

Getting Along Together

2nd Edition



Teacher's Guide

A comprehensive resource for teachers

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This project was developed at the Success for All Foundation under the direction of Robert E. Slavin and Nancy A. Madden to utilize the power of cooperative learning, frequent assessment and feedback, and schoolwide collaboration proven in decades of research to increase student learning.

Getting Along Together 2nd Edition Teacher's Guide

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This teacher's guide is an introduction to the basic parts of the Getting Along Together program and to the cooperative learning routines, classroom-management techniques, and structures that support Getting Along Together. Don't expect to master these routines in the first week of school or even the first semester. It takes time and concerted attention to fully implement the strategies. The good news is, that's all it takes.

Getting Along Together

What is Getting Along Together?

To succeed in school and life, students need to master reading, math, and other academic skills. Developing those skills requires that students *learn how to learn*, both independently and with others. Getting Along Together is a schoolwide program developed by the Success for All Foundation, Harvard University, and the University of Michigan that helps students build these skills and apply them both in and out of the classroom. It teaches students strategies to focus their thinking, manage their behavior, build positive social relationships, and understand and cope with their feelings—all in ways that support learning and life success. All students come to school with different strengths and experiences in these areas. Getting Along Together is provided to all students for two reasons: 1) every student has something to learn and something to share in these areas, and 2) when all students know and use the same strategies, those strategies are more useful and effective. Getting Along Together is designed to help each student and the school community as a whole.

What does Getting Along Together do and why?

Getting Along Together has four main goals:

1. to improve students' learning by teaching specific skills and how to use them. These skills include: focusing attention, effectively maintaining and using the high energy levels characteristic of school-age children, behaving in positive and appropriate ways, and understanding and managing feelings;
2. to foster engaged learners by providing tools that build and support a positive climate in classrooms and the whole school;
3. to build students' ability to face challenges and solve problems by providing activities and routines that promote cognitive, social, and emotional skills; and
4. to increase students' positive social and behavioral outcomes by teaching strategies for forming strong relationships, maintaining positive mental health, and making safe and responsible decisions.

How does Getting Along Together work?

Getting Along Together has two primary components that work together and must be in place for the program to succeed.

The first component is a set of classroom and school structures that build and support a positive, productive, and well-regulated environment in which all adults and children are respectful, focused, and engaged. These structures include cooperative learning approaches (such as Think-Pair-Share), Brain Games that build thinking skills, and routines that everyone in the school can use to solve problems and deal with challenges (e.g., the Stop and Stay Cool process helps students manage their feelings when frustrated or angry).

The second component is a set of lessons that teach the core Getting Along Together concepts (i.e., active listening, paying attention, understanding feelings, resolving conflicts) and the routines described above. These lessons use interactive and engaging formats, such as thematic children's books, role-plays, and art projects. In SFAF kindergarten and middle school programs, GAT content is embedded in the lessons.

Getting Along Together Skills

Getting Along Together teaches students to develop and use skills in three areas: thinking/cognitive skills, emotional-management skills, and interpersonal/social skills.

Thinking/Cognitive Skills

Children and adults can learn and use information more effectively when they have strong skills in what scientists call cognitive regulation, or executive functioning—simply put, thinking skills. For many students, skills such as attention and memory develop naturally, but programs that use specific strategies can help to boost these skills, making it easier for teachers to teach and students to learn.

Getting Along Together helps students build and use the following thinking skills that cognitive science has found to be important in learning:

Memory (also called working memory): Through fun and engaging games, students develop their memory muscles. While there are many different types of memory, Getting Along Together focuses on working memory—that is, the capacity to access, update, and manipulate information over relatively short periods of time.

Focus (also called attention): Getting Along Together gives students tools to focus their attention and hone in on what they are learning, including strategies for active listening (e.g., making eye contact, paraphrasing) and opportunities to practice focusing in the face of distractions.

Stop and think (also called inhibitory control): Being an effective learner and member of the school community sometimes requires resisting or replacing one’s natural response, for example, replacing the desire to shout out the answer with raising one’s hand. Students learn why it is important to stop and think before acting or speaking and strategies for doing so.

Cognitive flexibility (also called flexible thinking): This is the ability to consider multiple solutions to a problem, compare and contrast ideas, move from one task to another, generate and update hypotheses, and approach problems in new and flexible ways. (This skill is taught in grades 4 and 5 only.)

Emotional-Management Skills

Whether we realize it or not, feelings influence many of our everyday actions and interactions, including those in the classroom. For example, negative emotions, such as frustration or anger, can make it difficult to focus on the task at hand. While most feelings are natural and acceptable, some ways of handling and expressing those feelings are more effective and appropriate than others, especially in structured settings like schools.

Getting Along Together addresses two important topics about feelings and emotions:

Emotional knowledge and expression: The program builds or reinforces students’ understanding of emotions (including specific emotions such as anger and jealousy), why they matter, how to identify them in oneself and others, and how to express them in appropriate ways in the classroom and school (e.g., by using “I” Messages).

Emotional regulation: Students learn strategies for managing their emotions in ways that help them learn and succeed in school, including coping with negative feelings and building on positive emotions.

Interpersonal/Social Skills

Students live and learn in relationships, including relationships with classmates, friends, teachers, and other school staff. When students have strong interpersonal and social skills, they are better able to work in pairs and teams, give and get support from others, and form friendships and other relationships that contribute to happiness and well-being. They are also able to create positive and effective classroom and school environments in which all students have opportunities to learn and grow.

Getting Along Together helps students build and use the following interpersonal/social skills:

Reading and responding to social cues: Understanding tone of voice, body language, and other social cues can help students navigate social interactions and form positive relationships. But these tasks can be tricky, even for those who are socially adept. Getting Along Together builds students' skills and confidence in interpreting and responding to these cues so they can work, learn, and play effectively with others.

Social problem solving: The program provides structures and strategies for dealing with many of the dilemmas that arise in schools, including disagreements, hurt feelings, and entering and succeeding in social interactions.

Prosocial behavior: Getting Along Together recognizes that all students need to be responsible and respectful community members for the school as a whole to succeed. The program covers topics such as teamwork, responsibility, getting and giving help, and tolerance/acceptance of others.

Empathy: Getting Along Together explores point of view, or perspective, why it is important to understand and respond to others' feelings, and how putting oneself in another's shoes can help everyone succeed in school and life.



Getting Along Together in Grades K–5

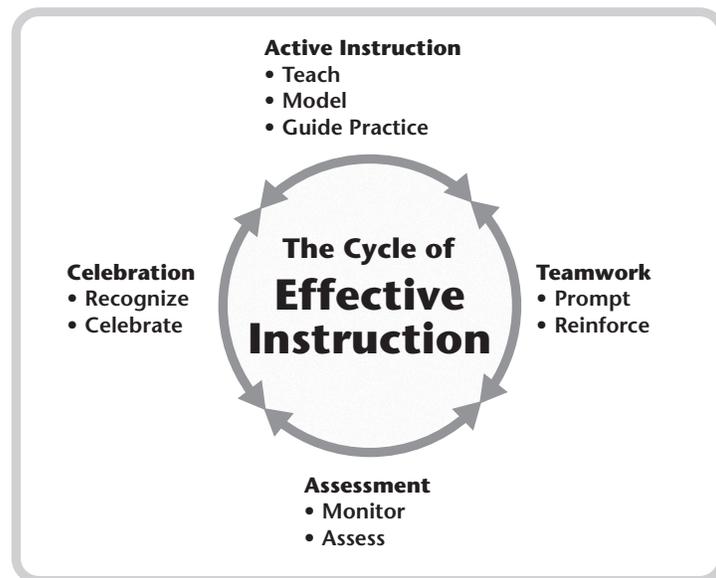
The Getting Along Together program provides lessons in social, emotional, and cognitive skills and multiple opportunities for students to practice these skills throughout the week and during a weekly Class Council. Sometimes schools assume that these skills are just natural or hardwired into all of us. In fact, social-emotional skills are no different from academic skills; they must be taught, and more importantly, they must be practiced. Without providing multiple ways for students to practice, lessons cannot be applied. *The mixture of interactive lessons and practice helps students internalize these skills and transfer them to real life.*

Key Getting Along Together Components

Skill Lessons

Throughout the year, there are skill lessons that focus on the content areas of Getting Along Together. Students get instruction and practice in the cognitive areas of attention, active listening, self-control, and memory; the more affective areas of emotional self-control, feelings identification, and empathy; and the interpersonal areas of friendship, conflict resolution, and social problem solving.

Getting Along Together uses cooperative learning and the Cycle of Effective Instruction as the vehicles for instruction. Students in grades 1–5 are placed in teams for the skill lessons. Teams are identified on the first day of school, reassigned after the first three weeks of school, if necessary, and then regrouped every quarter to ensure that students work with a variety of their peers. The lesson format follows the Cycle of Effective Instruction, with active instruction as the initial part of the lesson, then partner and team practice, and finally assessment (or reflection) and celebration.



Active Instruction: During the first portion of each lesson, you prepare students for learning. Through questioning and modeling, you lead them through the new content that they need to complete the rest of the lesson's activities.

Teamwork: Students acquire skills in Getting Along Together by practicing through teamwork activities. During this part of the lesson, students take control of their learning, working as partners or teams, while you circulate through the room checking with individuals or small groups of learners to monitor comprehension and clarify misunderstandings. This is your chance to meet with students one on one for targeted instruction or to monitor each team's mastery of GAT skills.

Assessment: Teams earn daily points throughout the lesson for working well together and meeting certain behavioral objectives. They receive formal recognition and points for the Big Q, a content question that teams answer using Random Reporter at the end of each skill lesson. Teams also demonstrate their mastery of content every day through the Cooperative Challenge. This is an opportunity for teams to demonstrate that they are transferring the content of a Getting Along Together lesson into their behavior.

Celebration: At the end of every week, team points are totaled, and team awards are presented during Class Council. Students are recognized and celebrated for their success at learning and practicing new skills every week.

In addition to the skill lesson, Getting Along Together skills are cemented by creating a schoolwide environment in which these skills are practiced all day and by connecting with parents through regular home communication. The other two parts of the Getting Along Together lesson suggest strategies to do this.

Extend and Connect: At the end of each lesson, there are suggestions for how to infuse the Getting Along Together skill throughout the day. The more students see these skills embedded into school life, the more they will master them. A well-implemented Getting Along Together program creates a broader change to the school climate so students see GAT skills integrated into general school expectations, not as a separate weekly lesson.

Home Connections: Each week, in grades 1–5, a Home Connections ticket is handed out to students at the end of the lesson, to be returned the next day. In kindergarten, a Parent Peek blackline master accompanies each unit in the lesson guide. This letter should be sent home to parents at the beginning of each unit. Home Connections provide opportunities for a family member to learn about and discuss some of the content that the child receives in the Getting Along Together lessons. (See Forging Family Connections for more information.)

Daily Getting Along Together Routines

A challenge in social-emotional instruction is how to offer sufficient practice so students can internalize the skills. One way to ensure that your students get some practice is to make sure that a day does not go by without a review of a Getting Along Together skill. Many teachers opt for a brief 5–10-minute morning meeting to practice the skills; other teachers find time throughout the day to practice. These are individual teacher decisions, but daily practice is essential. There are three routines that students should review daily:

Cool Kid (1 minute): Everyone likes to feel special. In Getting Along Together, all students have an opportunity to be the Cool Kid for a day during the school year. This is a chance for each student to feel special and get positive feedback from you and other students about how he or she is a valuable classroom member. During the first two

weeks of school, the Cool Kid is announced during the lesson, and the class is directed to notice all the positive behaviors that the Cool Kid does that are helpful to the class and the student's team. At the end of the day, you and the class will give the Cool Kid some positive feedback/compliments, award the Cool Kid certificate, and send the Cool Kid home with good news to share with the family. After the first two weeks of school, the Cool Kid is announced every Monday during the lesson, and the student remains the Cool Kid for the week. Compliments are given daily, and the certificate is awarded every Friday during Class Council.

Cooperative Challenge (Kindergarten Chilly Challenge) (3 minutes): This is a chance for teams to exhibit the skills they have learned during the skill lessons. The Cooperative Challenge is a schoolwide behavior. Students in all grades work on the same challenge at the same time. This enables the school to better embed GAT skills as part of the schoolwide climate and expectations. It creates a more powerful program when everyone works on the same skill all week. Students might be asked to help and encourage one another, give compliments, or use "I" Messages. Teams receive daily points when these behaviors are observed. All teams can earn 2 points when they exhibit the identified behavior. (For a more detailed explanation, see Daily and Weekly Routines.)

Brain Game (3 minutes): Brain Games are fun and often familiar games that help students practice skills in focus, memory, and self-control. In grades 4 and 5, students also practice cognitive flexibility with the games. Play these games often, and make sure that students master each game before you move on to a new one. Be sure to tell students which skill they are working on by playing each game. Ask students who have mastered a game to tell you how they got better at it and how getting better at these skills can help them in their academic subjects. It is important for students to connect the Brain Game skills to improvement in their academic work. Brain Games are introduced at the beginning of the week, but you can play them whenever you have a few minutes during the day, such as while waiting for recess or lunch, as a sponge activity between subjects, or at the end of the day. Keep these activities quick and fun, but let students play them as often as you can. (See Daily and Weekly Routines for a more thorough explanation.)

Class Council

After the first two weeks of lessons, in grades 1–5, Getting Along Together begins the regular routine of a skill lesson at the beginning of the week and a Class Council at the end of the week. In grades 1–5, Class Council is a half-hour meeting in which students do real-life application of the skills that they are learning to create a more positive and productive classroom. Kindergarten has a simpler, shorter weekly Class Council meeting. The Class Council meeting for both kindergarten and grades 1–5 consists of two major parts:

Part 1 – Reviewing and Goal Setting

Class strengths: Begin Class Council by identifying class strengths. Have students discuss areas in which the class has done well this week. Chart their responses, and celebrate.

Previous week's goal review: Part of Class Council is having a weekly goal that requires students to solve class problems and put in place a measurable goal to improve the functioning of the classroom or school community. Class goals may focus on better in-class behavior (e.g., no put-downs, fewer interruptions, complimenting one another, better listening) or schoolwide goals (e.g., better transitions, staying seated in the cafeteria). During this part of Class Council, the students and teacher review the previous week's goal and determine whether they achieved it.

Class concerns and goal setting: The real substance of Class Council is the opportunity for the teacher and students to not only celebrate class strengths, but also to voice common concerns, brainstorm solutions, and set weekly goals. Most teachers find it easy to organize this part of the meeting by discussing three questions:

- Which areas of working together could we improve?
- What is a good goal for next week? (Make sure this is measurable.)
- What are some solutions we can try next week to accomplish our goal?

If students are having difficulty mastering a particular skill, optional sample scenarios are included in each Class Council agenda for additional practice.

Part 2 – Celebration

Teacher affirmations and team celebration: The last part of Class Council is your chance to congratulate the class on what has gone well, award certificates or stickers to good, great, and super teams, and award the Cool Kid certificate. (For more information, see Class Council in Daily and Weekly Routines.)

Forging Family Connections

Forging strong family connections is the last key component of Getting Along Together. The Getting Along Together program is often a high-interest area for families. Teaching children the skills to manage their feelings and work well with others are domains in which the responsibilities of parents and schools intersect. The connection between school and family expectations for behavior must be addressed to help families understand the Getting Along Together program and, if possible, support those skills at home. The more children see consistent expectations for cognitive, social, and emotional skills, the easier it is for children to master them. There are several ways that schools can reach out to parents in Getting Along Together.

Home Connections

Every GAT lesson in grades 1–5 has a Home Connections component for students to do with their families or guardians. These Home Connections begin with an introductory letter to parents (Parent Peek) to explain the Getting Along Together program and each skill unit. Every week there is a homework sign-off for the student to complete with a parent or guardian.

To make Home Connections work well:

- Be sure to send home the Home Connections tickets on Monday and collect them the next day. If you have trouble getting the Home Connections tickets returned, set a team goal and incentive to increase the number of tickets returned by a team.
- Some students may not have a parent available to complete the Home Connections. Parents may be working multiple jobs or may not be in the home. Home Connections activities can be done by any adult friend or family member. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, or school volunteers can do the Home Connections with the student if the parent is not able to help. If a student is having trouble getting the Home Connections completed, problem solve with the student. Usually, there are other resources available, or contact the Schoolwide Solutions teams for help.
- Celebrate the students' work. At the end of the week, select a few Home Connections tickets to post on the bulletin board. Have the students keep portfolios of their Home Connections until the end of the year.

Parent Workshops

There is an introductory parent workshop available for Getting Along Together schools. Ideally, this workshop should take place early in the school year to help parents understand the expectations of the GAT program and the content of its lessons. The workshop is open to the whole family, and relatives are encouraged to attend. The workshop's structure is interactive and engaging. It is an enjoyable evening for everyone.

Getting good attendance is often a challenge when holding a parent workshop.

