A COMPLETE K–5 CURRICULUM

# Social & Emotional Learning

## Powered by the BECOME Pathway

*Aligned with the CASEL 5 Competencies and Massachusetts DESE SEL Guidance.*
*A signature Becoming U Wellness framework.*

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# Part 1 · Introduction

## A Standards-Aligned Foundation

This curriculum is grounded in the **CASEL 5 Competencies** — the national gold standard for social-emotional learning — and aligned with **Massachusetts DESE SEL Guidance**. Every lesson is designed to build skills in:

| CASEL Competency | Skill Focus |
|---|---|
| **Self-Awareness** | Identifying emotions and recognizing strengths |
| **Self-Management** | Regulating behavior and setting goals |
| **Social Awareness** | Showing empathy and appreciating diversity |
| **Relationship Skills** | Communicating, cooperating, and resolving conflict |
| **Responsible Decision-Making** | Making safe and ethical choices |

Massachusetts DESE emphasizes that SEL must be *explicit, integrated, and culturally responsive*. These principles are embedded throughout the curriculum so students gain meaningful, developmentally appropriate skills that connect to their daily lives.

## The Signature Approach · The BECOME Pathway

While CASEL and DESE define ***what*** to teach, the BECOME Pathway defines ***how*** to teach it — a clear, structured, teacher-friendly model that guides every unit and lesson.

| | Step | What It Looks Like |
|---|---|---|
| B | **Breathe / Begin** | Center the classroom with regulation and readiness. |
| E | **Explore** | Identify feelings, triggers, and strengths. |
| C | **Create** | Build new tools and strategies. |
| O | **Ongoing** | Practice through routines and daily application. |
| M | **Mindful** | Reflect on choices, perspectives, and impact. |
| E | **Empower** | Celebrate growth and carry skills into new contexts. |

*Through this pathway, SEL becomes not just a set of lessons, but a schoolwide culture that supports students in becoming their best selves — aligned with CASEL and DESE standards, yet uniquely Becoming U.*

# Part 2 · The K–5 Curriculum by Units

The curriculum is organized into six core units, each following a consistent structure:

**Focus → Skills ("I can") → Learning Objectives → Key Skills → Reference Charts → Core Activities → Assessment Ideas → Vocabulary → Read-Alouds → Teacher Notes**

This design keeps lessons teacher-friendly, consistent across grade levels, and easy to implement while maintaining developmental progression:

- **K–2:** Visual supports, puppets, role-play, songs, and daily check-ins.
- **3–5:** Journaling, deeper discussions, perspective-taking in stories, problem-solving, and peer dialogue.

## The Six Units

| Unit | Title | Focus |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Emotion Identification & Zones | Building a shared emotional language using the Zones of Regulation. |
| 2 | Regulation Tools & Coping Strategies | Finding, practicing, and applying strategies to manage emotions. |
| 3 | Empathy & Perspective-Taking | Recognizing others' feelings and growing compassion. |
| 4 | Friendship & Communication | Strengthening relationships, listening, and repairing conflicts. |
| 5 | Responsible Decision-Making | Practicing safe, fair, and respectful choices. |
| 6 | Growth Mindset & Goal Setting | Building resilience, celebrating effort, and setting meaningful goals. |

# Unit Summaries

## Unit 1 — Emotion Identification & Zones

**Focus:** Building a common emotional language across K–5 with the Zones of Regulation.

**Skills:** Recognizing feelings, connecting emotions to body cues, and using the Zones of Regulation framework.

## Unit 2 — Regulation Tools & Coping Strategies

**Focus:** Helping students find, practice, and apply regulation tools.

**Skills:** Breathing strategies, movement breaks, positive self-talk, and "toolbox menus."

## Unit 3 — Empathy & Perspective-Taking

**Focus:** Growing compassion and understanding differences.

**Skills:** Reading social cues, naming others' feelings, and taking another person's point of view.

## Unit 4 — Friendship & Communication

**Focus:** Strengthening relationship-building and conflict resolution.

**Skills:** Sharing, joining groups, active listening, assertive communication, and repairing after conflict.

## Unit 5 — Responsible Decision-Making

**Focus:** Practicing choices that are safe, fair, and respectful.

**Skills:** Stop–Think–Try, options-to-outcomes thinking, and consequence mapping.

## Unit 6 — Growth Mindset & Goal Setting

**Focus:** Building resilience, perseverance, and self-reflection.

**Skills:** Embracing "not yet," setting achievable goals, celebrating effort, and learning from mistakes.

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING · K–5

# Unit 1

## Emotion Identification & Zones

*Building a shared emotional language across K–5 — learning to recognize feelings, notice body cues, and connect them to the Zones of Regulation.*

# At a Glance

## Skills — "I can..."

| | |
|---|---|
| I can name my feelings. | I can notice how my body feels when I'm in different zones. |
| I can show my emotions using colors from the Zones. | I can tell when I might need help to get back to the Green Zone. |

## Learning Objectives

*By the end of this unit, students will be able to...*

- Identify and label basic emotions (happy, sad, mad, scared, frustrated, excited, worried).
- Connect emotions to body signals (heart racing, clenched fists, watery eyes).
- Use Zones of Regulation colors (Blue, Green, Yellow, Red) to classify emotions and states of alertness.
- Recognize that all emotions are normal and manageable — no Zone is "bad."
- Begin using the "size of the problem vs. size of the reaction" as a self-awareness tool.

