire to live out their own dream and act in their own interest; can turn into 'rage' towards themselves and their sense of inhibition for a long time. This theory relates to my project because children are able to initiate their own activities, but face challenges when failing their own game or when adult intervention is necessary. This theory relates to my project because children are able to initiate their own games with the use of their own imagination, as well as how adult intervention can influence the children's ability to continue to express their imagination.

Consideration of Diversity

At Ord Terrace, the minority enrollment is 98.1% and 94% of economically disadvantaged students attend this school. The demographics of Ord Terrace are 90.6% Hispanics, 1.9% White, 3.1% Asian etcetera. The setting of the school is a mid-size suburb, the student-teacher ratio is 20:1 and there are approximately 21 full-time teachers at Ord Terrace. In order to create my project I had to put into perspective the ethnicity and language spoken by the children. In order for that to occur I decided to go one day and observe the children attending the programs and conversate with some of the students. After having the conversation with the children I then started to think of activities that were inclusive for the children. The majority of students who attend Ord Terrace Elementary School are Hispanic and Bilingual. I worked with 6 kindergarten students; 3 females and 3 males who attend Community Partnership for Youth after-school program. I came up with an inclusive project where I could incorporate both genders. In order to create my activity I had to put into consideration what would be an activity that both genders would enjoy and participate in.

Learning Outcomes

I created three lesson plans for kindergarten students at Ord Terrace Elementary School.

By the end of the project, Kindergarten participants will:

1. Children will demonstrate empathy and express personal feelings/ emotions by drawing on paper.
2. Children will explain 2 different ways of methods to solve the conflict.
3. Children will define personal space and identify their own personal space through the use of hula hoops and a poster.

Method

Location and Participants

The project was presented at Ord Terrace Elementary School, in Seaside, California. The participants were six kindergarten children ages 5 to 6 years who attend Community Partnership for Youth (CPY). Community Partnership for Youth (CPY) is a prevention program that provides positive alternatives to gangs, drugs, and violence while reinforcing individual strengths. The vision of this program is to provide youth with a safe structured environment that encourages healthy boundaries, positive self-esteem, and the ability to make good choices for a full and successful life. CPY is an afterschool program that supports students in their homework and with positive reinforcements for a successful life. Three of the participants were female and the other three were male. Hispanic and bilingual. The number of participants varies across each lesson due to students leaving during the activity or not showing up because of an after-school program.

Procedures and Materials

The project I created was presented to the students in three weeks on Fridays only. The first day that I went to CPY I was able to meet up with staff and children attending CPY. I gave an overview to the staff member who is in charge of CPY at this certain location and after that brief talk, I was able to speak to all the kindergarten children. I introduced myself to them and I let them know what I would be doing. After that, the children got to join the rest of the kids and play at the playground. I had the opportunity to socialize with the children and got to observe them.

On my first day of implementation, I met up with the CPY staff member and asked him to choose six kindergarten children; three being female and three being male. Once he had gathered up all six children, I was able to introduce myself again and let them know why I was there. The students were having a snack and I was able to join them. As the children had their

snack I was asking them questions like what is your name? What is your favorite color? Do you have any pets? In order for me to get to know them. After the children were done with their snacks and cleaning up I decided to take them outside to start the activity.

To start off with the activity I first had the children run to the grass area. Then the children made a circle and sat after doing some stretches. Once done with the stretches two of the students had to leave and I ended up with 4 out of the 6. I explained to the children the activity that I had planned for them which is called “Which emotion am I?” This activity involved cards that show different emotions on them like sad, frustrated, and happy. Then after explaining I started to show one card at a time; the children had to guess what emotion was shown and as well as to what zone it belonged. In school children are being taught about their emotions and use the zone regulation chart. The zone regulation chart demonstrates 4 phases of alertness and emotion (blue, green, yellow, and red). The Blue zone demonstrates low levels of alertness; like sadness, boredom, or feeling sick. The Green zone is considered the goal zone. It demonstrates the zone of feeling alert, happy, and focused. The yellow zone demonstrates higher levels of alertness; like anxiety, silly, or frustration. Lastly, the red zone demonstrates higher levels of alertness; like feeling rage, panic, and other strong emotions. The red zone is the phase that requires the most attention because stronger emotions are shown which can lead to losing control of their emotions. Once the children had identified the cards they were able to identify their own emotions and their friends. When asking if student A is sad, what can we do? Some of the responses were; to ask them if they are okay or make them happy. Next, I showed a video of a book called *I am Human: A Book of Empathy* by Susan Verde. Then the children identified the different emotions that were displayed in the book. After finishing up the book; the children wanted to do head, shoulder, knees, and toes and the freeze dance game before going back to end

the activity. For the activity, I created some cards by drawing pictures of characters showing different emotions. See appendix A for materials used for Learning Outcome.