Here are some tips that may help to boost attendance:

- Send home multiple invitations for the event, and put up posters anywhere that parents might be. Publicity is important. A note sent home in a child's book bag is unreliable. Take a hint from businesses, and market your product. Some mechanisms to get the message out:
 - Send home multiple invitations with the child.
 - Put up schoolwide posters. Outdoor banners that count down until the event can be helpful.
 - If there is an outdoor sign at the school, list the Getting Along Together workshop.
 - Neighborhood stores or community centers are good locations for signs.
- Make sure the students' teachers attend and participate in the workshop. Parents like to see their child's teacher. A workshop is far more powerful if the teachers help to conduct the event.
- Hold the event when parents can come. If most parents are working, then an evening event may be helpful. Make the time as convenient as possible.
- Have a raffle associated with the event. A drawing for a family night out at a local restaurant or some other item of interest that promotes family fun can be a real draw. Often, local businesses are happy to donate something for a raffle. Work with the Schoolwide Solutions teams to come up with some options.
- Have a classroom incentive for attendance. No one can be more relentless than a young child who wants something. If students are working on an incentive that they care about, they will be more motivated to reach their goal.
- Welcome families as they arrive. Some families find schools intimidating. Work to create a welcoming environment. Assigning a greeter or providing a welcome button or a child-made corsage can make the event a more pleasant experience and increase the likelihood that parents will attend other school events.
- Make sure the kids perform. Parents always like to see their children featured by the school. Ensuring that students model the GAT skills increases parent interest.
- Serve food. Food always means "Welcome." Having a few treats available during the event can help to ensure a successful meeting. Stores are often willing to donate doughnuts, healthy snacks, etc. for parent workshops in schools.
- Call and invite the parents whom you want to attend. Often, schools see the same parents at every parent event—the loyal few. It is important to engage a wider group of parents. Welcome calls with a positive message about the parent's child and the event can make a difference. Good news and welcome calls to unengaged families are often the beginning of a better relationship. Pick a few parents whom you would like to attend, and give them a positive personal invitation.
- Some schools have done neighborhood sweeps. Teachers and Schoolwide Solutions teams members knock on doors to personally extend invitations. Depending on staffing and the time of year, this can be a terrific way to meet and engage the community.

Informal Outreach

Regular use of Home Connections and a parent workshop are a great start to engaging families, but family involvement also happens through the informal communications that teachers have with parents.

- When you meet a parent in the school or community, mention a Getting Along Together skill that you have seen his or her child doing very well.
- Keep the good news coming. All too often, families see a phone call or contact with the school as a bad sign. It means that their child has done something wrong. Schools that want to build a bigger base of parental involvement need to change this dynamic. Be the first one with good news. Compliment the parent on something that the child did well in Getting Along Together and his or her ability to be a good team member. The emphasis on noticing positive behavior helps to create trust between parents and schools.
- Be open to parent questions. Parents rightfully may have a lot of questions about Getting Along Together and why it is being taught. Take the time to hear them out, and answer their questions or concerns as positively and completely as you can. Some parents may question the role of the school in social problem solving, or they may have questions about content. The more the parents feel heard and have their questions answered, the more likely they are to support the program.
- Encourage schoolwide use of Getting Along Together skills so parents notice them when they come into the building. If Getting Along Together is used in the cafeteria or during transitions and Getting Along Together successes are posted where parents can see them, the importance of these skills will be highlighted to the families.
- Work with the Schoolwide Solutions teams to increase schoolwide and community connections for Getting Along Together.

Schedule*

First Two Weeks:

Daily Getting Along Together Routines and Sixty-Minute Lessons

Sixty-minute Getting Along Together lessons occur every day for the first two weeks of school during homeroom. In SFA schools, these lessons occur prior to the beginning of reading instruction while students are assessed for placement. During these first two weeks, students learn and practice team building, active listening, and conflict resolution. All the routines and structures for the GAT program are introduced during these initial lessons so you can put key classroom structures in place for the year.

Kindergarten has two twenty-minute lessons each week and daily GAT routines.

Week 3 Onward:

Weekly Thirty-Minute Skill Lesson, Weekly Thirty-Minute Class Council, and Daily Getting Along Together Routines

The regular schedule for the year begins in week 3. In grades 1–3, there is a thirty-minute skill lesson at the beginning of each week and daily Getting Along Together routines throughout the week. At the end of the week, students have an opportunity to put the skill to use during a thirty-minute Class Council. Kindergarten GAT is similar, but it has a twenty-minute lesson and a twenty-minute Class Council each week along with daily routines.

*In schools using KinderCorner, Getting Along Together is embedded in the lessons. Please follow the *KinderCorner Teacher's Guide*.

First Two Weeks (grades 1–5)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Daily Practice Routines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cool Kid Brain Games Cooperative Challenge 	Daily Practice Routines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cool Kid Brain Games Cooperative Challenge 	Daily Practice Routines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cool Kid Brain Games Cooperative Challenge 	Daily Practice Routines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cool Kid Brain Games Cooperative Challenge 	Daily Practice Routines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cool Kid Brain Games Cooperative Challenge
Skill Lesson (60–90 minutes)	Skill Lesson (60 minutes)	Skill Lesson (60 minutes)	Skill Lesson (60 minutes)	Skill Lesson (60 minutes)

Week 3 Onward (grades 1–5)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Daily Practice Routines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cool Kid Brain Games Cooperative Challenge Home Connections sent home 	Daily Practice Routines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cool Kid Brain Games Cooperative Challenge 	Daily Practice Routines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cool Kid Brain Games Cooperative Challenge 	Daily Practice Routines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cool Kid Brain Games Cooperative Challenge 	Daily Practice Routines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cool Kid Brain Games Cooperative Challenge
Skill Lesson (30 minutes)				Class Council (30 minutes)

Kindergarten*

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Daily Practice Routines <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cool Kid• Brain Games• Cooperative Challenge• Home Connections sent home	Daily Practice Routines <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cool Kid• Brain Games• Cooperative Challenge	Daily Practice Routines <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cool Kid• Brain Games• Cooperative Challenge	Daily Practice Routines <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cool Kid• Brain Games• Cooperative Challenge	Daily Practice Routines <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cool Kid• Brain Games• Cooperative Challenge
Skill Lesson (20 minutes)				Class Council (20 minutes, after first week)

*In schools using KinderCorner, GAT is embedded in the lessons. Please follow the *KinderCorner Teacher's Guide* instructions/schedule.



Getting Started: Cooperative Learning Overview



What brought you to teaching? For many people, it was the opportunity to make a difference to individual children and watch them grow, learn, and explore. But being responsible for the social and academic progress of every child turns out to be a daunting proposition given all the variables in their lives that are out of your control. Class size alone makes it difficult to provide the individualized attention that children need and deserve. The reality is that some students will always slip through the cracks. Or will they?

Getting Along Together is founded on the belief that every child can—and will—learn if proper support both in and out of the classroom is provided. No matter what the academic level of the student is, each child is challenged to do his or her best, and the contributions of all team members are equally valued.

Cooperative learning underpins the classroom organization of the Getting Along Together program and is one of the most powerful tools you have in providing the level of engagement and academic and social support that your students need to succeed. In the cooperative learning classroom, all students benefit from the constant coaching, encouragement, and feedback of their peers. And since more of the responsibility for learning rests on the students and their teams, you can spend more time working with individuals and small groups of learners, doing the kind of teaching that originally drew you to the field.

Cooperative Learning

Why cooperative learning?

Cooperative learning takes advantage of children's need for social interaction by offering a structured opportunity to discuss topics, share ideas, organize their thoughts, and work with other students. Cooperative learning also employs positive peer pressure by giving teammates a common learning goal and rewarding them for reaching that goal. This makes it an ideal instructional method for social-emotional learning; it provides interaction, motivation, and practice for the social-emotional skills taught in the lessons.

This social dimension is actually a critical aspect in the learning process for people of any age. People learn in communities. Together, we can accomplish more than as individuals, and we have more fun in the process. Students are no different. Research shows that opportunities for cognitive rehearsal, clarification, and reteaching have a positive effect on academic achievement.

When students collaborate, they have an opportunity to discuss new concepts with someone close to their own level of understanding. They get to try out new skills or ideas and ask questions in a small group before speaking to the whole class or finishing a written product. When students discuss and defend their ideas or solutions with teammates, they learn to think problems through, support their own opinions, and critically consider the opinions of others before coming to a conclusion. And they learn that in the end, the responsibility for learning still rests with them.

How It Works

How should this kind of experience be structured? According to research, three elements are key to making cooperative learning effective: team recognition, individual accountability, and equal opportunities for success. Cooperative learning as used in SFA and Getting Along Together provides all three.

- **Team recognition:** Students work in heterogeneous teams of four or five members, and teams earn certificates, stickers, or other recognition for achieving a designated standard together.
- **Individual accountability:** Teams work together to complete a project, solve a problem, or prepare for a test, but each student is responsible for completing an individual product and taking a test. There are no group grades.
- **Equal opportunities for success:** Students and teams are never in direct competition with one another. To earn individual recognition, students compete against their own past performance rather than against their classmates, so every student has an equal opportunity to succeed. To earn group recognition, teams strive not against one another but toward a common standard, so every team has an equal opportunity to succeed.

Teams that represent different learning styles, competencies, and leadership abilities usually turn out to be the strongest, stronger even than teams made up only of leaders, thanks to their diversity of skills. The same is true of teacher teams: a balance of skills and working styles is highly beneficial.

“Teamwork, with its concomitant demands for sophisticated negotiation and decision making, is not only a cornerstone of Success for All but also a crucial skill in the modern workplace. In a world that is increasingly interconnected and a society that is multicultural, the ability to appreciate diversity, listen accurately to others, and solve differences peacefully is essential.”

One Million Children
Slavin and Madden, 2001, p. 255

Cooperative learning is often portrayed as involving team grades, asking one child to do the work of four children, or turning control of the classroom over to students. In SFA, it means none of these things. Instead, as Michael D. Rettig and Robert Lynn Canady point out, “The essence of cooperative learning is that we work together, we learn together, but we are held individually accountable for our own learning” (2000, p. 233). Here, too, the research is unequivocal: structuring opportunities for team members to help one another and rewarding teams whose members improve upon past performance is the most effective cooperative learning model.

Putting Together Student Teams

Most of us have had the experience of being in a team in which one or two people did all the work while everyone got the benefit of the grade. This is not what teams in SFA and Getting Along Together are all about. Many of us have also experienced the energy that comes from working with others on a project and felt the tremendous flow of ideas that comes from putting several minds to work on a problem. We have been part of teams where we knew collectively more than as individuals, where we accomplished things together that we never could have done alone, and where we rose to the occasion and benefited from the array of skills that people brought to the team. This is the model of teamwork to which Getting Along Together subscribes.

Forming Teams

In the Getting Along Together classroom, the teacher creates teams; students do not. A team generally consists of four students. Add a fifth member to selected teams only when the class is not equally divisible by four.

A team should represent a cross-section of the class in gender, race or ethnicity, and past performance. Ideally, a team includes:

- Two boys and two girls
- Different ethnic backgrounds
- One relatively high, one low, and two average performers (High performer is a relative term meaning high in comparison to others in the class, not necessarily high compared to school or national norms.)

Friendship is not a criterion for effective teamwork. In the real world, people must find ways to work together regardless of their personal differences.

Within teams, designate partners—usually the two students sitting next to each other rather than across from each other. Five-member teams should have one set of partners and one triad.

The goal is to create partnerships and teams that function well. You can take into consideration behavioral concerns and deadly combinations when forming teams, but avoid deliberately putting students with friends or switching students from team to team. Over the course of the school year, you want students to learn how to work well together no matter who their teammates are. Never let students choose their own teams.

When forming teams at the beginning of the year, you might have little or no academic or performance information available. In such a case, assign teams using only gender and ethnicity. Keep these initial teams together for about three weeks or until you complete the introductory units of study. By then, you will have enough grades to determine each student’s performance level more accurately. From then on, re-form teams every four to eight weeks, usually when you finish a major unit of instruction. Follow whatever schedule

works best for you and your students, as long as you allow enough time for team members to learn how to work together effectively.

To assign students to teams, use one of the following options or any other available method that results in heterogeneous teams.

Option 1

One simple way to place students in teams is by using index cards with students' names on them, as in the following example. The example is based on a class of thirty students.

1. Write each student's name on an index card.
2. Divide the number of students by four to determine how many teams you will need. (For a class of thirty, you will end up with seven teams: five four-member teams and two five-member teams.)
3. Put the index cards in order according to student achievement level: lowest to highest.
4. Place the top seven cards on the table.
5. Line the bottom seven cards up in a row underneath the first row.
6. Place the remaining cards in two rows, lined up underneath the others, keeping aside the two extra cards. Students are now arranged by their academic achievement. The four cards in each column represent a heterogeneous team.
7. Review the composition of each team, and make adjustments as needed to balance ethnicity, gender, social skills, absenteeism, and other factors. Move cards only along the same row—do not move them up or down a column.
8. When you are satisfied with the composition of teams, assign the two remaining cards so you now have five four-member teams and two five-member teams.

Option 2

The following pencil-and-paper variant achieves the same result as above (heterogeneous teams). The example is based on a class of thirty-four students.

1. On a sheet of paper, rank the students from highest performing to lowest performing, based on work from the most recent unit(s). You may use grades, data from informal assessments, and your own judgment in creating this ranking.
2. Determine how many teams you will need. (For a class of thirty-four, you will end up with six teams of four and two teams of five.)
3. Begin assigning students to teams as shown, according to their relative performance. Remember to balance teams for gender and ethnicity. You may also consider students' personalities to avoid deadly combinations.
4. Review the team assignments. If they do not reflect a balance of gender, ethnicity, and other variables, trade students of similar performance levels but of different gender, ethnicity, social skills, etc.
5. Finally, assign fifth members as needed, with an eye to improving the balance on their new team. (In this example, you would assign students #17 and #18 to any team.)

“Research has...shown that using cooperative learning in the classroom can have positive effects on interethnic relationships, acceptance of mainstreamed academically handicapped students, student self-esteem, liking of others, and attitudes toward school and teachers.”

One Million Children
Slavin and Madden, 2001, pp. 205–6

High-Performing Students	Rank	Team
	1	A
	2	B
	3	C
	4	D
	5	E
	6	F
	7	G
	8	H
Average-Performing Students	9	H
	10	G
	11	F
	12	E
	13	D
	14	C
	15	B
	16	A
	17	
	18	
	19	A
	20	B
	21	C
	22	D
	23	E
	24	F
	25	G
	26	H
Low-Performing Students	27	H
	28	G
	29	F
	30	E
	31	D
	32	C
	33	B
	34	A

Facilitating Teamwork

As students get accustomed to working together, you may have questions about effectively managing a classroom of teams. The following are commonly raised questions and some possible solutions. If you have other questions, check with your instructional component team, your facilitator, or your SFAF coach.

How can I control noise levels?

As you begin to implement teamwork, you might notice that your classroom sounds noisier than usual. While the room should have a healthy buzz since teammates often need to talk to one another, noise levels should never exceed acceptable limits. Use team cooperation points and verbal praise to reward teams that are using appropriate voice levels. Work with students on using a library, an indoor, or a six-inch voice (as if they were talking to someone six inches away). When the noise level begins to rise, use the Zero Noise Signal to help students bring the volume back down to an appropriate level. If noise continues to be a problem, step up the pace of your lessons to minimize time off task. When re-forming teams in later weeks, distribute talkers evenly among teams.

How can I encourage students to rely on their team instead of on me?

When teams are functioning well, students recognize that part of their job in class is to challenge and support their partners and their teams. They know that their work is not complete until every member of the team understands what has been taught and is prepared to show his or her knowledge, either through questioning or through informal or

formal assessment. They also understand that the success of their team depends on the contributions of each teammate. To facilitate teamwork, ask questions like the following as you visit teams:

- How are your teammates helping you with this task? How are you helping them? What can you do if you encounter a problem completing this task?
- Do you agree with your teammates' answers? Do you have anything to add? What if you disagree?
- Did you ask three before me? Can anyone else on your team answer that question? What about someone on a neighboring team?

What if teammates work independently or one student does all the work?

There are many ways to encourage team members to work together:

- Use routines like Chip In and Round Table to promote 100% participation.
- Require team members to share resources to complete a task (for example, by providing only one or two reference books instead of four).
- For written team-based activities, offer each team member a different color pen, and require that the final product show approximately equal amounts of each color.
- Monitor teams closely, and publicly praise teams that are working well together or whose final product clearly represents the efforts of the whole team.

What if team members do not get along?

Realize that students may need some time to get used to working in teams. Each student is an individual and may differ from teammates in a number of ways. The easiest solution is time. As soon as students understand that teamwork is standard in your class and that they need to cooperate to be successful, they will come around. Never allow students to change teams; the incentive to cooperate comes in part from the realization that they must work together for several weeks before being assigned to new teams.

Reinforce positive behaviors and cooperation with frequent team cooperation points and verbal praise. Sometimes giving extra rewards to successful teams will promote better cooperation among other teams. You might also consider an additional team-building activity to facilitate interaction among team members and devote some class time each day to discussing and modeling the team cooperation goals and effective conflict-resolution skills. Work with team members to identify one another's unique strengths: What skills do they bring to the team? Although you cannot expect students to change their classroom behavior overnight, you can shape their behavior in small increments.

In the rare instance that a student refuses to work in a team or cannot control his or her behavior, scaffold team expectations for the student. Temporarily remove the student from the team, and assign him or her to work independently; he or she must complete all class assignments without the benefit of team assistance. After seeing how much harder it is to work alone, in most cases, the student will ask to return to the team. Build time working with the team, and allow students who have serious behavior problems to remove themselves from the team when necessary and use the Thinking Spot as a cool-down area. Always alert the Schoolwide Solutions coordinator in cases of behavioral difficulty. The Schoolwide Solutions Intervention team can help to craft effective solutions based on each child's strengths and resources.

If, in spite of your best efforts, there are a few teams in the class that just cannot work together, consider re-forming the teams earlier than you otherwise would, paying careful attention to avoid the problems from the initial set of teams. Ask members of the

Schoolwide Solutions Intervention team for suggestions on ways to encourage better teamwork in your classroom, and plan how you will begin to implement these strategies.

What if families complain that working in teams seems unfair?