## Key Skills Addressed (CASEL)

| CASEL Competency | Skill Focus |
|---|---|
| **Self-Awareness** | Recognizing and naming feelings |
| **Self-Management** | Beginning to notice body cues |
| **Social Awareness** | Understanding that others may feel differently |
| **Responsible Decision-Making** | Matching problem size to reaction size |

# Zones of Regulation — Reference Chart

*Every classroom should display these four Zones. No Zone is "bad" — they simply describe how our bodies and energy feel in the moment.*

| Zone | Description | Body Cues | Common Emotions | Sample Teacher Script |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **BLUE** | Low energy; our bodies are slowed down. | Slumped posture, yawning, heavy eyes, head down. | **Sad, tired, bored, sick.** | *"It looks like you're in the Blue Zone. That's okay. What can help your body feel a little more ready?"* |
| **GREEN** | Calm, focused, just-right for learning. | Steady breathing, eyes focused, body relaxed. | **Calm, happy, focused, proud.** | *"I see you're in the Green Zone — you look ready to learn!"* |
| **YELLOW** | Heightened energy; wiggly, stressed, or silly. | Fast talking, fidgeting, squirmy, racing heart. | **Frustrated, nervous, silly, excited.** | *"Sounds like you're in the Yellow Zone. What tool could help you slow down or feel calmer?"* |
| **RED** | Intense energy; body feels out of control. | Yelling, clenched fists, tears, stomping, red face. | **Angry, terrified, rage, explosive.** | *"I notice your body is in the Red Zone. Let's pause and take a breath together so you can feel safe."* |

## Key Reminders for Teachers

**All Zones are okay.** Emphasize this daily — emotions are normal; it's our choices in each Zone that matter.

**Zones ≠ behavior charts.** It's a self-awareness tool, not a "good vs. bad" label.

**Use modeling.** Share your own Zone aloud: "I was in the Yellow Zone before our staff meeting. I took three breaths to get back to Green."

**Anchor visuals.** Every classroom should have a Zones poster; students should see it used regularly.

## Core Activities

| Activity | Grades K–2 | Grades 3–5 |
|---|---|---|
| **Feelings Posters & Charts** | Teacher introduces emotions with visuals; students point or place their photo under the Zone. | Students brainstorm synonyms for each Zone and add to posters over time. |
| **Mood Check-Ins** | Students use magnets / stickers on a classroom Zones chart. | Students use exit slips or a digital "Mood Meter"; add reflections ("I'm in Yellow because…"). |
| **Emotion Charades** | Students act out simple emotions (happy, sad, angry, tired). | Students act out complex emotions (embarrassed, nervous, overwhelmed). Discuss intensity + Zones. |
| **"Size of the Problem" Sorting Game** | Act out reactions for small, medium, and big problems. | Sort and debate expected vs. unexpected reactions; journal reflections. |
| **Journaling or Drawing** | Draw themselves in a Zone with body cues. | Write: "A time I was in the Red Zone was ___. My body felt ___, and what helped me was ___." |

### Assessment Ideas

| Method | What to Look For |
|---|---|
| **Check-ins** | Students independently identify and report their Zone. |
| **Observation** | Students use emotion / Zone vocabulary in class. |
| **Performance Task** | K–2: Point to or circle the Zone for a scenario. 3–5: Write or role-play Zone awareness + matching tool. |
| **Reflection** | Journals show growth in emotional vocabulary over time. |

## Vocabulary

| Word / Phrase | Kid-Friendly Definition | Example Sentence |
|---|---|---|
| **Happy** | Feeling good, joyful, or excited | *"I feel happy when I play with friends."* |
| **Sad** | Upset or down | *"I felt sad when I lost my toy."* |
| **Mad / Angry** | Upset, wanting to yell or stomp | *"I was mad when my tower fell."* |
| **Scared** | Afraid or worried | *"I felt scared during the thunderstorm."* |
| **Tired** | Low energy or needing rest | *"I felt tired after recess."* |
| **Frustrated** | When something is hard and you can't fix it | *"I was frustrated when the puzzle didn't fit."* |
| **Nervous** | Jumpy about something coming up | *"I felt nervous before my presentation."* |
| **Embarrassed** | Uncomfortable about what others think | *"I was embarrassed when I tripped."* |
| **Overwhelmed** | Too much happening at once | *"I felt overwhelmed with homework."* |
| **Calm** | Steady, peaceful, ready to learn | *"I was calm while reading."* |
| **Blue Zone** | Low energy (sad, tired, sick) | *"I was in Blue when I missed my friend."* |
| **Green Zone** | Calm, focused, ready | *"I'm in Green when I'm paying attention."* |
| **Yellow Zone** | Heightened energy (frustrated, silly, excited) | *"I felt Yellow before the game."* |
| **Red Zone** | Intense emotions (angry, scared, out of control) | *"I was in Red when I yelled at my brother."* |
| **Body Cues** | Signals from your body | *"My hands were sweaty because I was nervous."* |
| **Size of the Problem** | How big the problem really is | *"Forgetting a pencil is a small problem."* |
| **Size of the Reaction** | How strong your response is compared to the problem | *"Crying for an hour over a broken crayon is a big reaction to a small problem."* |