On the second day, the lesson focused on conflict resolution. After doing some stretching and talking about how their week has been; I then started to proceed and introduce them to the activity for that day. On this day I only had 4 out of 6 of the children I started with. I started by reading the *Talk and Work It Out* book by Cheri J. Meiners. *Talk and Work It Out* book is a book that helps children to state the problem, listen, think of a solution, and agree to disagree when a solution isn't possible. Then I introduced the children to the worksheet we would be working on. Solve the Conflict worksheet has 4 scenarios and each scenario has an image that best represents solving the conflict. See appendix B to find *Talk and Work It Out* and the worksheet used for the Learning Outcome. In order to work on the worksheet we had to make our way to the benched area to be able to work on it. I started by reading the scenario and then the children thought it would be a good idea to read after I was done. So once we had reread the scenario we analyzed each image and then that when the children would start describing each image and would work together to figure out what image best represents the solution to the conflict. After the children completed the worksheet I assessed them. My assessment concluded with some conflict resolution cards where children would provide me with 2 different ways to solve the conflict.

On my third and last day of implementation, the lesson focused on personal space. On this day only 3 out of the 6 students that I started with attended the Community Partnership for Youth after-school program. The children used hula hoops and a poster board to understand personal space. I started with the children discussing what personal space was. Some of their responses were a spaceship, people, and someone taking over your space. I then explained the activity I had planned for them that day. I created an activity that consisted of painter's tape

where I created three different size squares (big, medium, and small). I then proceeded to give the children some hula hoops which then they would use in all three squares. We started with the big square where the children would move freely for approximately 1:30 minutes around and then move on to the following squares. Once we were done the children reflected on how each square was different and where they were able to move freely. See appendix C to find the Personal space poster, painter's tape, and hula hoops used for this Learning Outcome. Overall once the activity was over and we were able to move to the bench area I then started to assess the children. For the assessment, students would need to define personal space and use hula hoops to demonstrate what personal space looks like to them.

Results

According to Learning Outcome 1, children will be able to demonstrate empathy and express personal feelings/ emotions by drawing on paper. To assess this learning outcome I first asked the children if they could demonstrate empathy. The children didn't know how to demonstrate empathy on their own and would ask for my help; 0 out of 4 couldn't demonstrate empathy; this part of the learning outcome was not met. To assess the second part of Learning Outcome 1 on emotions, I provided the children with a piece of paper and crayons. Children started drawing on what empathy looked like to them. After they were done with their drawing I proceeded to ask the children to explain what they had drawn. Children stated, "My puppy because my puppy is happy because she loves me when she sees me," "My mom and me; my mom is happy; I like when my mom smiles make me happy," "Happy face because I am happy," and "I am happy when I'm with my friends; the day is happy." 4 out of 4 (100%) drew at least one thing that represented empathy to them and gave a brief explanation of their drawing. This learning outcome was fully met.

According to Learning Outcome 2, children will explain 2 different ways to solve the conflict. To assess this learning outcome I had some conflict resolution cards that had different scenarios to them. One stated, "Someone you sit next to at lunch is always talking really loud in your ear. What can you do?" Some of their responses were, "tell the teacher," "move to a different table," "tell them to be quiet," "stop, I don't like that," "space." 3 of the students were able to provide me with at least two different responses on how they would solve this conflict. 1 student wasn't able to provide me with two but did provide at least one. This Learning Outcome was partially met.

Lastly, for Learning Outcome 3 children needed to define "personal space" and identify their own personal space through the use of hula hoops and a poster. To assess this learning outcome I asked the question what personal space is? Their responses to the question were six feet apart, in personal space, and away from the person. This part of the learning outcome was met; 3/3 provided me with their own definition of personal space. For the second part of the Learning Outcome children used the hula hoops to demonstrate their personal space and would refer to the poster board that was demonstrated to them. One child decided to go in the middle of the hula hoop and showed how her "bubble" was the same as the one on the poster board. A second child grabbed the hula hoop with both hands and placed it in front of herself demonstrating the space the hula hoop created between her and her peers. The third child didn't want to demonstrate personal space with the hula hoop and decided to play with it instead. 2 out of 3 of the students partially met the learning outcome.