Families often have valid questions about their children working in teams. If families express concern, explain that students are graded based on their own individual performance, not on the work of team members. Talk with them about the academic benefits for all students: in helping others learn, students themselves gain a stronger understanding of the concepts and have a greater recall of what they have learned. Discuss the social benefits of cooperative learning as well: for students to be successful in the world outside of school, they need to know how to work with others from all backgrounds and perspectives, and teamwork allows students to develop strong leadership and social skills. If community concern about cooperative learning is widespread, talk with your Schoolwide Solutions coordinator about arranging a family night or some other event to model cooperative learning and its benefits.

Activities for Team Building

Each time you form or re-form teams throughout the year, have students participate in some sort of team-building activity. At a minimum, teams need to design new team names, logos, and/or slogans. To prevent overlap, coordinate team-building exercises with other teachers in your team.

1. **Vanity License Plates**

Give each team a piece of blank paper and several markers. Have them design a vanity license plate for their team, including a slogan (like the state slogans on real license plates) and a message of no more than eight letters and numbers printed in block capitals. Teams may also draw a background design for their license plates if time remains.

2. **Two Truths and a Lie**

Within each new team, students take turns telling one another two truths and one lie about themselves. The team must guess which statement is the lie. The lies should be as believable as possible to fool the group. Each team then chooses one of its members to share two truths and a lie with the whole class, which tries to guess the lie.

3. **All Together Now**

Give the class a topic such as an invention I wish I could make, what I wish our school looked like, etc. Then give each new team a sheet of poster paper and a set of markers or crayons. Without talking, the 1s begin the drawing. After one minute, tell the 1s to pass the paper to the 2s. Give the 2s one minute to add to the drawing before asking them to pass it to the 3s, and so on.

4. **Boxing Match**

Give each new team a shoebox with a lid, scissors, glue, and old magazines. Teams must completely cover the outside of the box and lid with cut-out pictures and words that relate to the members of that team. Use the box as a storage space for team supplies.

5. **Create a Team Slogan**

Create a team slogan, a team cheer, and a team handshake. These can be based on the theme that students will be studying, on common likes and dislikes, or on any other criteria. To keep the activity fresh throughout the year, change the specifications.

6. **Make a Poster**

Make a poster that demonstrates all the things that the members of the team have in common. To ensure that all team members participate in the project, give each student a

different color marker, and tell teams that each color must be equally represented in the final poster.

7. Come Fly with Me

Give an 11" x 17" sheet of paper to each new team. When you say, "Begin," each team must make a paper airplane—without talking, using their nondominant hands, and with every member of the team contributing—within two minutes. Afterward, have a contest to see which team's plane can fly the farthest.

8. Newspaper Scavenger Hunt

Get duplicate sets of newspapers, one per each new team. Also give each team scissors, glue, and a 12" x 18" piece of poster board. Create a list of items that teams must find in the newspaper. Items might include:

a picture of the president	sports equipment	a computer
an animal	a score from a game	name of a country
a children's movie	somebody smiling	a horoscope
a baby	somebody not smiling	a local restaurant
a food item on sale	something scary	a word with ten or more letters

Number the items in the list, and give a copy of the list to each team. Team members must hunt and find the items, cut them out of the newspaper, and glue them to the poster board in the order listed. Consider the time you have available and the students' grade level to determine how long or complex the list should be. Allow 15–30 minutes for the hunt, and tell students that when you call time, all the newspapers must be folded into a neat stack, with no scraps on the floor.

9. Grab Bag Theater

Prepare a bag that includes miscellaneous, unrelated objects (e.g., a baseball, lipstick, rubber ducky, spatula, hat, can of beans) for each new team. There should be one item for each member of the team. Give one bag to each team. Each member reaches in without looking and takes an item. Within ten minutes, the team must develop a skit based on a topic that you give the class. The topic can relate to classwork or can be generic (e.g., the worst field trip in the world, our cafeteria was taken over by aliens). During the skit, each member must use the item that he or she drew from the bag. Teams perform their skits for the rest of the class.

10. A Towering Plan

Give the following materials to each new team: ten straws, ten paper clips, four sheets of notebook paper (two for practice and two for the actual activity), and one pair of scissors. The goal is to build the highest tower. Each team gets five minutes to discuss its plan and then ten minutes to build the tower. The tower must be freestanding; it can't lean against anything. Only the materials supplied can be used.

11. In the Circle

Give each new team a piece of poster board or a large piece of paper. Have the team draw a large circle. Team members write things that they have in common inside the circle and things that are unique to each team member outside the circle. Use the following categories to elicit responses, or tailor the categories to tie in with the topic of study.

What is your favorite...

food	animal	cartoon	vegetable
drink	movie	cereal	restaurant
TV show	movie star	brand of gym shoe	computer game
CD	book	time to get up	number
singing group	basketball team	time to go to bed	school subject
TV star	dessert	color	season
store	theme park	state	holiday
sport	theme park ride	song	month
sports star	place to hang out	hobby	car

12. Spell It Out

Give each new team a word that relates to either the topic of study, cooperative learning (e.g., *team*, *teamwork*, *group*, *together*), or any other topic of your choice. Team members have five minutes to find personal items in their desks, backpacks, etc. that start with each letter of the word you gave them. For example, they could find gum, a ruler, an orange, an umbrella, and a pencil to spell G-R-O-U-P.

13. Four (or Five) of a Kind

Figure teams out on paper. Then think of a different book for each new team, and assign characters from that particular book to the members of the team. For example, members of a five-person team might be assigned to be Dorothy, the Tin Man, the Scarecrow, the Lion, and the Wicked Witch. On an index card, write each student's name and the character assigned to him or her. Before you switch teams, hand out the index cards. Students then move around the room to find the other characters who make up their team. Once they are in their correct teams, partners interview each other's characters by asking their name, age, hobbies, favorite foods, favorite TV shows, etc. Students must remember to answer as their characters would. Besides books, you might also use movies, TV shows, plays, etc. as sources for character names.

Team Points and Team Celebration in Grades 1–5

Students need a reason to work together and motivation to strive for success. In *Getting Along Together*, team points provide the engine for student engagement and motivation. Every team in grades 1–5 works to earn team points every day to become a super, great, or good team every week. All team points are a combination of points that students can earn during the lesson and points they can earn for exhibiting social-emotional and cognitive skills identified through the Cooperative Challenge or the team cooperation goals. It is important that you provide opportunities for students to earn these points several times a day. Students will begin to internalize these skills, at first with prompting and eventually, independently. Team points are one of the most important mechanisms in the program to ensure that this transfer occurs.

You should ensure that the system for team points works for your students. Students should be challenged to become super teams each week, but the task should be doable. Remember, it should always be possible for all teams to become super teams each week. Teams are competing against themselves, not against one another. Feel free to alter the point values, if necessary, to encourage hard work and success. If the point requirements are not appropriate for your classroom, make appropriate changes. Your daily goal should be for each team to earn a minimum of 5 points, with the hope and expectation that you will award more.

Cooperative
Challenge = 2 points

Big Q = 2 points

Each team cooperation
goal demonstrated =
1 point

Following is a sample chart for suggested awarding of team points:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Cooperative Challenge 2 points				
Lesson/Big Q 2 points				
Team cooperation goal – points awarded throughout the day 3+ points	Team cooperation goal – points awarded throughout the day 3+ points	Team cooperation goal – points awarded throughout the day 3+ points	Team cooperation goal – points awarded throughout the day 3+ points	Team cooperation goal – points awarded throughout the day 3+ points
Total: 7	5	5	5	5

Minimum Weekly Total: 27 points

Super team: within 3 points of the highest score

Great team: within 3 points of the lowest super team score

Good team: within 3 points of the lowest great team score

For example, if the highest score by a team was 40 points, the super teams would have 38–40 points, great teams would have 35–37 points, and good teams would have 32–34 points.

Awarding Team Points

There are several ways teams can earn points.

- **The Big Q:** Team points are awarded during the GAT lesson for correct answers to the Big Q and team huddle questions. The Big Q is the content check for the GAT lesson. At the beginning of each lesson, the Big Q is announced so students have a cue and frame for the lesson outcome. At the end of each lesson, teams have a few minutes to huddle up and prepare one another to answer the Big Q. You use Random Reporter to ask each team to answer the Big Q and award 2 points for a complete answer. Be sure to always ask the Big Q, and make sure that teams have prepared one another for a strong response.
- **Cooperative Challenge:** Throughout the day, teams can earn points by successfully exhibiting the behavior identified in the Cooperative Challenge of the week. Make sure to post the Cooperative Challenge, and give every team an opportunity *every day* to earn their Cooperative Challenge points. The Cooperative Challenge is schoolwide, so be sure to award points both during class and during transitions. Many schools create systems to award team points in specials classes, in the cafeteria, and on the playground. The Cooperative Challenge is the easiest and most powerful method for converting a lesson into school culture.
- **Team cooperation goals:** Any time that teams demonstrate the team cooperation goals, be sure to award points.

Points are awarded by placing a tally mark on the Team Tally poster, which should be displayed in the classroom. Add up the points that each team has earned each day, and write the total in the box provided on the poster. Make sure to announce team scores each day, and encourage teams to work hard to reach super team status. It is also important that you provide motivating statements and examples of how teams can increase their scores. Keep it fun, positive, and exciting.

During Class Council, team points are totaled, and teams receive their awards. Connect team achievement to some sort of celebration. Some teachers do something special if all teams become super teams or if all teams show improvement. Team celebrations do not necessarily need to be tangible. An extra Brain Game, a special song, or a chance to dance to some music can all be motivating to students. The important factor is to mark and celebrate success.

Write whether each team is a super, great, or good team on the Team Success! poster. This poster shows at a glance how teams are doing over time. Are some teams routinely achieving super team status? Are other teams struggling? If so, what might help those teams do better? This is an easy way to monitor team progress in social-emotional skills.

Chilly Chips

Note: Schools using KinderCorner with GAT will use pocket points. All other schools will use Chilly Chips.

In kindergarten, Chilly Chips take the place of team points. Chilly Chips are counting chips that students can earn and put toward a classroom celebration. Students and partnerships can earn Chilly Chips for successfully demonstrating Chilly Challenge behaviors throughout the day, answering the Big Q, or demonstrating other identified GAT behaviors in school.

In kindergarten, students sit in teams, but they primarily work in partnerships. Partners can earn Chilly Chips every day. When a partnership earns a Chilly Chip, they put it (or the teacher puts it) in an identified Chilly Chip bowl or container. The class sets a goal for the amount of Chilly Chips that must be collected for the class to celebrate success at the weekly Class Council. Either determine a set number of Chilly Chips that the class needs to earn in a week, or have the class celebrate when the bowl is full.

Breaking It Down

Chilly Chips should be an engaging and simple motivational tool. To institute consistent use of Chilly Chips:

- Identify a Chilly Chip bowl or jar. Generally, Chilly Chips rewards are determined by either setting a goal for the number of chips earned in a week or filling the bowl or jar. If you use the latter system, make sure that the bowl or jar is small enough and the rewards frequent enough that students can fill the jar each week. This system is supposed to be motivational and rewarding. If kindergarten students are unable to accumulate enough chips to celebrate, the motivational tool will lose a lot of its impact.
- Chips are provided with the GAT materials. Once a goal has been determined, you can put chips in the bowl anytime that you see students exhibiting Chilly Challenge behaviors, answering the Big Q successfully, or using GAT structures and strategies.
- Students should have several opportunities to earn Chilly Chips each day. Chilly Chips can be given anytime throughout the day. Frequent rewards are important to solidify changes in behavior and maintain student motivation.
- At the end of every day, teachers should review the status of the Chilly Chips. Some teachers count them every day so students not only practice counting but also realize that they are getting closer to their goal. Other teachers may mark the jar at the end of every day to make sure that students know they are making progress. In any case, daily review is essential for kindergarteners.
- At Class Council, make sure you announce it if students have met their goal, and then celebrate! Never ignore celebration, or motivation will quickly wane.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Make sure you maintain the use of Chilly Chips all day. GAT skills will only become internalized if kindergarteners work on these skills all day every day. Consistent use of Chilly Chips helps to ensure sufficient practice of GAT skills.
- If there are particular GAT skills that students need extra practice in to master, align the Chilly Challenge to your own classroom needs, and use Chilly Chips to award progress.
- Use the Chilly puppet to celebrate. Students love the puppet; having special times when Chilly comes out will increase the motivational practice of GAT behaviors.
- The Cool Kid can help with the daily review of Chilly Chips.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of your reward regimen. If students are consistently not making their goals, examine the issue. The goal may be too large and need to be reduced so students can achieve success. It may be that students do not understand the Chilly Challenge. If that is the case, model and practice the behavior that you wish to see. For example, if you wish to see better classroom focus, get specific. Maybe you wish to see active listening, or a faster response to the Zero Noise Signal, or assignments completed on time. Focus may be too vague for kindergarteners. Help them understand exactly what behaviors you are looking for.
- If rewards are not very rewarding, change them. In GAT, stickers and cheers are provided, but if students are not engaged and motivated by these rewards, find other ones. Brain games, dancing to music, or other treats can always be substituted if needed.



Making an Impact: Implementation Strategies

The trick to effective social-emotional programs is understanding that unlike math or history, learning these skills cannot be isolated in a class that teaches social-emotional learning (SEL) and cognitive regulation. These skills must be taught and modeled all day by the teacher in the classroom and by other adults in the school. Social-emotional learning occurs every time a student loses focus and is redirected; every time a student disruption occurs; and every time students interrupt and are corrected, have a conflict that is settled, or receive a compliment. Everything a student sees you do to handle a class disruption, a lack of attention, or peer problems is a lesson in SEL for that child. As a teacher, you model social-emotional learning all day. It cannot be separated out into an isolated lesson any more than breathing can be separated from life. Consequently, for these skills to be learned and internalized by students, the lessons need to be consistent and pervasive. For this reason, it is important that Getting Along Together skills be taught all day and that the core routines are in place throughout the day and throughout the school. Particularly for students who come from neighborhoods in which conflicts are often solved in very different ways, the school's staff must be careful to speak in a uniform, consistent voice. The message must be that when you cross the threshold into this school, this is the way problems are handled, and this is the way teams and students work with one another every day. How can you make sure that you speak in this clear, consistent voice?

- Make sure the Cooperative Challenge is schoolwide. The Cooperative Challenge must be the same for all students for this to be a schoolwide focus each week. Post the weekly Cooperative Challenge everywhere. Be sure to announce it on the public-address system every morning. Cafeteria workers should know what the Cooperative Challenge is and reinforce it during lunch. Make sure that your Cooperative Culture team has developed a plan for making the challenge a schoolwide effort. Schools have created token economies in which students who exhibit the Cooperative Challenge behavior outside of class bring a token back to their teams for team points. Schools have created bulletin boards, assemblies, and plays that all reflect the Cooperative Challenge. The more this is a weekly focus for behavior, the better students will internalize GAT skills.
- Use team cooperation goals and team points all day. Keep students in teams for as much of the day as possible, and award team points throughout the day for the demonstration of team-cooperation-goal behavior. The goals—practice active listening, help and encourage others, complete tasks, everyone participates, and explain your ideas and tell why—are fundamental for encouraging cognitive regulation and social-emotional learning. These goals must be attended to and reinforced all day, not just in Getting Along Together and SFA reading classes.
- Highlight and use Getting Along Together routines and structures across the curricula.
 - Highlight the Feelings Tree/Feelings Universe, the Feelings Thermometer, and Stop and Stay Cool in social studies and reading. Discuss where story characters are on the Feelings Thermometer and how they might cool down, or discuss what might have changed in history or in a novel if the person in question had stayed cool. Take every opportunity to identify and expand feelings vocabulary on the Feelings Tree. Identify feelings words during reading and social studies. Encourage students to

- use more sophisticated feelings vocabulary when they discuss the motivation and feelings of a character in a novel or a person from history.
- Use the Peace Path process when discussing outcomes in history or during reading. Have students use the concept of win-win solutions and the Peace Path process to evaluate the outcomes of conflicts in history and to discuss and defend different solutions. In reading, discussing the outcomes to conflicts and generating win-win alternatives are engaging and challenging discussions for students that also solidify their understanding of effective conflict resolution. Hypothesizing, comparing and contrasting, evaluating results, and identifying alternatives are all higher-order thinking skills that rigorous schools require of students. Using these structures and routines as part of an academic discussion can make for a powerful lesson on many levels.
 - Rehearsing empathy skills at any point in reading or social studies is helpful. You can ask students to give evidence of how a character or historical figure might have felt about an event. The ability to create a hypothesis and support it with evidence is a higher-order thinking skill that will challenge most students, and the topic is both important and engaging.
 - Highlighting or reviewing methods to increase cognitive skills can be important throughout the day. For example, reviewing the importance of shifting set when doing different algorithms in math helps students pay closer attention to the task at hand. Explicit review of strategies for improving memory can help as students begin to complete multistep problems.
 - The strategies described in the Jumping to Conclusions unit can be transferred to science or social studies. Help students collect data, and demonstrate that the cognitive capacity to stop and think before acting on faulty information is essential as an academic and social discipline.
 - Review the Extend and Connect activities in every lesson, and try to implement at least one suggestion to ensure that Getting Along Together is taught throughout the day.
- Model and do Think Alouds frequently to highlight the social problem-solving thought process. The more you can give students a glimpse into how you solve a problem in a win-win way, what clues you use to determine how someone might be feeling, what strategies you use to wait for something, and how you calm yourself in frustrating situations, the better they will understand. Hearing your self-talk during a Think Aloud or your explicit modeling of the Peace Path process can be vital to students. If you use the language, they will use the language.
 - Expect your students to use the skills all day. You would expect them to respond to a Zero Noise Signal and use conflict solvers and Stop and Stay Cool all day if needed. The structures are there to help students master what is often a new way of thinking and behaving. If you don't give them practice by expecting them to regularly use these routines and skills, you lose the power of the program. It would be like only expecting students to read during reading class or hold a pencil during writing. You would, of course, expect them to use their reading and writing skills all day. That is how they will improve. SEL skills are no different. Make your students use them as a normal part of school.
 - Finally, use these skills and routines everywhere—the playground, the cafeteria, the office, and the bus. Every part of the school needs to have the same consistent expectations that you have in the classroom. In SFA schools, this should be part of the Schoolwide Solutions teams' mission. For example, schools have had success with:

- painting the Peace Path on the playground or in the cafeteria for students to use.
- keeping Think-It-Through sheets in the office, on the bus, or with the guidance counselor so students who need to rethink their solutions to a problem have a consistent process and a place to go.
- doing parent workshops. Keep families informed so they can support students at home. One parent workshop is supplied with the Getting Along Together program, but schools can always adapt and create their own. Parents are great partners in this endeavor, so the more they are included, the better!
- keeping a Getting Along Together bulletin board in the front of the school and highlighting GAT-related writing or art projects.
- having a feeling of the week. One school principal would announce the feeling of the week and ask classes to submit as many synonyms for that feeling as possible. The principal would post the words on a large Feelings Thermometer in the school to highlight the differences in intensity illustrated by the synonyms. For example, the week that she posted *angry*, students submitted the synonyms *irked*, *furious*, *irritated*, *mad*, *enraged*, and *disgruntled*. The principal carefully ranked the words on the thermometer for school review.
- practicing waiting throughout the school. Students can wait for one minute before lunch or before getting on a swing. Discussing and defending what they did to wait in real-life situations can make those cognitive activities more powerful.