## Read Alouds

| Title & Author | Theme(s) | Zone-Linked Discussion Question |
|---|---|---|
| **The Color Monster**<br>*Anna Llenas* | Emotions represented as colors | *"Which Zone do you think the Color Monster is in when he feels angry? How can you tell from the pictures?"* |
| **Today I Feel Silly**<br>*Jamie Lee Curtis* | Normalizing changing feelings | *"Which Zones did the girl move through in this story? Have you ever felt more than one Zone in a day?"* |
| **In My Heart**<br>*Jo Witek* | Feelings + body cues (sensory) | *"When the book says "my heart feels small and fragile," what Zone might that be? What body cues go with it?"* |
| **The Way I Feel**<br>*Janan Cain* | Everyday emotions and how they show up | *"When the character felt frustrated, what Zone was that? What might their body cues look like?"* |
| **Glad Monster, Sad Monster**<br>*Ed Emberley* | Acting out and identifying feelings | *"Which Zone do you think the Glad Monster is in? Can you act out another Zone using your face or body?"* |
| **A Little Spot of Feelings**<br>*Diane Alber* | Naming and exploring emotions | *"What Spot would match the Yellow Zone? Which Spot might help you get back to Green?"* |
| **When Sophie Gets Angry…**<br>*Molly Bang* | Intense anger, calming strategies | *"When Sophie ran outside, what Zone was she in? What did she do that helped her calm back to Green?"* |
| **Wilma Jean the Worry Machine**<br>*Julia Cook* | Anxiety and worry | *"When Wilma Jean was worrying, what Zone was she in? What body cues told her she was worried?"* |
| **Brave Every Day**<br>*Trudy Ludwig* | Anxiety, courage, and self-talk | *"Which Zone was Cam in before the field trip? How did she move herself closer to Green?"* |
| **Sometimes I'm Bombaloo**<br>*Rachel Vail* | Losing control and regaining calm | *"What Zone was the character in when she was Bombaloo? What tools could help her get back to Green?"* |
| **Listening to My Body**<br>*Gabi Garcia* | Body awareness + emotions | *"When the character's stomach felt tight, what Zone do you think that was? What body cues tell you how you feel?"* |
| **The Invisible Boy**<br>*Trudy Ludwig* | Loneliness, inclusion / exclusion | *"What Zone might Brian be in when nobody notices him? What could a classmate do to help?"* |
| **What If Everybody Did That?**<br>*Ellen Javernick* | Choices + consequences | *"When the kids made unexpected choices, what Zone do you think they were in? How did those choices affect others?"* |

# Tiered Supports

**Tier 1** = what every student gets, to build common language. **Tier 2** = extra practice for students who need scaffolding. **Tier 3** = individualized, intensive coaching.

## Tier 1 — Universal (All Students)

**Focus:** Build shared emotional language schoolwide; normalize Zones as self-awareness tools.

| Strategies & Activities | Examples of Differentiation |
|---|---|
| • Daily Zones check-in (magnets, stickers, digital mood meters).<br>• Teach feelings vocabulary with visuals, posters, and read-alouds.<br>• Model teacher self-talk: "I was in Yellow before lunch, so I took a breath."<br>• Core activities: Feelings Posters, Charades, Journaling, Size of the Problem game. | • Short, visual activities for K–2 (5–10 mins).<br>• Longer discussion / journaling for 3–5 (10–20 mins).<br>• All classrooms display Zones posters and reference them in routines. |

## Tier 2 — Targeted (Some Students)

**Focus:** Strengthen emotion identification and regulation for students who need extra practice.

| Strategies & Activities | Examples of Differentiation |
|---|---|
| • Small group check-ins (morning / afternoon circles to name Zones).<br>• Pre-teach / re-teach Zones vocabulary using role-play and games.<br>• Visual cue cards for body cues & Zones.<br>• Guided reflection sheets: "I was in Yellow when ___. My body felt ___. What helped was ___." | • Pull 2–4 students for 10–15 min weekly practice.<br>• Use Social Stories about Zones.<br>• Provide toolboxes (fidgets, breathing cards) to practice moving Zones.<br>• Collaborate with families: share language / visuals for home. |

## Tier 3 — Intensive (Few Students)

**Focus:** Provide individualized support for students with significant difficulty identifying or regulating emotions.

| Strategies & Activities | Examples of Differentiation |
|---|---|
| • One-on-one coaching to connect body cues with Zones ("Your fists are tight — what Zone might that be?").<br>• Personalized regulation plan with preferred calming tools.<br>• Frequent check-in / check-out system with counselor or social worker.<br>• Integrate Zones into behavior plans or IEP goals (e.g., identify Zone and choose a coping tool in 4/5 opportunities). | • Individual visual schedules showing regulation breaks.<br>• Use Listening to My Body one-to-one with discussion.<br>• Practice co-regulation (guided breathing, movement breaks).<br>• Daily communication with caregivers about Zones progress. |

### Teacher Notes

- Use consistent Zone language schoolwide.
- Normalize: all Zones are okay — it's what we do in that Zone that matters.
- Pacing — K–2: short, visual activities (5–10 min). 3–5: longer discussion / journaling (10–20 min).
- Keep referencing this unit all year; it becomes the "common language" for SEL.

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# Unit 2

## Regulation Tools & Coping Strategies

*Helping students find, practice, and apply regulation tools —*
*so they can choose what brings their body back to the Green Zone.*

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# At a Glance

## Skills — "I can..."

| | |
|---|---|
| I can use breathing strategies to calm my body. | I can take a movement break when I need to refocus. |
| I can practice positive self-talk when I feel upset or worried. | I can choose a tool from my toolbox to help me get back to the Green Zone. |

## Learning Objectives

*By the end of this unit, students will be able to...*

- Identify at least three personal regulation tools (breathing, movement, positive self-talk, sensory strategies).
- Match regulation tools to different Zones of Regulation.
- Practice using tools during role-play and real-life classroom situations.
- Reflect on which tools work best for them in different contexts.
- Begin building a personalized "Regulation Toolbox" for ongoing use.