Discussion

Students attending Community Partnership for Youth being aware of social-emotional learning is important since it will benefit them in being more aware of their own emotions as

well as the emotions of others. Learning Outcome two and three were partially met. On the other hand Learning Outcome one was not met in the first part of it, while the second part of this outcome was fully met. Lesson three focused on personal space; the students spread their arms to demonstrate what personal space would look like without the use of the Hula Hoops except for one student. Children were able to relate the emotion cards presented to them on day one with the school curriculum material that is being taught to them. For all three Learning Outcomes the children were able to find interesting the topics that I was introducing to them. The book *Talk and Work It Out* was a new book for them. They found it relatable to them because there are events in the book that children have experienced in school or at home. In the activity about personal space, children demonstrated even more enthusiasm because there were Hula Hoops involved and the three squares were done with painter's tape. Even though I just got to see the students on Friday only the students were able to remember me and gather up without me

Even though all three lessons were partially met by the students who attended Community Partnership for Youth, there were some limitations in the project. One of the limitations was students leaving early when the activity had already started or students not attending every lesson. Since Community Partnership for Youth is an after-school program children would leave during the lesson which limited the number of students I would work with. Also, students leave during the activity because parents would come to pick them up early from the program. My activities were presented outside in the grass area. The students would get distracted by balls or other students that attended another after-school program. Presenting the activities outside for the children was not the most indicated place to present since the children would get distracted and lose focus on what was being explained to them.

Even though my project was not presented at a better time of the day for the children, everything turned out to work out with them. In the future, I would like to spend more time with the children to have a better understanding of the children's needs and where they would most need the support. Also, I would like to work with a bigger group of children and not limit my activities to a certain number of children. I would like to also work with 1-6 grade students because I believe that all children experience different situations in each stage of their lives and as an educator, I would like to support them in any way possible.

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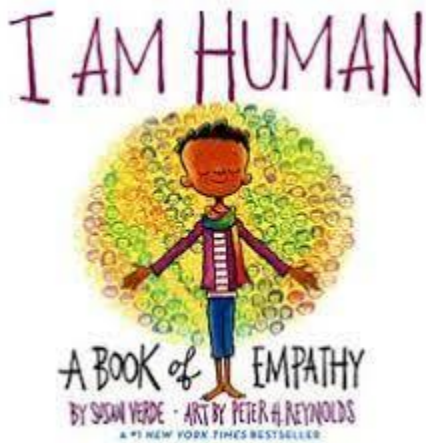
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Appendix A

Emotion cards, *I am Human: A Book of Empathy* by Susan Verde, and asked If students A is sad, what can we do? activity to meet Learning Outcome 1.



The ZONES of Regulation™ Reproduce: E The Zones of Regulation Handout

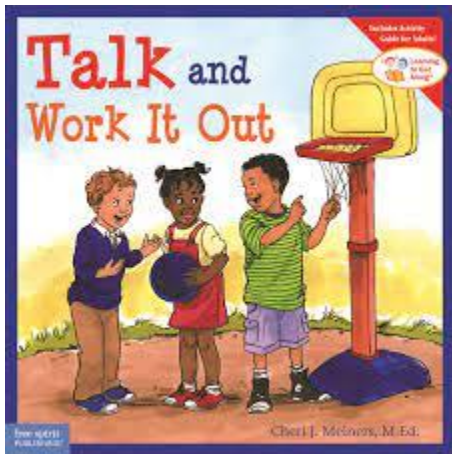
The **ZONES** of Regulation™

BLUE ZONE Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly	GREEN ZONE Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Relaxed	YELLOW ZONE Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control	RED ZONE Mad/Angry Terrified Elated/Excited Devastated Out of Control

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Appendix B

Solve the conflict worksheet and *Talk and Work It Out* by _____ activity to meet Learning Outcome 2.



Appendix C

Persona Space/ Personal Bubble Poster, Hula Hoops, Painters Tape (create 3 different size squares) activity to meet Learning Outcome 3.



Appendix



Social Emotional Learning for Kindergarten Students

Liliana C. Garduño
Human Development and Family Science



Introduction



I decided to focus on this topic because I didn't attend Kindergarten here in the U.S. Once I started to work with this age group I notice some challenges children were facing after the Pandemic.