These are just a few suggestions, and you will find many more ways that fit your school's culture and your class's needs. Research clearly shows that students who master these skills have lifelong tools to be successful in higher education, the workplace, and in relationships. This is important work that you are doing!



Getting Along Together Structures and Routines

Developing a Focus

The Getting Along Together curriculum uses a variety of routines and structures to facilitate cooperative learning, provide motivation, rehearse new cognitive-regulation skills, and create uniform ways to handle social problem solving, conflict resolution, and emotional self-control. This section of the guide is not meant to be read from cover to cover; rather, it is a compendium of all the routines and structures that are utilized in Getting Along Together. It is a reference tool for you to use when you need to review different parts of the program quickly. Pick the routines that need to be put in place first, read the associated text, and begin to plan how the techniques will play out in your classroom. Try them for a few weeks, referring to the *Getting Along Together 2nd Edition Teacher's Guide* for tips and troubleshooting. When you feel that you are implementing the routines well, select another area of focus.

The Getting Along Together curriculum explicitly introduces the routines associated with social-emotional learning. At the beginning of the school year, you will establish basic cooperative learning classroom practices, such as the Zero Noise and Active-Listening Signals, in addition to the structures concerning team points and team celebration. Such routines set an immediate standard for behavior and are easy for students to master, providing an early framework for success. As you progress through the initial Getting Along Together lessons, you will add routines and structures to help your students mediate daily conflicts and rehearse some of the fundamental cognitive-regulation skills. You will then focus on cool-down strategies, “I” Messages, or other teamwork and problem-solving skills. By building a firm foundation early in the year, you will increase your teaching and learning time later on. In other words, go slow to go fast.

Initial Structures and Routines Chart

Daily and Weekly Routines

Brain Games	Chilly Puppet
Cool Kid	Secret Spies
Cooperative Challenge/Chilly Challenge	Home Connections
Class Council	Chilly Chips

Cognitive Regulation

Active-Listening Signal	Stop and Think Signal
Focus Signal	Self-Talk
Remember Signal	Think Aloud

Emotional Processes

Cool-Down Strategies	Stop and Stay Cool
Feelings Thermometer	Think-It-Through sheets
Feelings Tree/Feelings Universe	

Interpersonal Processes/Conflict Prevention and Resolution

Conflict Solvers	Team Cooperation Goals
Hurdles to Teamwork	Thinking Spot
“I” Messages	Peace Path
Looks Like/Sounds Like/Feels Like	

Cooperative Learning and Classroom Management

Zero Noise Signal	Talking Stick
I-2-3 Move	Think-Pair-Share
Ask Three Before Me	Team Tally and Team Success! posters
Chip In	Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down
Random Reporter	

Daily and Weekly Routines

Brain Games

Purpose

Brain Games are fun, engaging activities that give your students practice in three cognitive skill areas that research indicates are essential for school success: focus/attention, stop and think/self-control, and memory. The additional skill area of flexible thinking, or cognitive flexibility, is added in grades 4 and 5. Regular explicit instruction and practice can improve students' ability in these areas and provide fundamental support for improvement in their academic performance.

Breaking It Down

- Select the Brain Game card that is suggested in the lesson. After the initial set of lessons, students can select the Brain Game from the deck of Brain Game cards. **Note:** Some of the Brain Games may require a minimal amount of advance preparation.
- Brain Game cards are color coded to indicate the type of cognitive skill that they primarily address.
- Explain the purpose of the Brain Game (written on the Brain Game card) to students, and quickly play the Brain Game each day.
- Play the Brain Game whenever there is unscheduled time during the day. For example, Brain Games can be good activities to do while getting ready to go to lunch, at the end of the day, before recess, or as a transition activity.
- Play the same Brain Game several times, and allow students to get better at the game before moving on to the next one.
- Once students have attained some mastery of a Brain Game, be sure to debrief the game. Ask students what they did to improve and how they could use those strategies in an academic subject. Make sure that students' responses are as specific as possible, and chart the strategies.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Connect the purpose of a Brain Game to academic work. For example, Simon Says requires focus and self-control. Your students must focus and listen carefully to the speaker and then control their automatic response to touch a part of their bodies. Ask students to think of other times in school when they have to stop and think before they act to make the connection between the game and school more explicit.
- Asking students to explain how they got better at a Brain Game can help them improve and strengthen the skill's connection to academics. For example, your students might say they got better at Simon Says by using self-talk. They told themselves to really listen because the game was tricky, or they reminded themselves not to move unless they heard the name Simon. Verbalizing how they improved in the skill illustrated by the Brain Game helps students transfer their increasing ability to school work.
- Quick practice is the key to success. One quick round makes it feasible to play a Brain Game several times a day, and the practice helps students improve their skills. Keep it quick and doable.
- Use the Brain Games flexibly, and connect them to classroom goals. Although a certain Brain Game may be suggested in the lesson, if your class has a particular cognitive area that is challenging for them, you may concentrate on Brain Games that relate to that skill. For example, if focus/attention is a problem for your class, be explicit about the problem in Class Council, and set a class goal. Then select Brain Games that deal with focus/attention for additional practice.

- After debriefing the Brain Game, make sure that you chart the strategies that students used to improve their performance. Refer to these strategies during academic work. For example, have students select a strategy that will help them better remember their spelling words, or ask students to select a strategy that will help them focus better when you give directions. Debrief how the strategies are working for students in their academic subjects.
- Model using Think Alouds to connect the Brain Games to schoolwork and to demonstrate strategies for improving those cognitive skills. For example, when working on clarification in reading, you might say, “Oh, I misread that word. I need to focus and pay close attention to sounding out the words I don’t know and not just guess. If I tell myself to go slowly the first time I read a passage, I will make fewer mistakes. Then I can reread and go faster. This is the same way I get better at playing Simon Says.”
- Use the hand signals for the cognitive skills all day in the early grades. These provide powerful visual cues for younger students.
- Remember that the power of Brain Games is in the processing. Make sure that students understand why they are playing Brain Games, and frequently draw attention to the Brain Game skills that students use to do academic work throughout the day.

Cool Kid

Purpose

Improving self-esteem and creating a caring classroom community are important parts of Getting Along Together. Choosing the Cool Kid during the skill lesson and then awarding the Cool Kid certificate at the end of the day or week with compliments from you and other students is one easy way to shape the classroom community. Everyone can be the Cool Kid, so a student who may be quiet or rarely gets positive attention is identified as often as the most successful student in the class. Once you identify the Cool Kid, you may give him or her a special job or privilege during the day (e.g., first in line, choose a Brain Game), but always compliment the Cool Kid by highlighting some examples of him or her as a positive team member. This ensures that a student not only benefits from general class affirmation, but also is given a clear message about which of his or her behaviors are appreciated by the class. This helps the student consciously understand what classroom expectations are and what classroom success looks like, and how he or she is already being a successful classroom member.

Breaking It Down

- Randomly select a Cool Kid at the beginning of the skill lesson on Monday. Be sure to select a different Cool Kid until all the students have had a chance to participate.
- Tell the class that this is the Cool Kid for the week, identify any special jobs or privileges that the Cool Kid might have, and tell the class that we are all looking for examples of great team behavior from the Cool Kid.
- At the end of each day, model a meaningful compliment, and then have the class give three meaningful compliments to the Cool Kid. Jot down the compliments. On the last day of that week, choose three especially meaningful compliments to write on the Cool Kid certificate. Present the certificate to the Cool Kid at the end of Class Council. **Note:** If students have more than three compliments to share, let them know that they can personally do this at any time.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Remind students to focus on positive behavior rather than an external attribute when complimenting the Cool Kid. For example, a classmate could state, “I really liked how you listened to everyone on the team,” rather than “I really like your dress.”
- Focusing on the Cool Kid behaviors can be useful for addressing common classroom problems or when students are acquiring a new skill. For example, in a classroom that is having problems with taking turns, the teacher might say that he or she is looking particularly for the Cool Kid to show examples of taking turns at recess. Be sure to monitor carefully and identify examples to share at the end of the day. Focusing on positive examples is a good way to reduce unwanted behavior. Highlighting a positive example creates motivation for the rest of the students to follow suit. If you provide a focus for the Cool Kid, make sure that this student will be successful with the identified skill. Under no circumstances should the Cool Kid fail.
- Make sure the Cool Kid is a success. Some students with more serious behavioral issues may struggle through the day when they are the Cool Kid. It is tempting to remind these students that they are not really acting like a Cool Kid that day. Resist the temptation, and find several clear examples of positive behavior to report. No child misbehaves all day, so find those few moments when the student attended to the lesson, shared something with a classmate, or played constructively with others. Highlighting positive behavior for these students can be far more powerful than focusing, yet again, on the negative behaviors.
- Have a particular classroom routine that the Cool Kid always does, such as taking attendance, taking the lunch count down to the office, or watering the plants. This ensures that the Cool Kid is not forgotten and has a special job.

Cooperative Challenge/Chilly Challenge

Purpose

The Cooperative Challenge, or Chilly Challenge in kindergarten, is identified at the beginning of the week during the skill lesson. It should be the same for everyone in the school, and it requires students to exhibit a core skill that will be presented during the week. Cooperative Challenges/Chilly Challenges provide opportunities for regular rehearsal of the presented skills so students can become proficient. The Cooperative Challenge/Chilly Challenge is an important way to keep the skill alive all week until your students master and internalize the skill so it becomes part of daily school behavior. Teams also receive team points for successfully demonstrating the Cooperative Challenge/Chilly Challenge. This motivates students to master the skills taught during the lesson and is an important part of your assessment of student mastery.

Breaking It Down

- Read the Cooperative Challenge (provided in the skill lessons) daily at the beginning of the lesson.
- Award points when you see a member of the team exhibit the identified skill or demonstrate the behavior.
- Record points on the Team Tally poster. Teams get 2 points for demonstrating the Cooperative Challenge that day.
- Congratulate teams for their strong efforts.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Award team points for the Cooperative Challenge every day. If students are going to improve their skills, they need a reason to do so. Without strong use of team points, motivation and team cohesion sink. Frequent team points are essential for teams to be strong and work hard to acquire mastery of the material.
- Celebrate successful results. Be enthusiastic and excited when teams earn points for the Cooperative Challenge. Make sure that the points are recorded on the poster and that there is a celebration at the end of the week for good, great, and super teams. Points without celebration quickly become unimportant.
- Be sure to award points for the Cooperative Challenge not only throughout the day, but throughout the school. If students exhibit a cooperative behavior while transitioning to lunch or specials classes, award points.
- Work with the Cooperative Culture team to design opportunities to award points throughout the school. Many schools create token economies so specials teachers, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, or office personnel can reward the students' successful demonstrations of the weekly Cooperative Challenge. Students can then take the token or certificate back to their homeroom teams for team points (see attached certificate).

Sample Schoolwide Cooperative Challenge Schedule

Week 1	Use active listening.	Week 19	Use Stop and Stay Cool.
Week 2	Use Stop and Stay Cool.	Week 20	Use a win-win solution.
Week 3	Use "I" Messages.	Week 21	Demonstrate a focus strategy.
Week 4	Use the Peace Path.	Week 22	Demonstrate a waiting strategy.
Week 5	Demonstrate a focus strategy.	Week 23	Everyone participates.
Week 6	Demonstrate a stop and think strategy.	Week 24	Use a win-win solution.
Week 7	Use "I" Messages.	Week 25	Help and encourage others.
Week 8	Practice apologizing.	Week 26	Use "I" Messages.
Week 9	Demonstrate a memory strategy.	Week 27	Show empathy.
Week 10	Help and encourage others.	Week 28	Use the Feelings Thermometer.
Week 11	Use Stop and Stay Cool.	Week 29	Use active listening.
Week 12	Use the Feelings Thermometer.	Week 30	Demonstrate a stop and think strategy.
Week 13	Use the Peace Path.	Week 31	Use the Peace Path.
Week 14	Use active listening.	Week 32	Practice not interrupting.
Week 15	Use a win-win solution.	Week 33	Use a win-win solution.
Week 16	Show empathy.	Week 34	Use Stop and Stay Cool.
Week 17	Use "I" Messages.	Week 35	Demonstrate a memory strategy.
Week 18	Demonstrate a focus strategy.	Week 36	Demonstrate a stop and think strategy.

Class Council (grades 1–5)

Purpose

Long before children are able to vote, they are ready to participate as full-fledged members of a community. Class Council is a flexible forum that gives students the skills and the structure to do a better job of self-regulating. Through regular thirty-minute meetings, students have the opportunity to practice the skills they learned in the skill lessons, share and celebrate good news, raise questions and concerns about day-to-day affairs, and engage in planning, problem solving, and goal setting within the context of the classroom community. In short, they learn how to be effective citizens and leaders. Class Council is the place where all the skills that students are acquiring in Getting Along Together can be practiced and used in a real-world setting each week. Through this process, students are empowered and learn appropriate ways to have a voice in their class and school community.

Breaking It Down

- Have your Class Council materials ready. These include:
 - a graphic organizer to brainstorm solutions for the identified class concern,
 - the Team Tally and Team Success posters,
 - the Cool Kid certificate, and
 - good, great, and super team stickers.
- Use the following agenda to structure your Class Council.

Part 1: Reviewing and Goal Setting

- **Discuss class strengths:** Have teams discuss and report on areas in which the class has done well this week. Identifying strengths is an important way to shape behavior. Students need to be able to identify their successes not only so they can feel a sense of achievement, but also so they can replicate those behaviors. Both the teacher and the students should contribute to the discussion of class strengths. The more clearly success is defined and celebrated, the more likely these behaviors will be repeated.
- In grades 4 and 5, the Secret Spies report on examples of GAT skills and strategies that they saw each week (see description of Secret Spies).
- **Review previous goal:** Review the class goal from the skill lesson on Monday or from Class Council the previous week. Be sure to celebrate if the class made progress or met their class goal.
- **Discuss class concerns:** These are the behavioral areas that need more work. Along with the students, the teacher should generate some classroom or schoolwide concerns and shape the discussion and selection of the goal for the upcoming week.
 - Have each team discuss and suggest a class concern that they would like to address for the week.
 - Chart all suggested concerns, and help the class select one to focus on for the upcoming week. Class concerns can be about class climate issues (e.g., teasing, put-downs, lack of teamwork, interrupting, lack of focus, problems listening) or more schoolwide concerns (e.g., transitions or behavior in the cafeteria, on the playground, or in the halls). The class may also decide to focus on a Getting Along Together skill that needs more practice.
 - Brainstorm win-win solutions. Use a graphic organizer to brainstorm win-win solutions for the class concerns.
 - Set goals for the upcoming week. Determine how students will know whether they are making progress toward addressing the class concern, and then set a measurable goal for the upcoming week. For example, if the problem is interrupting, the teacher could keep a tally or give bonus points for active listening at the end of every day. The class could set a goal for how many bonus points or how few tally marks they hope to receive. If the problem is on the playground, have playground monitors report how many playground problems they had. Setting goals that allow students to measure their progress is essential for creating results with Class Council. Good intentions, lectures, or pep talks rarely create long-lasting change, nor do they give students experience in practicing new behaviors. Setting goals and celebrating progress are the keys to change.
 - Remember to compliment the class on good problem solving, and keep the solutions positive and win-win.

Optional: If additional practice on a Getting Along Together skill is needed, sample scenarios for role-playing are provided in most lessons.