## Key Skills Addressed (CASEL)

| CASEL Competency | Skill Focus |
|---|---|
| **Self-Management** | Using strategies to regulate behavior and emotions |
| **Self-Awareness** | Identifying which tools help in different Zones |
| **Social Awareness** | Respecting that peers may use different tools |
| **Responsible Decision-Making** | Choosing safe and appropriate strategies |

# Tools by Zone — Reference Chart

*Match the tool to the Zone. Teach these in calm moments so students can reach for them under stress.*

| Zone | Possible Tools | Sample Teacher Script |
|---|---|---|
| BLUE | Stretching, water break, jumping jacks, upbeat music | *"Looks like you're in the Blue Zone. What movement could help your body feel more awake?"* |
| GREEN | Keep steady: focus check, stretch break, gratitude | *"You're in the Green Zone — what can you do to stay there?"* |
| YELLOW | Breathing strategies, fidget tools, mindful coloring | *"It sounds like you're in the Yellow Zone. Which tool from your toolbox could help you slow down?"* |
| RED | Safe space break, deep breathing, talking to an adult | *"Your body looks like it's in the Red Zone. Let's take a break together and use one of your tools."* |

## Key Reminders for Teachers

- **Normalize practice:** students need daily rehearsal of regulation strategies, not just in crisis.
- **Model tools:** use strategies yourself and say them aloud ("I'm going to take 3 breaths before we start math.").
- **Offer choice:** give students a menu of options — they don't all respond to the same tool.
- **Create visuals:** post a "Toolbox Menu" in the classroom with images and words.

## Core Activities

| Activity | Grades K–2 | Grades 3–5 |
|---|---|---|
| **Class Toolbox Creation** | Teacher introduces a class "toolbox" with visuals (breathing, stretching, quiet corner). Students practice each tool daily. | Students co-create a classroom menu of strategies and explain when and how to use them. |
| **Breathing Games** | Teach "Smell the Flower, Blow the Candle" or "Belly Breathing with a Teddy Bear." | Teach "Square Breathing" or "5-Finger Breathing." Practice before transitions. |
| **Movement Breaks** | Play "Freeze Dance" or "Simon Says Stretch." | Use GoNoodle, yoga sequences, or brain break cards. |
| **Positive Self-Talk Practice** | Students repeat simple affirmations: "I can do this. I am safe." | Students write and decorate affirmation cards ("I can handle challenges"). |
| **Tool Sorting Game** | Sort cards of regulation tools into "Helps in Blue," "Helps in Yellow," etc. | Debate or journal which tools work best for different Zones and why. |
| **Role-Play Scenarios** | Practice: "What tool could you use if you feel wiggly during reading time?" | Act out scenarios (test anxiety, playground conflict) and choose tools. |

### Assessment Ideas

| Method | What to Look For |
|---|---|
| **Check-ins** | Students name a tool they used during the day. |
| **Observation** | Do students try tools independently or with prompts? |
| **Performance Task** | K–2: Show how to do a breathing exercise. 3–5: Write or role-play a scenario with a chosen tool. |
| **Reflection** | Journal: "One tool that helped me today was ___ because ___." |

## Vocabulary

| Word / Phrase | Kid-Friendly Definition | Example Sentence |
|---|---|---|
| **Regulation** | Calming your body and mind so you feel ready | *"I used breathing to help with regulation."* |
| **Toolbox** | A collection of strategies you can use to help yourself | *"My toolbox has breathing, drawing, and walking."* |
| **Strategy** | A plan or action that helps you | *"My strategy for feeling calm is listening to music."* |
| **Breathing** | Taking slow breaths in and out to calm down | *"I used belly breathing before the test."* |
| **Positive Self-Talk** | Saying kind and helpful words to yourself | *"I told myself, 'I can try again.'"* |
| **Movement Break** | A short activity to wake up your body | *"I took a movement break to feel ready for math."* |

## Read Alouds

| Title & Author | Key Theme | Sample Discussion Question |
|---|---|---|
| **Breathe Like a Bear**<br>*Kira Willey* | Breathing strategies | *"Which breathing exercise could help in the Yellow Zone?"* |
| **I Am Peace: A Book of Mindfulness**<br>*Susan Verde* | Mindfulness and calm | *"How did the character bring themselves back to Green?"* |
| **A Little Spot of Calm**<br>*Diane Alber* | Self-regulation | *"What calm strategies could you put in your toolbox?"* |
| **Anh's Anger**<br>*Gail Silver* | Coping with big emotions | *"What tool helped Anh when he felt in the Red Zone?"* |
| **Don't Think About Purple Elephants**<br>*Susan Whelan* | Managing worry | *"What tool did Sophie use when she was in the Yellow Zone?"* |
| **Even Superheroes Have Bad Days**<br>*Shelly Becker* | Coping strategies | *"What tool did the superheroes use to get back to Green?"* |

## Teacher Notes

- Keep tools visible and accessible in every classroom (a “calm corner” or toolbox station).
- Explicitly teach tools in calm moments before expecting students to use them in stress.
- Reinforce daily: use short breathing and movement breaks during transitions.
- Encourage students to notice which tools work best for them — personalize toolboxes.