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What is Social Emotional Learning? (SEL)

- It's the process in which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal goals (Halmatov, 2018).



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Needs Statement

Kindergarten students attending Community Partnership for Youth Program have not fully developed their social emotional learning skills when it comes to allowing peers to join with each others activities and figuring out solutions on their own.

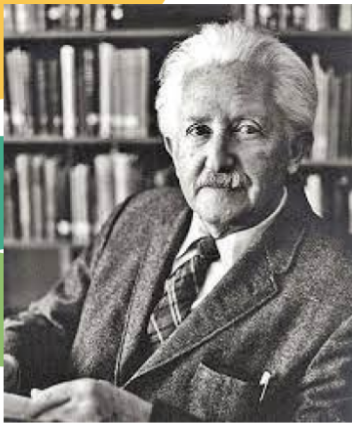


Literature Review

- Empathy: Empathy is grounded in increasingly complex cognitive skill, including putting oneself in another's situation and being able to imagen others emotional state (Lam et al., 2012).
- Conflict Resolution: By conflict resolution individuals prepare to settle differences in certain forms of understanding problem solving techniques to assist, and develop cooperation skills (Durlak et al., 2011).
- Personal Space (Proxemic): The degree of separation that individuals maintain between each other in social situations (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1999)



Psychosocial Development Theory



Erik Erikson
June 1902- May 1994

The theory focuses on the stages of development based on how an individual adjusts to social crises throughout their lives.

- 8 Stages
 - **Initiative versus Guilt (3-6 years old)**
 - **Virtue: Purpose**
 - During the initiative versus guilt stage children begin to assert their power and control over the world through direct play and other social interactions.

Learning Outcomes

I designed a workshop on empathy, conflict resolution, and personal space for kindergarten students. It focused on the following outcomes:

1. Children will demonstrate empathy and express personal feelings/emotions by drawing on paper.
2. Children will explain 2 different ways to solve conflict.
3. Children will define personal space and identify their own personal space through the use of hula hoops and a poster.



Method

Participants:

- 6 Kindergarten students
 - 3 female and 3 male
 - The number of students varied across the lessons
 - Hispanic
 - Bilingual



Ord Terrace Elementary



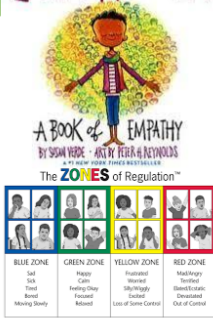
Methods: Procedures & Materials

Day 1

Book: *I Am Human A Book of Empathy*

Emotion cards

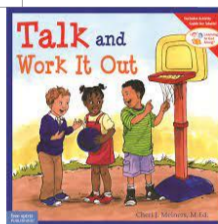
I AM HUMAN



Day 2

Book: *Talk and Work It Out*

Solve the Conflict Worksheet

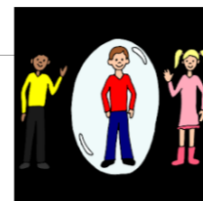


Day 3

Poster (Personal Bubble)

Hula Hoops

Painter Tape (3 different size squares)





Assessment Results: L01

- 1. Children will be able to demonstrate empathy and express personal feelings/emotions by drawing on paper.

Demonstrate empathy:

0/4. (not met)

Drawing:

4/4 (fully met)



Assessment Results: L0 2

- 2. Children will be able to explain 2 different forms of methods to solve conflict.

Conflict Resolution Cards

3/ 4 (partially met)

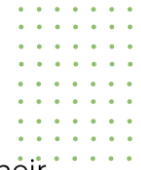
Someone you sit next to at lunch is always talking really loud in your ear?
What can you do?

Someone pushes another student and cuts in front of the lunch line?
What can you do?





Assessment Results: LO 3



3. Children will be able to define personal space and identify their own personal space through the use of hula hoops and a poster.

Question asked:

What is personal space?

3/3 (fully met)

Hula Hoop personal space:

2/3 (partially met)



Successes

- Students were able to define personal space and demonstrate what personal space look like to them with the hula hoops.
- Students were able to provide at least 2 examples of how to resolve conflict.

Limitations

- Presenting the activities outside to the children would cause them to get distracted by other students attending a different program or balls laying around.
- Students leaving during activities or not attending CPY.

Future Directions

- More time and a different day of the week.
- Less Distracted area
- Work with a bigger group
- Work with 2 graders.



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Thank You!