Part 2: Celebration

- Bring the Class Council to a close by identifying the positive behaviors that you saw during the meeting. Note any progress that the class has made in their problem-solving skills, praise individuals or teams for their contributions to class, and thank the students for all their efforts today and over the past week.
- Announce team point totals for the week, and award super, great, and good team stickers to students and record on the Team Success poster.
- Award the Cool Kid certificate.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Early in the year, plan to devote at least thirty minutes weekly to Class Council. Set a regular meeting time, and tell the students so they know what to expect.
- Never skip goal setting and goal review. Setting a *measurable* goal and reviewing the results are the ticket to motivating students to acquire new skills.
- Make goals achievable. If students are really struggling with a particular skill (e.g., paying attention or not interrupting), start with a goal that you feel is achievable. Students need to experience reaching a goal and celebrating the results to be motivated to change their behavior. If goals are set too high, they become frustrating or ignored. Once students experience success, the goal can be raised to the next level.
- Be sure to keep discussions and role-plays positive and win-win.
- If students are struggling with a particular skill, use the scenarios provided in the manual as a part of the meeting.
- Always start and end the Class Council on a positive note. If you know that you will discuss something difficult, plan how you might wrap up the meeting so the students feel good about themselves and their contributions.
- With the students, establish ground rules to govern Class Council, such as no blaming, omit student names when discussing common classroom problems (e.g., “I think we have been interrupting each other in class” rather than “Susie is always interrupting”), or use “I” Messages.
- Use the language of conflict solvers and teamwork hurdles to guide discussion, and talk about why it is important for all students to feel safe sharing their feelings in front of the class.
- If you use the Peace Path to highlight a class concern and brainstorm solutions, use neutral material that does not identify or point a finger at any specific student. Reference a conflict from scenarios at the end of each unit, novels, stories, videos, newspaper articles, and plays, or ask students to invent their own scenarios to use in Class Council. Once students are familiar with the process, real-life issues can be introduced.
- Do not skip the discussion about class strengths during part 1. Work from your students’ strengths, and build up their resilience by emphasizing their many positive efforts and contributions. Focusing on strengths is motivating and provides a roadmap for prosocial behavior. It not only lets students know how to create a caring classroom community, but also highlights their ability to exhibit those behaviors successfully.
- Once the process of Class Council is understood, find ways to increase student leadership. In grades 4 and 5, the Cool Kid is the designated student leader. Use your judgment to gauge how much of a leadership role each Cool Kid is ready to handle. Students could run the discussion of class strengths or areas of concern. The more students own Class Council, the more effective the meeting will be.

Chilly Puppet

Purpose

Everybody loves a mascot. Chilly the rockhopper penguin is the well-loved mascot for GAT. SFA provides a penguin puppet for every teacher. Do not hesitate to be creative with how you use Chilly. Using Chilly is motivating for students and helps them make a more personal connection with the program.

Hints for Using Chilly

- Chilly resides in the Thinking Spot. Using the Chilly puppet can be an alternative to writing a Think-It-Through sheet, particularly for younger children. Students can explain the problem to Chilly rather than writing down their ideas.
- Many teachers involve Chilly during Class Council. He can be in charge of compliments or announce which teams are super, great, and good teams. Be creative in how Chilly can help energize the Class Council activities.
- In kindergarten, Chilly is always part of Class Council. He announces the Cool Kid for the week and the Chilly Challenge. He is always available to celebrate!
- Use Chilly as a motivator. Let Chilly model key GAT skills. Chilly can model self-talk, how to make friends, how to stop and stay cool, or any other GAT skills that are covered in the lessons.
- Let Chilly be a reward. Super teams can earn the right to have Chilly on their desks or tables for a day. Teams that have done a particularly good job with the Cooperative Challenge could take Chilly to lunch. The possibilities are endless.
- For younger students who are learning to better manage their emotions, Chilly can be a real help. Some students benefit from going to the Thinking Spot and giving Chilly a hug to cool down.

Secret Spies

Purpose

The Secret Spies are used in grades 4 and 5 as part of Class Council and as a general classroom structure to encourage students to utilize GAT tools throughout the day. Students are selected to be Secret Spies for the upcoming week. No one is supposed to know who the Secret Spies are. The spies keep their eyes open all week for examples of students using GAT tools during the day. At the Class Council, the spies are identified, and they report on what they saw. Teams can earn additional points for good examples that the Secret Spies observed. This structure is designed to be a motivating and fun way for students to practice and better identify the GAT skills and tools.

Breaking It Down

- Quietly select two students to be the Secret Spies for the week. Their job is to notice examples of students using GAT tools in the classroom and provide this information at Class Council.
- The Secret Spies secretly watch their peers all week for good examples of GAT skills and behaviors.
- At Class Council, the Secret Spies are announced, and they provide some examples of great use of the GAT tools.
- Celebrate these examples.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- At the start of the year or with younger students, pick one thing for the Secret Spies to look for. Once students are more familiar with GAT tools, the Secret Spies can look for more than one thing.
- Secret Spies can be used in several different ways. For example, they can be used to watch for ongoing positive examples of students using GAT strategies to handle a common classroom problem.
- Secret Spies may need to make some secret notes so they remember what they see during the week.

Home Connections

Purpose

Home Connections are designed to inform parents and families about the Getting Along Together program and to involve them in encouraging the use of Getting Along Together skills. Each Getting Along Together unit includes a Parent Peek letter to explain the unit. In addition, there is a Home Connections ticket that should be signed by the parent or guardian when the student explains what he or she learned in GAT that week.

Breaking It Down

- Hand out the Parent Peek letter on the first day of every GAT unit.
- Have the Home Connections tickets ready to distribute on Monday after the skill lesson (or on whatever day the skill lesson is taught).
- Collect the tickets the next day, and provide team recognition or some other type of incentive.
- Keep a record of Home Connections return rates for your class.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Provide an incentive to motivate students to complete and return the forms. This might be extra team points for teams in which all members return the forms or an extra point for each student who returns the form.
- Some of the students will be unable to complete the forms at home due to various issues, such as a parent's work schedule, lack of time, or willingness to help. Contact the Schoolwide Solutions teams for help in those cases. Community volunteers or school-personnel volunteers can be enlisted to help these students complete their Home Connections tickets whenever time is available.



Cognitive-Regulation/Thinking Skills Structures and Routines

Active-Listening Signal

Purpose

Cooperative classrooms should be environments with lively, engaged discussion among students and teams. The healthy buzz of conversation is a good indicator that learning is going on. There are, however, times when the class needs to come together and listen to one person talk, such as when the teacher gives direct instruction or when a Random Reporter is sharing a team's response. Sometimes students need a reminder to stop their discussions and listen to the speaker. The Active-Listening Signal is an easy way to ask for attention and good listening.

Breaking It Down

To give the Active-Listening Signal:

- Raise your hand, and make a V with your index and middle fingers (as in the peace sign) for active listening.
- When students see you make the Active-Listening Signal, everyone except the speaker should adopt the active-listening posture and give his or her full attention to the speaker.
- The components of the active-listening posture are:
 - look at the speaker,
 - be quiet, and
 - sit still with your hands in your lap.
- Keep your hand raised until all the students demonstrate the active-listening posture and the room becomes quiet except for the speaker.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Do not continue with the activity until all the students are quiet and in the active-listening posture. This might take some work and practice, but students quickly become good at this if you are consistent with your expectations when you use the Active-Listening Signal. If you attempt to talk over the discussion or only wait for it to become a little quieter before continuing, students will rapidly realize that they do not need to pay attention to the signal. Consistent expectations are the key to success.
- Practice is crucial, especially for younger children. Make it a game to see how quickly and how often students can respond to the Active-Listening Signal. Be sure to use team rewards for active listening for additional motivation and to award team cooperation points. Sometimes making it a game and pitting one team against another or one class against another can increase the fun.
- If the signal is not working, ask yourself, “Have I been consistent in my expectations? Have I made sure that I wait for attention from all the students before lowering my hand? Am I providing sufficient practice and reward for the students to become adept at this skill?”
- The Active-Listening Signal and active-listening posture are structural supports to help students practice a key cognitive skill: attention and focus. This is an important skill to reinforce by frequently using this signal and connecting this skill to the Focus Brain Games to help students gain more practice and see the connection to academic work.
- Add a nonverbal signal to help capture the students' attention. For example, flick the lights, or clap twice before you raise your hand. This helps auditory learners or students who have their backs to you.



Grades 1-3



Grades 4 and 5

Focus Signal

Purpose

In the early grades, it is helpful to have hand signals for the three cognitive-regulation skills. Focus, or attention, is one of those cognitive-regulation skills. When you need greater attention to the task at hand or when a set of complicated instructions requires particular focus, cueing students with the Focus Signal can be helpful.

Breaking It Down

- When you want the students to focus carefully on the activity or discussion, hold your hands up to your eyes as if you are using binoculars. This signal can be used during active instruction or teamwork.
- Encourage the students to use the signal appropriately, and reward them with points.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Use the Focus Signal across the curriculum to encourage the students to use the cognitive-regulation skills in academic activities other than Getting Along Together.



Grades 1-3



Grades 4 and 5

Remember Signal

Purpose

One of the goals of Getting Along Together is to increase students' ability to use a few fundamental cognitive skills. One such skill is being able to access, remember, and manipulate information, which is needed in all academic subjects. Students must be able to remember number values and the steps to solving a problem to do most mathematical operations. Students need to remember letter sounds, decoding rules, and word meanings to read. Working memory is crucial in all these tasks. Getting Along Together lessons and activities help students transfer their developing memory skills from a gamelike setting to the curriculum. Cueing students when their memory skills are needed, particularly for younger students, strongly supports them as they internalize these cognitive skills.

Breaking It Down

- Use the Remember Signal (two fingers on each hand rubbing the temples) when you present information or make a team assignment that requires memory.
- Initially, it is important to review the skills or strategies that students have learned to strengthen their memory muscles after you present the signal. After a week or so of review, students should be able to use the memory tools easily.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Use the signal often during academic subjects. Students may not know when they really need to remember things. Signal use clarifies how students can use their cognitive skills for academic success.



Grades 1-3



Grades 4 and 5

Stop and Think Signal

Purpose

The Stop and Think Signal cues students to employ the cognitive skill of self-control throughout the day, especially for younger children. Students need to identify and apply this cognitive skill from Brain Games to real-world situations. The Stop and Think Signal is one way to remind students to use their self-control skills and to give them practice across the curriculum.

Breaking It Down

- Use the Stop and Think Signal to have students reflect on their behavior during transitions or when the class's energy level is rising and students are exhibiting impulsive behavior (e.g., interrupting, getting out of their seats).
- Give the signal (one hand making the motion to stop and the other hand pointing at your head) as needed to serve as a reminder throughout the day.
- Remind the students about stop and think strategies that they have identified and when to use them.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- If students are struggling with self-control skills, practice this signal often. The more practice and celebration of successful use of self-control, the better students will master the skill.
- If students are having difficulty with self-control, reteach the skills. There are GAT units on waiting, jumping to conclusions, and interrupting. Create a Looks Like/Sounds Like chart for the problem area so students recognize what the problem looks and sounds like, and then chart suggested solutions. This is a great Class Council activity.
- Use Think Alouds to model self-control strategies. You might model how you keep yourself from interrupting or how you are able to wait for something. Modeling the behavior that you want to see is very powerful.
- There may be a few students in your class who have problems with self-control. These students may require special strategies. Refer such students to the Intervention team for an individualized plan. Team action plans in the *Leading for Success Schoolwide Solutions Guide* can be very helpful for situations in which one student keeps the team from earning points. The team action plan is one method of addressing this problem. The other is to use every opportunity to reward the child whenever he or she exhibits self-control.
- The Thinking Spot is a valuable resource for students who have trouble with self-control. Allow the student to excuse himself or herself, settle down at the Thinking Spot for a short time, and then return to his or her team. If possible, have the student use a Think-It-Through sheet at the Thinking Spot. This should help the student identify both the problem area and a solution. You should review this Think-It-Through sheet when the student returns to his or her team. Initially, the student may need guidance to do this, but eventually, the student will use this skill without prompting. Make sure to keep this intervention positive. It is a resource, not a punishment. This is a mechanism for the child to learn better self-control and become a successful team member. Celebrate the student's ability to identify when he or she is losing control and to stop and think of a solution.

Self-Talk

Purpose

Self-talk is a person's ability to process his or her thoughts automatically and independently to increase learning, build self-esteem, develop better emotional control, and improve problem-solving skills. Over time, students learn to listen to their thoughts and consciously shift their thinking to help themselves become more effective team members and learners. By grade five, students learn to recognize common thinking traps e.g., negative or "glass half-empty" thinking; doing the I Can't chant; extreme thinking ("I will *never*..." or "It is *always*..."); and thought reading ("I know she thinks I'm weird"). When students begin to recognize negative and ineffective thinking, they learn to shift their thinking in a more productive direction. For example, students learn strategies to cope with frustration by telling themselves to slow down, take a break, or take a deep breath. Students work on

developing resiliency by learning to shift negative thoughts of failure to more positive thoughts of improvement. For example, rather than students telling themselves that they will *never* master multiplication, they learn strategies to stimulate positive thinking that they *can* take steps to master multiplication. Teachers use Think Alouds to model the cognitive behavior that they want students to use to promote positive thinking and achievement. In the upper-level grades, after students have learned to recognize and use the self-talk process, they learn strategies to check and alter their own thinking.

Breaking It Down

Positive self-talk allows students to monitor their own mental processes and shift their thinking in a more positive or productive direction. Students in the upper grades learn to do this by using a series of steps:

- **Catch the Negative:** Students should practice listening to what they say to themselves. Students need to begin by simply recognizing when they are using negative self-talk.
- **Stop and Think:** When students hear themselves using negative thinking, they need to stop and think about their self-talk.
- **Calm Down:** When students get locked into negative thinking, it is easy for them to become frustrated or disappointed. Learning to manage these emotions by using cool-down strategies is the beginning of helping students take charge of their thinking and emotions.
- **Replace:** The final step is to encourage students to replace their negative thoughts with realistic, positive ones and to use these more productive thoughts to help make a plan of action.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Use Think Alouds to model self-talk strategies. Think Alouds can show students how negative thinking looks and sounds. For example, model what extreme thinking sounds like, or show how easy it is to use the “I can’t...” chant or to be paranoid. See if students can identify the cognitive traps that you model. This will prepare them to identify their own usage. Also use Think Alouds to model how to use self-talk steps to change your thinking. Learning to listen and evaluate our inner voice is not easy. Students will need to see you model both negative and positive thinking and the steps to change from negative to positive.
- Be sure to take advantage of examples from literature or current events of people using cognitive thinking traps. Help students brainstorm how those characters could use the self-talk steps to change their thinking. Would that change the outcome of the novel or the event in history or current events? Making connections across the curriculum not only cements the learning for students but normalizes how common thinking traps are.
- Use Think Alouds to ask questions to yourself as part of modeling self-talk steps. Turning a negative into a positive often begins by challenging our thinking and pushing for evidence: “Am I *really never* good at *any* sports? How do I know how Susan really feels about me?” Model how to ask questions to challenge your own thinking.
- In a supportive manner, challenge students who are using negative thinking, and help them identify their common negative thinking patterns. Ask: **Is it true that you will never do it? Is it true that you can’t do it, or is it just hard? Will that always be the case?** If you ask questions in a supportive way, you can help students learn to internalize positive-thinking skills so they can begin to challenge their own thinking.
- Always celebrate examples of students using positive self-talk. Listen when students are doing independent work or working in teams. If students use any of the steps to shift their thinking, stop and celebrate. Having real life examples is a powerful reinforcement for change.

- Keep it realistic. Have students practice turning a negative into a realistic positive. It is important for the shift in thinking to be doable. A student may never be a math star, but there are probably areas of math that he or she has mastered, and there are probably small-step improvements that can be made. For example, it is more realistic for a student to say, “I will study and do better on my next math test” than for the student to say, “I will get 100 on my next test” or “I will be a math whiz.” Being realistic makes positive self-talk useful. Using unrealistic self-talk is a set up for more failure. Realistic self-talk breeds success. For example, if I say to myself that I will become a physics Nobel laureate, I will be disappointed and my negative self-talk will be confirmed. But saying to myself that I will improve on my next physics test is not only doable but also confirms that I can act on my own behalf and be successful.
- Teach students to be their own best friends. Model giving advice to a friend, and then have the students imagine that they are advising their best friends. Ask students, **What would you say? Would you tell your friend that he or she will never be able to do something?** Best friends see your best side and are supportive. Help students learn to be their own best friend and talk to themselves the way a good friend would.

Think Aloud

Purpose

Learning is all about thinking—which means that, without explicit instruction in the internal strategies and processes that thinkers use, students might never understand how to take control of their own learning or emotions. To become strategic learners and effective thinkers, students need to see how other people think and problem solve. They need to hear you think aloud. In *Getting Along Together*, many of the cognitive and emotional skills involve things that we say in our own heads to concentrate, maintain control, and problem solve. If students do not see and hear you do these things frequently, it will be hard for them to understand what they need to master.

Breaking It Down

A Think Aloud gives voice to your mental processes. It is a play-by-play description of what is going on in your head, and it helps students become more metacognitive—to think about their own thinking. To use a Think Aloud:

- Be clear about what you are modeling. For example, say, “Remember, we’re working on using context clues. I’m going to show you what I do when I listen to someone talk. You will see me stop and think aloud when I try to decide how someone else might be feeling.”
- During the Think Aloud, do not interact with the students. Pretend that you are alone in the room and that you have the unusual habit of verbalizing your every thought. For instance, if you are modeling how to use context clues for empathy, begin by verbalizing your own internal dialogue. “I think Peggy looks sad. Her voice is soft, her shoulders are drooping, and her eyes look kind of teary. I think I must have hurt her feelings when I said I didn’t want to play with her after school. I think she feels hurt.”
- When you finish thinking aloud, discuss the strategy that you modeled. How did the strategy work? When should students use it? How will it help them?