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# Unit 3

## Empathy & Perspective-Taking

*Growing compassion and understanding differences — helping students recognize others' feelings, take new perspectives, and build inclusive relationships.*

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# At a Glance

## Skills — "I can..."

| | |
|---|---|
| I can notice how someone else might be feeling. | I can listen to others with care and respect. |
| I can imagine what it might be like to be in someone else's shoes. | I can respond in ways that show kindness and understanding. |

## Learning Objectives

*By the end of this unit, students will be able to...*

- Identify emotions in others using facial expressions, body language, and context clues.
- Practice perspective-taking through stories, role-play, and discussion.
- Show empathy by naming others' feelings and responding supportively.
- Recognize that people may feel differently in the same situation.
- Understand that empathy helps build stronger friendships and communities.

## Key Skills Addressed (CASEL)

| CASEL Competency | Skill Focus |
|---|---|
| **Social Awareness** | Recognizing others' feelings and perspectives |
| **Relationship Skills** | Listening actively, showing care, and responding kindly |
| **Self-Awareness** | Understanding one's own reactions to others' feelings |
| **Responsible Decision-Making** | Considering how choices impact others |

# Empathy & Perspective-Taking — Reference Chart

| Concept | Description | Sample Teacher Script |
|---|---|---|
| **Empathy** | Understanding and caring about how someone else feels | *"It sounds like your friend is sad. How do you think they feel right now?"* |
| **Perspective-Taking** | Imagining what it's like to be in someone else's shoes | *"If you were in their place, how would you feel?"* |
| **Active Listening** | Giving full attention to the speaker — with eyes, ears, and body | *"Show me with your body how you listen when a friend is talking."* |
| **Compassionate Response** | Taking action to show care | *"What is one kind thing you could do to help your classmate feel better?"* |

## Key Reminders for Teachers

- **Model empathy daily:** share your own perspective and how you consider others'.
- **Use diverse stories:** highlight different cultures, backgrounds, and experiences.
- **Validate differences:** it's okay for people to feel differently in the same situation.
- **"Pause and notice":** stop in real moments to ask, "How do you think they feel right now?"

## Core Activities

| Activity | Grades K–2 | Grades 3–5 |
|---|---|---|
| **Feelings Detective** | Show pictures of kids and faces; students guess emotions. Ask, "What makes you think that?" | Use photo scenarios or short video clips; discuss body language and context clues. |
| **Walk in My Shoes** | Students role-play a character from a story. "How would you feel if this happened to you?" | Small group debates: "How might each person in this story feel differently?" |
| **Compliment Circle** | Each student shares one kind thing about a peer. | Students write affirmations for classmates, focusing on empathy ("I notice you are a good friend when…"). |
| **Two Sides of a Story** | Simple conflicts (sharing toys, waiting in line) — retell from each student's perspective. | Role-play conflicts (group work, playground challenges) and switch roles to see the other side. |
| **Empathy Maps** | Students draw a person and add what they might feel, see, hear, and need. | Students complete written empathy maps for book characters or historical figures. |

### Assessment Ideas

| Method | What to Look For |
|---|---|
| **Check-ins** | Students can identify how a peer might feel in simple scenarios. |
| **Observation** | Students use empathy language: "I think you're feeling ___." |
| **Performance Task** | K–2: Match pictures of emotions with scenarios. 3–5: Write or role-play two perspectives in a conflict. |
| **Reflection** | Journal: "A time I showed empathy was when ___. It helped because ___." |

## Vocabulary

| Word / Phrase | Kid-Friendly Definition | Example Sentence |
|---|---|---|
| **Empathy** | Understanding how someone else feels | *"I showed empathy when I helped my friend who was sad."* |
| **Perspective** | The way someone sees or experiences something | *"From my perspective, waiting is hard, but my friend didn't mind."* |
| **Compassion** | Caring about others and wanting to help | *"She showed compassion by sharing her snack."* |
| **Feelings Detective** | Someone who looks for clues about how people feel | *"I was a feelings detective when I noticed his smile."* |
| **Active Listening** | Using your ears, eyes, and body to pay attention | *"I practiced active listening by looking at my partner and not interrupting."* |

## Read Alouds

| Title & Author | Key Theme | Sample Discussion Question |
|---|---|---|
| **Stand in My Shoes**<br>*Bob Sornson* | Understanding empathy | *"How did Emily show empathy in the story?"* |
| **The Invisible Boy**<br>*Trudy Ludwig* | Inclusion and compassion | *"What Zone might Brian be in when he feels left out? What could classmates do to help?"* |
| **Those Shoes**<br>*Maribeth Boelts* | Perspective-taking and kindness | *"How did Jeremy feel when he wanted the shoes? How did his friend feel when he gave them away?"* |
| **The Rabbit Listened**<br>*Cori Doerrfeld* | Comforting others | *"What kind of empathy did the rabbit show? How did it help?"* |
| **Each Kindness**<br>*Jacqueline Woodson* | Impact of choices on others | *"How do you think Maya felt when others didn't include her?"* |
| **We're All Wonders**<br>*R.J. Palacio* | Perspective and inclusion | *"How did the main character feel different from others? How can we show empathy in similar situations?"* |
| **Enemy Pie**<br>*Derek Munson* | Shifting perspective about others | *"What changed when the boy spent time with his 'enemy'? What perspective did he gain?"* |

## Teacher Notes

- Use real-life classroom situations to pause and highlight empathy moments.
- Reinforce that empathy can be shown in small actions (listening, including, sharing).
- Encourage students to use empathy language: “I think you feel…” or “It sounds like…”
- Link empathy to conflict resolution: understanding the other person is the first step to problem-solving.