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Use visual and verbal cues to show when you are thinking to yourself. Exaggerate if you have to; point to your temple, stroke your chin, or look into the distance to show that you are thinking. Track the text with your finger if you are reading.
- Ask yourself questions as part of the Think Aloud. When modeling how to solve a conflict, you could ask yourself whether the conflict solver is win-win: “Is there more than one way to solve this problem? What would happen if I chose this solution? Is that a win-win outcome?” Your mind sifts through these options so quickly that you might not even be aware of them, but these are exactly the kinds of questions you want to bring to light. By modeling your own thinking process, you teach students how to think.
- Don’t leave learning to chance! Set the stage for the Think Aloud so students know exactly what to look and listen for. Debrief the Think Aloud afterward to draw students’ attention explicitly to the most important details.
- Assess your class to determine which skill areas they struggle with most, and do frequent Think Alouds on those topics to illustrate good self-talk (about how to stop and stay cool, empathize with others, avoid interrupting, etc.).
- The most effective Think Alouds sound spontaneous but are actually carefully planned—or even scripted—ahead of time. Identify the skill or process that you want to model, and decide which elements to highlight. How can you break the skill or process down into manageable bits? What are students most likely to struggle with? What opportunities will they have to practice on their own or with teammates? By planning ahead and anticipating students’ needs, you can create a more effective learning experience.
- In grades 4 and 5, students are explicitly taught several different uses for self-talk, including to monitor their negative thinking. Be sure to do several Think Alouds on this topic so students can see how it works. For example, if you want to model how to turn around negative thinking, you could say, “I can never get division problems right. They are impossible! Hmm...is that true, that I never get them right? Sometimes I do. Maybe they are not impossible, just hard. I can work to get better at division.”



Emotional-Management and Self-Control Structures and Routines



Grades 1–3

Cool-Down Strategies

Purpose

When people become angry, emotions can get in the way of peaceful conflict resolution. Cool-down strategies are ways for students to bring their emotions under control before they get into trouble or harm anyone or anything. With their anger in check, students can then take steps to stop and think and resolve the conflict peacefully.



Grades 4 and 5

Breaking It Down

- Students must first recognize that they are getting angry and that they need to take steps to bring their anger under control. (See Feelings Thermometer.)
- Next, they need to employ an appropriate strategy for talking themselves into a less volatile state of mind. To do this, they can use the Stop and Stay Cool Steps, self-talk, Write and Mail to the Moon, take a break, or the Settle-Down-Jar.

Stop and Stay Cool

In this strategy, students identify that they are in danger of losing control and then practice regulating their breathing as a way of defusing their anger. (For more on this, see Stop and Stay Cool.)

Self-Talk

In this strategy, each person thinks of a phrase or statement to repeat silently when he or she is getting angry. Statements might include: “I can stay in control,” “This will pass,” “There is no need to get upset,” “I can get through this,” “People make mistakes, and I can excuse them,” or any other phrase that interrupts the cycle of angry thoughts.

Take a Break

Taking a break may be the best solution, particularly for frustrating situations. If a student has made repeated mistakes or cannot seem to master a particular skill and is becoming increasingly frustrated, taking a break and doing something else may be a good way to calm down so the next attempts are more successful.

Settle-Down Jar

The Settle-Down Jar is helpful to an agitated, angry, or frustrated student in a number of ways. First, the very act of going to use the jar offers the student something else to do instead of giving in to the strong emotion, which will only make the problem worse. Second, when the student shakes up the jar, he or she experiences a powerful visual metaphor for his or her confused and intense feelings as the dirt or glitter swirls around in the churning water. Third, watching the contents slowly settle down is a soothing and calming experience and is a visual illustration of the idea that it takes time for strong feelings to settle down, but they will indeed settle down. Breathing slowly and evenly as he or she watches the jar’s contents settle, the student can feel his or her own mind becoming as clear and calm as the water in the jar.

Directions:

We suggest that you try a few versions of this jar if you have time. Some people find the dirt more effective; others prefer the glitter. Do not substitute sand; it is too heavy to swirl.

1. Find a clear plastic jar with a lid, about the size of a mayonnaise or peanut butter jar.
2. Fill the jar about two-thirds full with water.

3. Add either two to three teaspoons of fine dark dirt or about two tablespoons of glitter.
4. With the lid on tightly, shake up the jar, and see if it creates the desired effect. If not, adjust the contents.
5. An alternative suggestion comes from Kerry Lee MacLean, author of *Moody Cow Meditates*. She prefers to use sparkles or glitter. She suggests filling the jar three-quarters full with warm water and then adding enough glycerin to fill the jar almost to the top. Glycerin thickens the water and helps the jar's contents fall slower. Then add four drops of colorless dish soap, which helps the glitter sink to the bottom of the jar. Finally, add a few pinches of glitter or sparkles. Then shake the jar to see if it creates the desired effect. If not, adjust the contents.
6. After you have explained and demonstrated the purpose of the jar to the students, put it in the Thinking Spot where they can access it as needed.

Write and Mail to the Moon

For some students, writing down their feelings and then sending them off to outer space is a good way to cool off and avoid saying or doing something they may later regret. Students should find a quiet spot (perhaps the Thinking Spot), write down their thoughts, and then when they are calmer, put their thoughts in an envelope or fold them up and throw them away.

Once students have their emotions under control, they can begin to resolve the conflict. (See also Conflict Solvers and Peace Path.)

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Emotions are invisible, so students need help recognizing emotional cues in themselves and others. Use the Feelings Thermometer to talk about the incremental (or immediate) escalation of emotions. Use a role-play scenario or a Looks Like/Sounds Like/Feels Like chart to introduce and discuss signs that might indicate when someone is getting angry: clenched fists, raised voice, tensed upper body, etc.
- Help students develop a more complex range of vocabulary to describe their feelings. This will help them better understand and express the nuances of their emotions and enable them to recognize the difference between frustration and fury, for instance.
- Model using a Think Aloud to show students how to analyze a problem. Practice working through cool-down strategies in hypothetical conflicts, or talk about conflicts in books that students are reading as a way to discuss alternative outcomes.
- Discuss why cool-down strategies work; they interrupt the cycle of angry thoughts that could otherwise escalate and lead to violence.
- Acknowledge that anger and frustration are normal emotions that can be hard to handle. Reassure students that feeling angry or frustrated is not bad but that they need to learn how to control their reactions to these emotions. It is their reactions that can get them into trouble.
- Not every cool-down technique will work for everyone or in every situation. Work with individual students to find a strategy that fits. Suggestions include taking a break, counting to 10, taking a deep breath, or finding another task such as exercising, playing music, doing a puzzle, reading a book, or writing to a friend.
- Provide the Settle-Down Jar or other options at the Thinking Spot so students can try different strategies, such as listening to music or sculpting clay to cool down, and encourage students to share their own ideas with others.

Feelings Thermometer

Purpose

Students often lack the ability to recognize when they are about to be overpowered by their emotions. They also tend to have an insufficient emotional vocabulary to understand the many nuances in their feelings—for instance, misinterpreting loneliness as anger. Teaching students to take their emotional temperature is the first step toward helping them learn to keep their reactions under control.

Breaking It Down

- Emotions run on a continuum from low key to intense. Before students can control their responses to anger and other emotions, first they must be able to identify the feeling and gauge its intensity.
- Just as a thermometer measures rising temperatures, an emotional thermometer measures rising levels of emotion.
- Use the Feelings Tree/Feelings Universe to introduce, or review, a variety of ways to describe different levels of a particular emotion. For example, *annoyed*, *bothered*, *frustrated*, *irate*, *livid*, *resentful*, *furious*, and *outraged* are different levels of anger.
- Have students label their Feelings Thermometers with words from the Feelings Tree and then write down, or simply discuss with their teammates, situations that might make them feel each of these emotions.
- Thereafter, students can refer to the Feelings Thermometer and use it to gauge the level of their emotions. Recognizing when emotions are heating up and acknowledging the intensity of those emotions are important steps toward resolving a conflict peacefully.
- Keep a Feelings Thermometer at the Thinking Spot for student reference.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Students need regular practice and encouragement in taking their emotional temperature. It is not an easy skill to master. When you see tempers flare in the classroom, have the students check their emotional thermometers. If tempers are too hot, the students must cool down before attempting to resolve the problem. If you have sufficient wall space, post the Feelings Thermometer for easy reference; students can then point to their anger level.
- Work on building students' emotional vocabulary over time. Vocabulary alone is not a remedy, but without it, students cannot come to a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of contributing factors in an emotional situation. Begin with words that students intuitively understand (slang and colloquial expressions are fine), but as the year progresses, add words that are appropriate to school or a more formal work setting.
- Use the Feelings Thermometer for good feelings too (e.g., happy, calm, thankful).
- Help students connect emotions to something they can see, hear, or feel. Use a Looks Like/Sounds Like/Feels Like chart to explore the manifestations of a particular emotion and to help students sense the subtle differences between their many moods.
- Model by revealing your own emotions to the class. If you are frustrated by something they are doing (or not doing), refer to your emotional thermometer, and talk with students about what cool-down strategies you might try. Use a Think Aloud to show your mental processes. The more examples you can provide for your class, the better they will understand how to use these techniques on their own.
- Children need to practice using the Feelings Thermometer when emotions are low so they will have the skill when emotions are high. Give them opportunities to rate anger or frustration when they are just a little angry or frustrated; don't wait for the feeling to escalate.

Feelings Tree/Feelings Universe

Purpose

For students to identify, discuss, and control their feelings, they must have a sufficient feelings vocabulary. They need to be able to recognize and name their internal states to talk about, rather than act on, their feelings. The Feelings Tree in grades 1–3 and the Feelings Universe in grades 4 and 5 provide an ongoing structure to expand students' feelings vocabulary. The Feelings Tree has multiple branches to identify these core feelings. The Feelings Universe has a range of planets. Some of the feelings are provided, and some are left for the teacher and/or students to name. Students in grades 1–3 are encouraged to use the leaves provided with the Feelings Tree to identify the many words that express feelings in the same emotional family. In grades 4 and 5, students add additional feelings to the feelings planets. For example, in grades 1–3 under the “angry” branch, students identify similar words, such as *irritated*, *furious*, or *frustrated*, and discuss the different nuances of these feelings-family words. In grades 4 and 5, students would identify related words to put on the “angry” planet. This process helps students build a more nuanced vocabulary to identify their own feelings. This self-awareness is foundational for emotional self-control and social problem solving.

Breaking It Down

- The Feelings Tree has three branches identified for three feelings families, “sad,” “mad,” and “happy,” and leaves are provided for specific vocabulary words. Begin with the three identified branches. Students can suggest other words that they know for *mad*, *sad*, or *happy*. Write each word on a different leaf, and place the leaf on the appropriate branch. Be sure to have students define the differences between these words, but link how the words are related.
- The Feelings Universe in grades 4 and 5 works in a similar fashion. There are several named planets (“happy,” “sad,” “mad”) and additional optional planets. Related feelings that are identified by students can be added to the appropriate planets, and additional planets can be added for other emotions.
- Develop the rest of the branches or planets over the course of the year. During training, feelings-family lists are provided, but highlight the branches or planets that are most useful for your students. For example, you might identify *scared* with the related words *anxious*, *worried*, *nervous*, *fearful*, or *surprised*. Determine which additional branches are the most helpful for your students.
- Maintain the tree or universe all year. Add leaves to the tree (or planets to the universe) as new vocabulary words come up in class discussions or during other subject areas.
- Have students use the Feelings Tree or Feelings Universe when they give “I” Messages or discuss a problem. Encourage students to use more accurate vocabulary than just *mad*, *sad*, or *glad* to discuss their own feelings.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Use the Feelings Tree or Feelings Universe across the curriculum. During reading, add leaves or planets when new feelings vocabulary is used in the book or story. Have students use the Feelings Tree when they discuss a character in a book or a historical figure to describe that person’s reaction to an event or interpersonal problem.
- Some words might belong on two branches of the Feelings Tree, or on two planets in the Feelings Universe. Have students discuss the similarities and differences, but stress that we all may feel more than one thing at the same time and that some of the more sophisticated feelings words reflect this overlap.

- There may be disagreements about whether a word deserves its own branch (or planet) or is really a subset of another one. For example, the word *embarrassed* might be part of the “nervous,” “anxious,” or “sad” branch, or it might be on its own branch. Have students discuss their thinking and support their arguments. There are not necessarily right or wrong answers, but the discussion should be rich and insightful; the learning is in the discussion. The point is to have students expand their vocabulary and their understanding of feelings.
- Remember, the goal is to have students identify, label, and discuss various feelings. Categorization is not as important and should be flexible. Many feelings words cross categories or may not fit easily onto one of the identified branches or planets. Use the Feelings Tree or Feelings Universe as a basis for discussion and understanding, rather than categorization.

Stop and Stay Cool

Purpose

Students do not always come to school with sufficient conflict-management skills to negotiate a classroom setting. To develop a healthy control of their emotions, they may need to practice specific strategies for cooling down when they feel themselves getting angry. Stop and Stay Cool is one way to do that.

Breaking It Down

- In this strategy, students:
 1. identify that they are in danger of losing control,
 2. tell themselves to stop,
 3. give themselves a Chilly hug (optional for upper-grade students),
 4. practice regulating their breathing as a way to defuse their anger, and
 5. gain control.
- Once students are back in control, they can begin to identify possible solutions and take steps to resolve the conflict. (See Conflict Solvers and Peace Path.)

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Although students must work their way through Stop and Stay Cool themselves, you can still help them gain control of their emotions. When you notice a student getting upset, gently remind him or her of the steps, and ask if he or she needs help working through them.
- Initially, students may not have enough self-discipline to talk themselves back into control. Together, you might want to establish a safe space within the classroom where a student can go for a few minutes until he or she has cooled down. Check in with the student to see how things are going.
- Use Think-It-Through and the steps of the Peace Path to keep the resolution process on track.
- Not every technique works for every person or situation. See Cool-Down Strategies for additional suggestions to try with students for whom Stop and Stay Cool is not working and for other ways to fine-tune students’ conflict-prevention and conflict-resolution skills.
- In upper grades, students may want to alter or skip the Chilly hug. Engage students to discuss what would work best for them, and create the steps that work.

Think-It-Through Sheets

Purpose

Think-It-Through is a process in which students spend some quiet time reflecting and use self-talk to work through a problem before they attempt to jointly craft a solution that works for everyone involved.

Breaking It Down

When students are involved in a conflict or have a problem, they individually complete a Think-It-Through sheet, a process that involves:

- reflecting on the problem that needs to be solved,
- identifying their feelings about the problem,
- communicating those feelings through an “I” Message, and
- proposing one or more solutions to the problem.

There are different Think-It-Through sheets depending on grade level, but all roughly follow the above steps. Once each child has completed a Think-It-Through sheet, the students involved can then move toward a peaceful resolution, using the Peace Path process if the problem involves a peer or a discussion about their behavior with you or another adult if the situation involves a behavioral problem. As the students reach the upper grades, the process also engages the students in using consequential thinking.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Keep Think-It-Through sheets in a specific place in your classroom (i.e., the Thinking Spot) where students can go to cool down and talk out their problems.
- Make alternatives available for students who have difficulty with written activities. For example, a tape recorder that students can use to record their answers or allowing them to draw their solutions will prevent these students from becoming frustrated with the Think-It-Through sheet and rejecting the problem-solving process. Younger students can talk to the Chilly puppet.
- Because students come to class with a variety of problem-solving models, some of which are more appropriate for school than others, you will need to model, discuss, and consistently reinforce your expectations for resolving classroom conflicts. Review these expectations periodically throughout the year—particularly after a vacation or after an unusually disruptive incident.
- Students must identify and agree on a single problem to work on. Not every conflict, however, is that cut and dried. For some students, trying to decide which complaint to address first may itself become a point of conflict. To facilitate the process, consider working with the students to list their various issues and come to some agreement about how to proceed. Then turn the process back over to the students.
- Some teachers choose to tear up the Think-It-Through sheet when the problem is resolved.

“Schools often keep [Think-It-Through sheets] in the guidance office or in the main office for students experiencing difficulty throughout the day. In addition, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and other school personnel may keep these sheets to dispense to students if necessary. The more opportunities a student has to practice talking themselves through problems in a positive way, the more automatic and accomplished the skill becomes.”

One Million Children
Slavin and Madden, 2001, p. 257



Interpersonal/Social Skills Structures and Routines



Conflict Solvers

Purpose

Conflict solvers are actions that students can take to prevent common classroom conflicts or to keep an existing conflict from getting out of hand. They are a critical part of the formal problem-solving Peace Path process in which students take time to cool down and think about the problem and possible solutions. Conflict solvers can also be used as informal classroom reminders whenever a squabble arises.

Breaking It Down

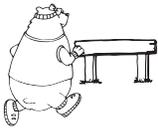
- There are many ways to head off the kinds of daily conflicts your students might experience in the classroom, hallway, lunchroom, or play area. A list of possible conflict solvers includes:
 1. Share.
 2. Take turns.
 3. Apologize.
 4. Ignore.
 5. Make amends.
 6. Compromise.
 7. Laugh it off.
 8. Take a break.
 9. Get help.
 10. Talk it out.
- When small conflicts arise, students should first try one or more of the options on the list. This may avert the need for a more formal intervention process such as the Peace Path.
- Make sure the list of conflict solvers is easily accessible at the Thinking Spot.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- The more students practice these options, the more they will internalize them. Consistently use the language of conflict solvers in your classroom and school. Keep the list posted in your classroom, or make sheets available to students or teams, and refer students to this resource as needed. (See also Hurdles to Teamwork.)
- Instead of getting drawn into simple conflicts, ask the students involved whether they have tried any conflict solvers. If not, have them consult the list to see if any of the options is a viable solution. Initially, you may need to help walk them through each of the possibilities.
- Publicly praise students for using these strategies on their own and for averting any need to go through the Peace Path process.
- This is only a starter list of conflict solvers. Periodically, help students brainstorm some conflict solvers of their own, and encourage students to talk to one another about their favorite strategies. By listening to others, children might discover new options that they never would have thought of on their own.
- In the early elementary grades, students have physical mediators for some of the conflict solvers. For example, they have a Taking Turns Bag for taking turns. Keep these items in the Thinking Spot, and encourage students to use them when they are practicing win-win solutions at Class Council or when they are solving peer conflicts. As the year progresses, you can begin to wean students from these physical mediators and just use the conflict solver terms.