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# Unit 4

## Friendship & Communication

*Strengthening relationship-building and conflict resolution — teaching students how to share, listen, cooperate, and repair relationships.*

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# At a Glance

## Skills — "I can..."

- I can share and take turns with others.
- I can listen to my friends with care.
- I can use kind and respectful words when I talk.
- I can solve problems with friends in a fair way.
- I can fix things when I hurt someone's feelings.

## Learning Objectives

*By the end of this unit, students will be able to...*

- Identify qualities of a good friend (kindness, respect, honesty).
- Practice active listening skills in peer conversations.
- Use "I" statements and assertive communication in conflict.
- Work cooperatively in groups and take turns.
- Apply simple strategies to repair relationships after conflict.

## Key Skills Addressed (CASEL)

| CASEL Competency | Skill Focus |
|---|---|
| **Relationship Skills** | Building and maintaining friendships, resolving conflict |
| **Social Awareness** | Respecting differences in friendships |
| **Self-Management** | Managing emotions during conflict |
| **Responsible Decision-Making** | Choosing fair, respectful solutions |

# Friendship & Communication — Reference Chart

| Concept | Description | Sample Teacher Script |
|---|---|---|
| **Friendship Qualities** | Trust, kindness, respect, fairness | *"What makes someone a good friend? Can you show that today?"* |
| **Active Listening** | Listening with eyes, ears, and body | *"Show me whole-body listening — eyes watching, ears listening, body still."* |
| **"I" Statements** | Expressing feelings assertively without blame | *"Instead of 'You're mean,' try, 'I feel upset when you take my pencil.'"* |
| **Repairing Relationships** | Apologizing, making amends, moving forward | *"What can you do to fix things with your friend?"* |

## Key Reminders for Teachers

- **Practice like academics:** friendship skills need rehearsal, just like reading and math.
- **Model communication:** use kind, respectful language in daily interactions.
- **Rehearse with role-play:** practice conflict resolution before real conflicts happen.
- **Honor differences:** friendship doesn't mean always agreeing.

## Core Activities

| Activity | Grades K–2 | Grades 3–5 |
|---|---|---|
| **Friendship Web** | Students toss a ball of yarn, naming one quality of a good friend — creating a web of kindness. | Students write qualities on index cards, then rank or group them into "Top 5 Friendship Qualities." |
| **Listening Partner Practice** | Students pair up and share "What I like to do at recess." Partner repeats back what they heard. | Partners share longer prompts ("What makes you a good friend?") and reflect on accuracy of listening. |
| **Compliment Chain** | Each student gives a compliment to the next person in the circle. | Students write compliments on sticky notes and post them on a "Friendship Wall." |
| **Conflict Role-Play** | Practice simple scenarios (sharing toys, waiting turns). Use scripts to solve conflicts. | Role-play complex scenarios (group project disagreements, hurtful words). Introduce "I" statements. |
| **Apology / Repair Practice** | Practice saying: "I'm sorry for ___. Next time I will ___." | Students brainstorm or write letters on how to repair after a conflict. |

### Assessment Ideas

| Method | What to Look For |
|---|---|
| **Check-ins** | Students can name one quality of a good friend. |
| **Observation** | Students use listening skills (eye contact, not interrupting). |
| **Performance Task** | K–2: Role-play conflict and resolution. 3–5: Write an "I" statement for a scenario. |
| **Reflection** | Journal: "One way I was a good friend today was ___." |

## Vocabulary

| Word / Phrase | Kid-Friendly Definition | Example Sentence |
|---|---|---|
| **Friend** | Someone you care about and spend time with | *"My friend plays with me at recess."* |
| **Kindness** | Doing or saying something that helps someone feel good | *"I showed kindness when I shared my crayons."* |
| **Respect** | Treating others the way you want to be treated | *"I showed respect by listening quietly."* |
| **Active Listening** | Using eyes, ears, and body to pay attention | *"I practiced active listening when my partner talked."* |
| **"I" Statement** | Saying how you feel without blaming others | *"I feel upset when you push me."* |
| **Apology** | Words you say to fix a hurt | *"I gave my friend an apology when I hurt their feelings."* |
| **Cooperation** | Working together to reach a goal | *"We used cooperation to finish the puzzle."* |

## Read Alouds

| Title & Author | Key Theme | Sample Discussion Question |
|---|---|---|
| **How to Be a Friend**<br>*Laurie Krasny Brown* | Friendship basics | *"What is one thing the characters did to show they were good friends?"* |
| **Enemy Pie**<br>*Derek Munson* | Resolving conflict | *"How did the boy's feelings about his 'enemy' change? What helped?"* |
| **Strictly No Elephants**<br>*Lisa Mantchev* | Inclusion and acceptance | *"How did the kids show respect and include everyone?"* |
| **Chrysanthemum**<br>*Kevin Henkes* | Respect and name-calling | *"How did Chrysanthemum feel when kids laughed at her name? How could her classmates repair it?"* |
| **A Sick Day for Amos McGee**<br>*Philip C. Stead* | Caring and empathy in friendships | *"What did Amos's friends do to show kindness when he was sick?"* |
| **My Mouth Is a Volcano**<br>*Julia Cook* | Listening and waiting to talk | *"What happened when Louis interrupted? What did he learn about listening?"* |

## Teacher Notes

- Teach and practice “I” statements explicitly with sentence frames.
- Encourage positive reinforcement: praise moments of kindness and cooperation.
- Use class meetings to talk about friendship challenges and celebrate successes.
- Keep a “Friendship Toolbox” visible: posters, scripts, and reminders for solving conflicts.