“Many of the behaviors that students bring to school are necessary to help them survive outside of school. Just as students learn to use various rules, depending on the Nintendo game they’re playing, they also need to learn to use certain rules to be successful in school settings and circumstances. If students from poverty don’t know how to fight physically, they are going to be in danger on the streets. But if that is their only method for resolving a problem, then they cannot be successful in school.”

A Framework for Understanding Poverty
Payne, 1998, p. 100



Hurdles to Teamwork

Purpose

Children come to school with a wide range of social skills. The best way to encourage a healthy learning environment is to focus students on the positive behaviors that you expect them to demonstrate and provide clear models and plenty of opportunities to practice. But some children might also need you to define behaviors that you will *not* tolerate. Teaching students to recognize and avoid these hurdles is an effective way to establish boundaries in your class or school.

Breaking It Down

- Display the hurdles poster to remind students of specific behaviors that you do not want to see. A list might include:
 1. Put-downs
 2. Insults
 3. Being unable to wait
 4. Threats
 5. Teasing
 6. Sarcasm
 7. Excluding others
 8. Yelling
 9. Interrupting
 10. Jumping to conclusions
 11. Being defensive
 12. Making excuses
 13. Getting even
- Elicit students' suggestions for other behaviors they have observed that make the school environment less safe and supportive, and add them to the list.
- Refer to this list whenever you hear or see students putting up hurdles instead of using encouraging words and conflict solvers. Tell the students involved that hurdles are unacceptable and that they need to find a more appropriate response. For suggestions, refer them to the list of conflict solvers.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Use the language of conflict solvers and teamwork hurdles to guide your everyday classroom interactions. Make sure that the conflict solver cards and Hurdles to Teamwork poster are posted for the students to refer to. Have the students refer to the strategies that have been identified to overcome hurdle behaviors.
- When reading novels or doing social studies units, ask students to discuss whether a character from the novel or from history encountered some hurdles to getting along with others or employed some effective conflict solvers.
- Publicly praise students, and award a few team cooperation points whenever you hear students using conflict solvers instead of hurdles.
- Help students explore the benefits of one set of behaviors over another. For example, ask, "How does it feel when someone puts you down? What about when someone gives you a compliment?" Help them generalize about how people should act toward one another.
- Don't expect instant perfection, but do follow up with students after something has gone badly to help them strategize for the next time (e.g., "That didn't go so well. What else could you have tried?").

"I" Messages

Purpose

In any conflict, it is important that the people involved understand one another's thoughts and feelings. An "I" Message is a way for a person to communicate clearly, without insult or blame, how he or she feels about a problem. It is a key part of the Peace Path process, in which students take some time to cool down and think about a problem before they attempt a solution.

Breaking It Down

An “I” Message has two parts in grades 1–3:

1. “I feel...” In the first part of an “I” Message, a student states how he or she feels as a result of the current situation.
2. “...because...” In the second part, the student states what behavior has caused this feeling.

An example would be “I felt hurt because you called me a name at recess.”

In grades 4 and 5, students are given the option to expand the “I” Message if they choose. The expanded “I” Message is “I feel _____ when you _____ because it seems _____.” This ending is particularly useful when students are jumping to conclusions about a situation. For example, students may be angry because they assume that someone did something to be mean or because he or she doesn’t like someone else. Students are not taking the time to check out a situation. In these cases, it is often helpful to have students use the expanded “I” Message. Students may need practice in stopping and thinking before they make a decision about a situation.

An example would be: “I felt hurt when you didn’t sit with me at lunch *because it seems* like you don’t want to be my friend anymore.”

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- It is important to differentiate between feelings and actions when developing an “I” Message. The first part of an “I” Message must state what a student feels inside. The second part must contain a clear description of an observable behavior—something specific that the student can see or hear. Students may use sentence stems other than “I feel...when you...,” but they should always include both parts in their “I” Messages.
- Remind students to use their emotional vocabulary to identify and describe feelings when building an “I” Message. If students lack sufficient words to describe their range of feelings, work with them first on building a stronger emotional vocabulary. (See Feelings Thermometer and Feelings Tree.)
- If there is more than one problem between two students, each student should prepare an “I” Message, and they should decide together which problem to work on first.
- Sometimes students focus on surface problems while the underlying source of conflict remains hidden. For instance, hitting or name-calling might be symptoms of a deeper conflict such as not knowing how to share. For lasting solutions, help students identify, explore, and resolve the root issues, not just those on the surface.
- An effective “I” Message is the first step, but not a solution in itself. Once students develop their “I” Messages, they must still use the Peace Path process to come up with a solution that works for everyone involved.

Looks Like/Sounds Like/Feels Like Chart

Purpose

A Looks Like/Sounds Like/Feels Like chart is a simple tool that helps students identify the specific behaviors that accompany each team cooperation goal or conflict-resolution strategy. It is a way of making otherwise invisible processes visible and accessible to your students.

Teaching or reinforcing conflict-resolution skills might seem to detract from instructional time. However, it is time well spent, particularly early in the year. As students learn to manage their differences, you actually gain back the time you used to spend as referee.

Breaking It Down

Here's how it works. Suppose your class is focused on helping and encouraging others:

- Make three columns on chart paper or an overhead transparency. Label one "Looks Like," the next "Sounds Like," and the last "Feels Like."

Looks Like	Sounds Like	Feels Like
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• listening attentively• explaining a solution without giving the answer• nodding• smiling at a teammate• giving a thumbs up or high five	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Way to go! That's a great explanation."• "Thanks for helping me; I understand how to do it now."• "Super solution! I wouldn't have thought of doing it that way."• "You can do it."	

- Ask your students what helping and encouraging their teammates looks like. List answers on the chart. (Examples include: listening attentively, explaining a solution without giving the answer, nodding, smiling at a teammate, giving a thumbs up or high five, and so on.)
- Next, ask what helping and encouraging others sounds like. List answers on the chart. (Examples include: "Way to go! That's a great explanation," "Thanks for helping me; I understand how to do it now," "Super solution! I wouldn't have thought of doing it that way," "You can do it," and so on.)
- Finally, ask what helping and encouraging others feels like. List answers on the chart. (Don't worry if students can't think of any examples right now. You may return to this column later in the week once students have gained more experience.)
- Remind students each day of the kinds of behaviors that you are looking for, and refer to the chart whenever you award team cooperation points so students have a concrete understanding of what they are aiming for.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Use chart paper or transparencies instead of a chalkboard to create your chart so you can add to it over time. Post the list, and review it as a class the next time you want to work on that behavior.
- As you see evidence of students trying out the kinds of behaviors that you identified, reinforce them by awarding team cooperation points. For the strongest reinforcement, be sure to tell students exactly why they are receiving the points.
- Even though students may initially be unable to fill it in, the Feels Like column is one way to help students become aware of their emotions and how certain behaviors make them feel. Return to this column after students have experienced the particular behavior, cooperative learning strategy, or conflict-resolution process on which you chose to focus.

Use this same kind of chart to explore conflict-resolution strategies with your class: What does a good solution look like? What does it feel like? Do both people have to be happy for it to be an effective solution?

Team Cooperation Goals

Purpose

Team cooperation goals are a way to improve students' in-class behavior over time and help children learn to function effectively in teams. By focusing on a single behavior at a time and having team cooperation points tied to this targeted behavior, students soon internalize appropriate classroom behavior. As children become more skilled in interacting with their classmates, conflicts decrease, and time increases for both learning and individualized or small-group teaching.

Breaking It Down

Pick one behavior to focus on at a time. Spend time discussing what that behavior actually looks, sounds, and feels like so students have a strong mental image to compare with their own behavior.

- **Practicing active listening** involves listening with a goal or question in mind and analyzing what you hear or see in light of this question. It means paying close attention to what a speaker says, thinking carefully about his or her words, and formulating a response. An important part of active listening is also respecting the contributions of others, even when you do not agree. Behaviors you might expect to see when students are actively listening to one another are: heads close together, eyes on the speaker, and bottoms up as students lean over their tables or desks. All team members should be ready to ask a question, restate a teammate's answer, or otherwise contribute to the discussion at any point.
- **Helping and encouraging others** involves the ability to gauge where teammates are in their understanding and help them extend their knowledge or skill. It means that students share their own thinking, ask questions, and give hints or suggestions, but they do not tell one another answers or do one another's work. It also means offering thanks, praise, or compliments for specific things that a teammate has done well. In a team where students are helping and encouraging one another, you might hear comments and questions such as "That explanation was very clear," "I like how you...", and "Have you tried...?"
- **Everyone participating, or 100% participation**, means involving all team members in a team discussion or project, including those who are reluctant to join in. It also means making sure that each member of the team understands the key concepts and is adequately prepared before sharing in front of the class or being individually assessed. When every member of a team is participating, all students are on task, teammates are taking turns and talking to one another about their work, and students are actively listening to one another and offering assistance when a teammate is struggling.
- **Explaining your ideas and telling why** is an important part of any child's education and a consistent theme throughout SFA. All students need practice sharing their thinking or explaining how they came to a particular answer—both because children sometimes get correct answers through faulty reasoning and because the best way to learn is to teach. Students who can explain their thinking clearly to others have more than a surface understanding of the material and are more likely to retain it.
- **Completing tasks** seems like a given. Of course students have to complete tasks! But it is not always clear what constitutes a completed task, what expectations students must meet, and what form their product should take. This team cooperation goal is

If teams need help keeping every member involved, try the **Chip In** strategy. For additional ideas of how to use the team cooperation goals effectively, see **Looks Like/Sounds Like/Feels Like Chart, Team Tally and Team Success!** posters.

a pact between you and your students. Your responsibility is to explain clearly the particular requirements of a task. Each team's responsibility is to stay focused and help all members meet or exceed those expectations.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- While your students are learning what kind of behavior you expect in the classroom, pick a weekly goal instead of a daily one. This helps to focus discussion on what the targeted behavior looks like, and it gives students extended practice in demonstrating that behavior. Coordinate with other teachers so they, too, are focusing on the same cooperative learning goals.
- Be aware of cultural differences in how people communicate. For example, the amount of eye contact or the physical distance between people can have a profound impact on interpersonal communication. Help students explore the possible effects of cultural differences on their perceptions of a given situation.
- Be sure to praise students when you see them demonstrating the desired behaviors. Be as specific as possible, for instance, "Great job helping and encouraging each other! I like how you thought of a hint instead of just giving away the answer."
- Begin the week with a five- or ten-minute discussion about what the targeted behavior looks like. Use a role-play scenario, a Looks Like/Sounds Like/Feels Like chart, or some other means of bringing the behavior to life so students can actually experience it before they are held accountable for it. At the start of class each day for the rest of the week, review the behavior, and remind students of how to tell whether they are meeting the goal.
- As you look for evidence of these behaviors, listen in on team conversations to hear how students are thinking, where they are struggling, and whether you can sense common misunderstandings that you need to address as a whole class.
- As your class becomes familiar with these five goals, add others, or refine students' understanding of the existing standards. For instance, talk about why the goals are important and how they help students of all abilities achieve, or discuss how they are related to effective problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills.

Thinking Spot

Purpose

The goal of Getting Along Together is to help students learn and internalize social, emotional, and cognitive skills. Part of helping students become adept at these skills is to offer opportunities for independent practice throughout the day. The Thinking Spot is one method of providing this opportunity for practice. The Thinking Spot can be set up somewhere in the back of the classroom if possible. Key Getting Along Together tools should be kept there for student practice. When students need to solve an interpersonal conflict, think through a problem, or have a space to cool down, they should remove themselves to the Thinking Spot and apply the skills they have learned to their particular problem.

Breaking It Down

- Set up a table in the back of the classroom. Keep the following materials on the table:
 - an 8 ½" x 11" copy of the Peace Path,
 - two checkers or poker chips so students can use the Peace Path like a game board to walk through the steps,
 - an 8 ½" x 11" laminated copy of the Feelings Thermometer,
 - the Taking Turns Bag,
 - an 8 ½" x 11" copy of the Stop and Stay Cool Steps,

- several Think-It-Through sheets, and
 - the Settle-Down Jar.
- Tell students that if they are having a problem, they can ask for permission to remove themselves to the Thinking Spot. If two students are having a problem and they have the capacity to independently problem solve, they can both go to the table to work out the conflict and report their solution to you before returning to their teams.
 - If a student is struggling in class, you can ask the student to go to the Thinking Spot and practice Stop and Stay Cool and/or complete a Think-It-Through sheet.
 - If students are able to quickly and successfully solve their problem, be sure to congratulate them as they return to the group. The Thinking Spot is an opportunity for independent practice of social, emotional, and cognitive skills; it is not a punishment. It is important that you reinforce that concept for the students. Even if a student is sent to the Thinking Spot, it is for practice, not punishment, and if the student completes the practice successfully, that is cause for celebration.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Demonstrate how to use the Thinking Spot. Make sure that students know what is there, how they are supposed to use the tools, and the process for removing themselves from their class activity to the Thinking Spot and re-entering the class. Guidelines for use may be necessary. There may be certain times during class that students may not use the Thinking Spot (e.g., during tests), or students may have to postpone their use of the Thinking Spot to a more appropriate time. You will need to establish what you think are appropriate guidelines for your students.
- Make sure to celebrate successful examples of independent problem solving. In the long run, this is exactly what you would like to see.
- If a student is abusing the use of the Thinking Spot and removing himself or herself to cool down all the time, create the opportunity for the student to earn team points if he or she can begin to cool down at his or her seat or can reinstate himself or herself to the team within two minutes. You need to reinforce the student for using the skills, but for doing so quickly and without removing himself or herself from the team, as much as possible.



Peace Path

Purpose

In any conflict, the goal is to find a win-win solution, but this can only happen when both parties are clear about their feelings, calm enough to actively listen to each other, and have the skills to negotiate effectively. It is important to give students an initial structure for this kind of complex negotiation. The step-by-step Peace Path model is a way of making the problem-solving process concrete enough for children to practice on their own. Students can practice the Peace Path process using the Peace Path poster or the 8.5" x 11" version that is left in the Thinking Spot. Eventually, students will internalize the process, and they can use the steps without using the path or a visual aid.

Breaking It Down

The steps in the Peace Path process are:

Step 1: Tell the problem.

Each person gives an "I" Message, with the other person summarizing that message by saying it back. This ensures that each person knows how the other is feeling.

Step 2: Brainstorm solutions.

Each person suggests a solution to the problem, with the other person summarizing to be sure that he or she has understood.

Step 3: Solve the problem.

They decide on a solution to implement. Both people discuss the possible solutions and agree on one to try. They should strive for a win-win result, something that both parties can live with, and then try it out.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Spend some class time early in the year modeling the Peace Path process and allowing students to practice the steps. Although it means an initial investment of instructional time, it should dramatically diminish the amount of time you spend mediating conflicts later in the year.
- Make sure that 8 ½" x 11" copies of the Peace Path are available at the Thinking Spot for students to use to solve interpersonal conflicts.
- The problem-solving process is an exercise in active listening. As you implement the Peace Path process, make active listening your weekly Cooperative Challenge.
- Use the sample scenarios included in the lessons, or create your own scenarios, to have students role-play walking the steps of the Peace Path with a partner during Class Council. By asking students to solve imaginary situations, you give them valuable experience and skills on which to draw when they attempt to resolve their own points of conflict.
- Students must be careful to use cool-down strategies and conflict solvers to prevent the conflict from getting worse. As students learn the Peace Path process, monitor from a distance in case you need to intervene and remind them of the steps or to help set them back on the path toward peace.
- Establish ground rules. For instance, students may not use the Peace Path process as an excuse to get out of classwork. If a conflict arises in the middle of an activity, let students know that they may need to wait until a more appropriate moment in the lesson or day before attempting to resolve their differences. Likewise, if students experience inappropriate outbursts of emotion as they attempt to walk the Peace Path, institute a three-strikes rule: After three outbursts, the student must either call in a pinch hitter to help with negotiations or sit on the sidelines for a while before resuming the problem-solving process. Be clear and consistent with your expectations.



Cooperative Learning and Classroom-Management Structures and Routines

Zero Noise Signal

Purpose

While a cooperative learning classroom should have a healthy buzz, you certainly don't want noise to become a problem. The Zero Noise Signal is an easy way to quiet the class and focus students' attention on you. Use it whenever you have something the whole class ought to hear, when students need to bring the volume back down to acceptable levels, at the start or end of an activity, or when you want to refocus students who are off task.

Breaking It Down

To give the Zero Noise Signal:

- Stop talking, raise your hand in the air, and remain quiet as you wait for students to respond.
- When students see you give the signal, they should complete their sentences and then respond to the signal by raising their hands, turning their attention to you, and becoming silent.
- Keep your hand raised until all students have returned the signal and the room is quiet. Wait until students are alert and attentive before beginning to speak.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Do not speak when your own hand is in the air, no matter how tempting it may be. The only way for students to understand this technique is if you are a good model when you use it. If you absolutely must speak, lower your hand until you have finished talking.
- Do not move along in the lesson until all students are silent and attentive. This might take some work, especially early in the year, but with consistent practice, students will soon respond. Make it a game to see how quickly they can react. Challenge them to do better, for example by pitting their response times against those of another class. Award team cooperation points for a quick response.
- If the signal doesn't seem to be working, ask yourself, "Do I talk when my hand is in the air, or am I silent as a model for students? Do students know they can finish their sentences before raising their hands? Do I wait for all students' attention before going on?"
- Add a nonverbal signal to help capture students' attention. For example, flick the lights, or clap twice before you raise your hand. This helps auditory learners or students who have their backs to you.
- If noise continues to be a problem, work with students on developing a six-inch, a library, or an indoor voice. Include voice level as part of the criteria for team cooperation points. Praise teams for maintaining an appropriate volume, and give them one or two additional points when they do so.
- Have fun with the Zero Noise Signal. Periodically develop a new signal (for instance, touching your left earlobe), and share it with the class. Keep a running score of which team responds first to the signal, and let the team with the best score at the end of the week choose a class privilege, such as being first in line for lunch, as their reward.
- The Zero Noise Signal is a terrific schoolwide structure. Use it in all school environments, including in the lunchroom, on the playground, and at assemblies.