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING · K–5

# Unit 5

## Responsible Decision-Making

*Practicing choices that are safe, fair, and respectful —*
*and learning how to think through consequences before acting.*

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# At a Glance

## Skills — "I can..."

- I can stop and think before I act.
- I can make choices that are safe and fair.
- I can think about how my decisions affect others.
- I can solve problems by thinking of more than one option.
- I can take responsibility for my actions.

## Learning Objectives

*By the end of this unit, students will be able to...*

- Identify safe vs. unsafe, fair vs. unfair choices.
- Practice the "Stop–Think–Try" process before acting.
- Predict possible consequences of different choices.
- Explore how decisions impact peers, family, and community.
- Apply problem-solving strategies to classroom and peer scenarios.

## Key Skills Addressed (CASEL)

| CASEL Competency | Skill Focus |
|---|---|
| **Responsible Decision-Making** | Making choices that are safe, fair, and respectful |
| **Relationship Skills** | Considering others when making choices |
| **Self-Management** | Pausing before reacting |
| **Social Awareness** | Recognizing fairness and equity |

# Responsible Decision-Making — Reference Chart

| Concept | Description | Sample Teacher Script |
|---|---|---|
| **Stop–Think–Try** | Pause, consider options, choose the best action | *"Let's stop and think. What are two choices you could make right now?"* |
| **Safe Choices** | Decisions that keep everyone from harm | *"Is this choice safe for you and others?"* |
| **Fair Choices** | Decisions that share and respect rights | *"Was that fair to everyone in the group?"* |
| **Consequences** | What happens after a choice (positive or negative) | *"If you choose this, what might happen next?"* |
| **Responsibility** | Owning actions and making repairs | *"What can you do to fix things after that choice?"* |

## Key Reminders for Teachers

- **Mistakes are learning:** treat them as opportunities to grow.
- **Think aloud:** model your own process — "I was going to rush, but I stopped and thought first."
- **Embed fairness:** weave it into academic work (sharing materials, group projects).
- **Slow-thinking strategies:** count to 5, deep breath, "size of the problem."

## Core Activities

| Activity | Grades K–2 | Grades 3–5 |
|---|---|---|
| **Stop–Think–Try Practice** | Teacher shares simple scenarios; students act out stopping and trying different choices. | Students write or role-play scenarios, weighing pros and cons of each option. |
| **Fair / Unfair Sort** | Students sort cards into "fair" vs. "unfair" choices (e.g., taking turns vs. skipping line). | Students debate tricky scenarios (e.g., dividing group work) and justify fairness. |
| **Consequence Mapping** | Students draw cause-and-effect pictures ("If I push, then my friend might get hurt"). | Students create flowcharts showing short- and long-term consequences of choices. |
| **Problem-Solving Role-Play** | Practice resolving playground or classroom conflicts. | Role-play complex scenarios (cyberbullying, cheating, group disagreements). |
| **Decision Dice** | Roll dice with prompts: "Think of 2 choices," "Say what's safe," "Say what's fair." | Use decision wheels or cards to generate multiple solutions to a problem. |

### Assessment Ideas

| Method | What to Look For |
|---|---|
| **Check-ins** | Students explain one safe or fair choice they made today. |
| **Observation** | Do students pause before reacting in conflict? |
| **Performance Task** | K–2: Choose the safe / fair option from 2 choices. 3–5: Role-play a scenario with multiple outcomes. |
| **Reflection** | Journal: "A choice I made today was ___. The consequence was ___." |

## Vocabulary

| Word / Phrase | Kid-Friendly Definition | Example Sentence |
|---|---|---|
| **Choice** | Something you decide to do | *"I made a choice to play with a new friend."* |
| **Consequence** | What happens after your choice | *"The consequence of helping was that my friend smiled."* |
| **Fair** | When everyone gets treated with respect | *"It was fair when we all got a turn."* |
| **Safe** | Something that doesn't hurt anyone | *"Crossing at the crosswalk is safe."* |
| **Responsibility** | Owning what you do and fixing mistakes | *"I showed responsibility by cleaning up my mess."* |
| **Stop–Think–Try** | A tool to help make smart choices | *"I used Stop–Think–Try before I grabbed the ball."* |

## Read Alouds

| Title & Author | Key Theme | Sample Discussion Question |
|---|---|---|
| **What If Everybody Did That?**<br>*Ellen Javernick* | Consequences of choices | *"What happens when everyone makes the same choice? Was it fair?"* |
| **Do Unto Otters**<br>*Laurie Keller* | Respect and fairness | *"How did the animals make respectful choices?"* |
| **Decibella and Her 6-Inch Voice**<br>*Julia Cook* | Self-control and regulation | *"How did Isabella learn to use her voice responsibly?"* |
| **The Bad Seed**<br>*Jory John* | Making better choices | *"What choices did the Bad Seed change to feel better?"* |
| **If Everybody Did**<br>*Jo Ann Stover* | Cause and effect of actions | *"What did the story teach about consequences?"* |
| **David Gets in Trouble**<br>*David Shannon* | Owning mistakes | *"How did David learn to take responsibility for his choices?"* |

## Teacher Notes

- Integrate decision-making language into classroom norms: “Is that safe? Is it fair? What might happen next?”
- Practice daily with small scenarios before applying to bigger conflicts.
- Praise responsible choices out loud so students see them valued.
- Revisit Zones of Regulation: link decision-making to recognizing which Zone you’re in before choosing.

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING · K–5

# Unit 6

## Growth Mindset & Goal Setting

*Building resilience, perseverance, and self-reflection — teaching students that mistakes are opportunities to grow and goals are steps toward success.*

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# At a Glance

## Skills — "I can..."

| | |
|---|---|
| I can keep trying, even when something feels hard. | I can say "I can't do this yet" instead of "I can't do this." |
| I can set a goal and work toward it step by step. | I can celebrate my effort and progress. |
| I can learn from mistakes instead of giving up. | |

## Learning Objectives

*By the end of this unit, students will be able to...*

- Define growth mindset and explain the difference between "fixed" and "growth" thinking.
- Use positive self-talk and "yet" language to reframe challenges.
- Set age-appropriate academic, social, or personal goals.
- Monitor progress toward goals and reflect on effort.
- Recognize that mistakes are part of learning and success.

## Key Skills Addressed (CASEL)

| CASEL Competency | Skill Focus |
|---|---|
| **Self-Management** | Perseverance, goal-setting, and self-regulation |
| **Self-Awareness** | Recognizing strengths, effort, and areas for growth |
| **Responsible Decision-Making** | Making choices that support long-term goals |
| **Relationship Skills** | Encouraging peers and celebrating others' successes |

# Growth Mindset & Goal Setting — Reference Chart

| Concept | Description | Sample Teacher Script |
|---|---|---|
| **Growth Mindset** | Belief that abilities can grow with effort and practice | *"You can't do it yet. With practice, you'll get better."* |
| **Fixed Mindset** | Belief that abilities are unchangeable | *""I'll never be good at math" → reframe to growth mindset."* |
| **Effort Over Outcome** | Progress and persistence matter more than perfection | *"I'm proud of how hard you worked, even if it wasn't perfect."* |
| **SMART Goals** | Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound | *"My goal is to read 3 books this month."* |
| **Resilience** | Bouncing back from challenges | *"You kept trying even after it didn't work the first time — that's resilience."* |

## Key Reminders for Teachers

- **Celebrate effort, not just results:** "You worked hard on that" beats "You're so smart."
- **Use "yet" language daily:** and model it yourself.
- **Encourage peer encouragement:** students recognize one another's growth.
- **Revisit goals often:** don't just set them once and forget them.

## Core Activities

| Activity | Grades K–2 | Grades 3–5 |
|---|---|---|
| **"Yet" Language Practice** | Students reframe fixed statements: "I can't do this" → "I can't do this yet." | Students write growth statements and share with the class. |
| **Goal-Setting Chart** | Students draw or use visuals to show a small goal (e.g., learning a new letter). | Students use SMART goal templates to set academic and personal goals. |
| **Mistakes = Learning** | Read a story where the character makes mistakes; discuss what they learned. | Students journal about a mistake that taught them something important. |
| **Effort Jar** | Add a bead or marble to a class jar every time a student shows persistence. | Students track progress toward goals with checklists or effort logs. |
| **Peer Encouragement Circle** | Students share one kind encouragement with a classmate. | Students write notes recognizing a peer's effort and growth. |

### Assessment Ideas

| Method | What to Look For |
|---|---|
| **Check-ins** | Students can use "yet" language when facing challenges. |
| **Observation** | Students show persistence instead of giving up. |
| **Performance Task** | K–2: Share one personal goal aloud. 3–5: Create a written SMART goal with steps. |
| **Reflection** | Journal: "One time I kept trying was ___. I learned that ___." |

## Vocabulary

| Word / Phrase | Kid-Friendly Definition | Example Sentence |
|---|---|---|
| **Growth Mindset** | Believing you can get better with practice | *"I have a growth mindset when I say 'I can learn this.'"* |
| **Fixed Mindset** | Thinking you can't change or learn | *"I had a fixed mindset when I said 'I'll never be good at spelling.'"* |
| **Yet** | A word that means you can get there with time | *"I can't do it... yet."* |
| **Goal** | Something you want to work toward | *"My goal is to finish my book by Friday."* |
| **Effort** | Trying your best, even if it's hard | *"I showed effort by practicing every day."* |
| **Resilience** | Bouncing back after something is hard | *"I showed resilience when I kept trying after losing the game."* |

## Read Alouds

| Title & Author | Key Theme | Sample Discussion Question |
|---|---|---|
| **The Most Magnificent Thing**<br>*Ashley Spires* | Persistence and creativity | *"What did the girl learn from making mistakes?"* |
| **Rosie Revere, Engineer**<br>*Andrea Beaty* | Growth mindset and failure | *"How did Rosie's perspective change when her invention failed?"* |
| **Your Fantastic Elastic Brain**<br>*JoAnn Deak* | Brain grows with practice | *"What does the book say about how your brain changes when you learn?"* |
| **What Do You Do With a Problem?**<br>*Kobi Yamada* | Overcoming challenges | *"How did the character's mindset shift when facing the problem?"* |
| **Salt in His Shoes**<br>*Deloris & Roslyn Jordan* | Practice, patience, and goals | *"What helped Michael Jordan reach his goal?"* |
| **The Dot**<br>*Peter H. Reynolds* | Effort and creativity | *"How did Vashti learn she could grow as an artist?"* |
| **Giraffes Can't Dance**<br>*Giles Andreae* | Believing in yourself | *"What happened when Gerald believed he could dance?"* |

## Teacher Notes

- Anchor “yet” language across all subjects — math, reading, recess.
- Reinforce SMART goals in both academics and SEL (e.g., “I want to take 3 deep breaths when I’m in the Yellow Zone”).
- Share stories of famous people who overcame failure to model resilience.
- Celebrate small wins — stickers, certificates, or “Effort Shout-Outs” at class meetings.