1-2-3 Move

Purpose

This simple technique helps maintain order when students have to move in the classroom or other areas of the school. By smoothing the transition between activities, it can save precious class time for instruction.

Breaking It Down

- Explain what you expect the students to do—line up by the door, move into expert groups, pick up materials, etc.
- Say, “One” (and hold up one finger) for students to gather their belongings.
- Say, “Two” (and hold up two fingers) for students to stand and push in their chairs.
- Say, “Three” (and hold up three fingers) for students to move.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Use the Zero Noise Signal to get students’ undivided attention before giving the first sign, and make sure students remain quiet as they complete each step.
- Don’t say “1-2-3” without pausing between each number. Allow several seconds for students to react.
- Use clear hand signals, and once your class has the idea, try giving silent cues only.
- Practice this technique consistently from the first day of school. Although initially it may seem cumbersome, with steady practice, it will soon become automatic—and a great energy saver.

Ask Three Before Me

Purpose

Routine questions such as “Where do we write our name?” and “What’s the date?” usually do not need a response directly from the teacher. The Ask Three Before Me strategy frees you to answer those questions that clearly require teacher input and to assist students in genuine need. It also helps students and teams take more responsibility for their own learning by reinforcing the idea that they can depend on someone other than the teacher for help.

Breaking It Down

- Before students begin any activity, make it clear that if they have questions, they need to ask three other people (teammates or students nearby) before coming to you.
- Firmly enforce the rule. Whenever a student asks you a routine question, your response should be “Did you ask three before me?” If the student has not consulted others, defer the question first to teammates or nearby students.
- If the student still has not received a satisfactory answer after asking three people for help, you should then offer assistance.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Consistency is key, especially early in the year. If you find that the strategy is not taking hold, make a conscious effort to respond to student questions by asking “Have you asked three before me?” Over time, this repetition will set and reinforce the standard.
- Initially, you might want to post the rule on the board as a reminder for students.
- Another way to establish Ask Three Before Me in your classroom is to make it a weekly team cooperation goal and to award team cooperation points whenever you notice teams using the strategy.

Toss It Back

Like the Ask Three Before Me strategy, Toss It Back reinforces the idea that students can depend on one another to find the answers to many of their questions. Toss higher-order questions back to students or teams by asking “What do you think? What do your teammates think?” After you toss it back, make sure to clarify any lingering misunderstandings or questions that students might have.

- Students should consult those closest to them, not their friends across the room. If volume is a problem, work with students on appropriate voice levels, for instance, by practicing indoor or six-inch voices instead of outdoor voices.
- As students gain experience working together, you can extend the strategy to higher-order thinking questions as well. The more you encourage students to consult their classmates first, the more you reinforce effective teamwork and problem-solving skills.
- Recognize, praise, and award points when students utilize the routine.

Chip In

Purpose

This simple technique keeps all students involved by giving every child the opportunity (and the responsibility) to contribute to team discussions. It is an effective way to nudge reluctant speakers to participate and to rein in students with the tendency to dominate.

Breaking It Down

- Prior to a team discussion, distribute a cup, or some other type of container, to each team, and give each student one or two counters—chips, centimeter cubes, game pieces, or other small objects.
- To begin the discussion, one student shares an idea or answer with the team and puts a counter into the team’s container. Then it is another student’s turn to speak and place a chip into the container.
- As each child speaks, other members of the team listen carefully. This continues until every team member has had a chance to participate in the discussion, or chip in.
- Students may pass if they have nothing to say at first, but they need to think of something to contribute the next time their turn comes around. Each student’s counter(s) must be used for this activity to end.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- If students have difficulty paying attention to one another’s contributions, make active listening the weekly Cooperative Challenge, and award team cooperation points whenever you catch teams listening well and responding to what one another has to say. All team members should be ready to ask a question or contribute to the discussion at any point.
- If teams are still having a hard time balancing the contributions of their shyest and most outgoing team members, work on 100% participation during the Cooperative Challenge, the Big Q, and team discussions. Give team cooperation points to teams in which all members are actively involved in the discussion.
- The point is not for students to feel trapped into talking, but to remind them of their responsibility as team members. If you have an exceptionally shy or reluctant student, do not get into a battle of wills over the need to chip in. Instead, consider ways to compromise and yet still bring the child into the discussion. You could, for example, initially give the student one less counter than others on the team receive, or you could make a free-pass certificate that the child can place in the container once a day in place of a counter. Over time, as the child gains confidence, remove these supports until the student is a fully contributing member of the team.

Round Table

If you like the Chip In technique, try using Round Table. It’s a way to have students brainstorm as a team.



Random Reporter

Purpose

Typically, some students desperately want to be called on to answer a question while others desperately don't. Random Reporter introduces the expectation that all students will be prepared to answer every question with the support and assistance of their team. At the same time, because you select students at random to respond to a question, it eliminates the need for raised hands and keeps you from inadvertently calling on the same students over and over again.

Breaking It Down

When you place students into teams, assign each student a number from 1–4 (or 1–5 for teams with five members). Write the number on a piece of masking tape, and stick the tape to each student's desk. Change the numbers only when you form new teams.

To use Random Reporter, follow these steps:

1. Ask a question.
2. Have students *think* about an answer for a few seconds.
3. Have students *discuss* their answers with the team for a few seconds.
4. Call on either the 1s, 2s, 3s, or 4s (or 5s) to *share* the team's answer with the class.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- For younger students, you can hand out colored craft sticks and call on students by color.
- Don't expect perfection from yourself or your students right off the bat! This technique will become automatic as the year progresses.
- Pacing is critical with Random Reporter. Are you allowing silent time for individual students to think before asking them to discuss with their teams? Are you allowing teams time to talk before asking them to share with the class? If not, make a conscious effort to count to 5 before moving to the next step.
- Do not call a number until it is time to share. Students are more likely to stay engaged in team discussion—and to help one another prepare an answer—if they do not know who will be asked to share the team's response. After all, it could be them!
- To assist visual learners, add hand signals to call attention to the different steps in this routine. For example, ask the question, point to your temple, and say, "Think." Then, after a suitable amount of time, give the signal for team discussion. Providing simultaneous visual and verbal cues helps students stay focused on their current task.
- If you find that you need help randomly selecting students, label wooden sticks or slips of paper with the numbers 1–4 (or 5), and put them into a bag or cup. Another option is to take the aces, 2s, 3s, and 4s (or 5s) out of a card deck. After allowing students time to think and discuss as a team, call a team name, and then pull a number from the bag.
- If you are working with students on active listening, ask them whether they agree or disagree with the previous student's answer and whether they have anything else to add. This is a subtle but firm reminder that they need to listen carefully to one another's responses.
- During the few seconds when teams are discussing the question and answer, encourage all team members to take part. Award team cooperation points to teams with 100% participation—for example, "Great job, Team Judo! I can see that everyone is involved in the discussion! Give yourselves 5 points."

Why is it important to ask the question first, let students think, and then allow them to talk to one another before you call a number?

Teachers typically ask whether they have to call students by number instead of by name. The answer is yes and no. Use numbers to select students at random—but when you're talking to the students, you may call them by their names. For example, "Now that you've had a chance to talk with your teammates, I want to hear from the 3s. John, you're a 3. What did your team come up with as an answer?"

- Use the team discussion time to take a quick informal assessment of students' learning, to note any points of confusion, or to offer feedback, encouragement, and clarification.
- Use cognitive-regulation signals during team discussion to highlight the cognitive processes that students should be using (i.e., focus, memory, stop and think).
- Students should focus on the discussion, not just sharing their perspectives. They should struggle to identify one common best answer and make sure that everyone knows it.

Time-Saving Tips:

- After students have had a chance to think and pair during Think-Pair-Share, use Random Reporter to randomly call on a student from one or two teams to share with the class.
- When having students jigsaw, assign them to expert groups using their numbers.
- Make celebrations fun and simple. Students do not need tangible rewards. Find easy, repeatable celebrations such as an extra Brain Game, dancing to music, extra drawing time, or a turn on the computer. There are many ways to celebrate, so keep it simple and repeatable.

Talking Stick

Purpose

Particularly for younger students, teamwork and good discussion can be challenging. Often quieter students do not get a chance to talk, and students may have difficulty taking turns to speak and really listening to the speaker. The talking stick is designed to help students improve team discussion by ensuring that each student has a turn, that the person who has the stick is the speaker, and that the rest of the team is listening.

Breaking It Down

- Give each team or partnership a talking stick or similar item.
- During team or partner discussion, students pass the stick around the team or to their partners. Only the person with the talking stick should be speaking; the rest of the team should be listening.
- Monitor to make sure that the stick is passed to every team member and that team members are using strong active-listening skills.
- Use Random Reporter to debrief team discussion. If you are using the talking sticks with partnerships, do not debrief every partnership; just select a few to respond.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- The talking stick should never be used for a whole-class discussion and passed around to every student. The talking stick should primarily be used for team or small-group discussions. Using it for a whole group slows the pace of instruction to glacial. Think-Pair-Share and selecting a few students to share responses is a better approach. It allows all students to participate but keeps the pace of instruction moving.
- If there are very shy students in the class, allow students to pass if they are uncomfortable speaking.
- Give team points for good active listening when teams use the talking stick.



Think-Pair-Share

Purpose

As with Random Reporter, this simple questioning technique keeps all students involved in class discussions and provides an opportunity for every child to share an answer to every question. It takes the fear out of class discussion by allowing students to think carefully about their answers and talk about them with a partner before they are called on to respond. For shy or tentative students, this can help put the emphasis back on learning instead of on simply surviving class. The technique was developed by Frank Lyman of the University of Maryland (1981).

Breaking It Down

To use Think-Pair-Share, follow these steps:

- Ask the question.
- Have students individually *think* about an answer for a few seconds.
- Allow students to *discuss* their answers with a partner for a few seconds.
- Finally, have students *share* in teams, or call on a few students to share their answers with the class.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- There is no magic amount of think time or pair time. In general, depending on the complexity of the question, allow students to think for 5 or 6 seconds and to pair for perhaps 10 seconds. You want to give them just enough time to think and spark some ideas in their partners, but not enough time to get off task.
- If you want students to share with the class, do not feel as though you must call on a representative from every team or all partnerships. After calling on one or two teams or partners, ask other teams to give a thumbs up if they had similar answers.
- Give a specific task when asking students to pair. For example, say, “Take 10 seconds to talk with your partner and come up with one answer to the question,” or “Talk with your partner for a few seconds and see if you can come up with two solutions to the problem.”
- When it comes time for students to share their responses (in partners, in teams, or as a class), anything doesn’t go. Students need to provide correct, well-reasoned, clearly explained answers. Use questioning to help students or teams flesh out their answers. Model the elements that make an answer stronger—phrasing the answer as a complete sentence, using words instead of gestures, supporting answers with evidence, and so forth.
- If students are not prepared to answer questions, ask yourself whether you are allowing silent time for individual students to think before having them pair with their partners. Are you allowing partners time to talk before asking them to share with the team or the class?
- Listen to partner and team discussions to see what kinds of responses the students are giving. This can provide valuable clues about how well students work together, how well they grasp the concepts, and what images they use to make those concepts stick in their minds. Not only does this information make a good informal assessment, but it might also prove useful the next time you teach the material.

Why is it important for students to think on their own for a few moments before allowing them to share with a partner?

- Make sure partners are of different academic levels. This allows students who are at a lower level (or who are very shy) to hear and practice a response from a higher-level Getting Along Together student, to become inspired to think of another response, and to gain the confidence to share their own answers.
- To help visual learners, add hand signals to call attention to the different steps in this routine. For example, ask the question, point to your temple, and say, “Think.” After a suitable amount of time, extend your right index and middle fingers together, and say, “Pair.” When partners are ready to talk with their teammates, touch the tips of both index and middle fingers together, and say, “Share.”
- To vary responses during share time, vary your questions. Encourage students to react to what others have said—to compare answers, add information, agree, disagree, or otherwise respond to the answers proposed by their classmates. Teachers call this Think-Pair-Share-Compare. Award team cooperation points for active listening.
- Do not allow students to shout out answers or raise their hands. If you want to make sharing more random, use numbered slips of paper, wooden craft sticks labeled with the numbers 1–4 (or 5), or the aces, 2s, 3s, and 4s from a deck of cards to call on students. (See Random Reporter.)
- Think-Pair-Share is a highly effective routine for questions that require students to exert their mental muscles, but not all questions merit such extended contemplation. For simpler queries, you might do better with thumbs up/thumbs down or by eliciting a quick response from one or two students and moving on.
- Sometimes repeating the question while students are thinking helps students stay on track.

Team Tally and Team Success! posters

Purpose

Everyone needs to celebrate success and periodically stop to acknowledge his or her accomplishments. The Team Tally and Team Success! posters are a visible, easy-to-use method that shows students how teamwork can lead to weekly team rewards. For students who are not yet intrinsically motivated, this is a critical connection that shows the value of good behavior and an unrelenting focus on mastering cognitive and social-emotional skills.

Breaking It Down

- Put the Team Tally and Team Success! posters in a part of the class where they are visible for all students to monitor. Write team names on the posters.
- Every day, tally each team’s points from the Big Q and the Cooperative Challenge and bonus points for team huddle and the team cooperation goals on the Team Tally sheet.
- Total the points at the end of the week before Class Council, and determine who is a good, great, or super team. Determine the highest score; all teams that are within 3 points are super teams. Teams that are within 3 points of the lowest super team are great teams, and teams that are within 3 points of the lowest great team score are good teams. Remember, team points need to serve you and your students. They are designed to reward practice and mastery of skills; therefore, if you need to make adjustments to this method of team scoring, do so thoughtfully so team points are challenging but realistic.
- Hold a brief ceremony during Class Council in which you award good, great, and super team stickers and acknowledge teams’ efforts over the past cycle.
- Write whether each team is a good, great, or super team on the Team Success! poster to keep track of improvement over time.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- To increase motivation, consider giving some additional form of recognition to super teams—something simple but meaningful and fun to your students. Let them be the first in line for lunch, allow them to bring in juice or a small snack, or offer some other classroom privilege that will resonate with your students.
- When awarding team stickers at Class Council, be sure to emphasize what contributed to these rewards: individual hard work and team cooperation.
- To increase motivation, make a bargain with your students: Promise them a popcorn party, a movie, a class held outside, extra recess time, or some other special activity if all teams are super teams for a month. This ups the ante. Now students are responsible not only for their own teams, but for other teams as well, increasing the positive peer pressure in your classroom.
- You can emphasize continuous learning in other subtle ways in your classroom—for instance, by remembering to give students a pat on the back when you notice improvement or steady effort, not just when they earn good grades. Remember to compare a child not with other students, but only with his or her own past performance.

Rewards

When considering ways to reward super teams for their achievements, think about what would be both meaningful to your students and easy for you. You should not spend money for prizes, although you might seek donations from businesses within the community. Banks and other companies might donate key chains, pens, or magnets. But students also appreciate such rewards as extra computer time. Be creative, ask students or other teachers for ideas, and use the following list to get started:

- A positive note or phone call home
- Team picture on teams-of-the-week bulletin board
- Bookmarks (created on the computer)
- Old trophies or medals (basketball, chess, etc.) to sit on desks for the week
- First-in-line coupon
- Sit on the couch or beanbag chair for the day
- Bring a CD to class to share at an appropriate time
- A pass to the media center or computer lab
- Take home art supplies
- Helper for the day
- Write on the chalkboard or wipe off the board
- Eat lunch with another class
- Super trophy for the week
- Help in the school office
- Free-hint-on-a-test coupon
- Extra Brain Game

Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down

Purpose

This quick method of polling keeps everyone involved in a lesson and lets you quickly assess student understanding or opinions.

Breaking It Down

- Ask a yes-or-no, agree-or-disagree type of question.
- Have students give a thumbs up to respond in the affirmative, a thumbs down for a negative, and a thumb sideways if they aren't sure.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

For simple questions or to assess class comfort level, you do not necessarily need to provide think time between the question and the students' responses. For other questions, however, you might want to allow students several moments to think about their answers before giving a thumbs up or thumbs down. Use hand signals to guide the class: Ask the question, then point to your temple, and say, "Think." After a suitable amount of time, ask the class to show their response.

How can thumbs up/thumbs down help you determine and address the needs of individual students?

Getting Along Together

2nd Edition

To succeed in school and life, students need to master reading, math, and other academic skills. Developing those skills requires that students *learn how to learn*, both independently and with others. Getting Along Together 2nd edition is a schoolwide program and curriculum that helps students build these skills and apply them both in and out of the classroom. It teaches students strategies to focus their thinking, manage their behavior, build positive social relationships, and understand and cope with their feelings—all in ways that support learning and life success.



The mission of the Success for All Foundation is to develop and disseminate research-proven educational programs to ensure that all students, from all backgrounds, achieve at the highest academic levels.

These programs were originally developed at Johns Hopkins University.