

# SEL COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

DEEPENING RELATIONSHIPS

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## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Children in elementary grades are constantly learning new skills that are necessary to connect with others and build relationships. These skills, such as active listening, understanding verbal and nonverbal language, and demonstrating kindness, must be taught and modeled intentionally. A great way to teach and reinforce these skills is through role playing of real situations that children must navigate. Role-playing activities can be done at home, at school, and in after-school or community programs. Click [here](#) to learn more about using role-playing as an SEL teaching tool (Edutopia).

## MIDDLE SCHOOL

In their middle school years, children begin to explore and understand the many different types of relationships in their lives.

They apply a variety of social and emotional skills when interacting with friends and peers, teachers, coaches, family members, community members, etc. This is also a critical time in learning how to ask for help and lend a hand to others when able.

This [resource](#) offers suggestions for teaching children how to ask for and give help as a way to deepen the many different relationships that they have with others.

## HIGH SCHOOL

Teens in high school must navigate ways to balance increasing independence with increasing responsibilities. This often means initiating and maintaining positive relationships with friends and adults who will help them achieve their goals. One way to deepen relationships is through intentional conversations and asking questions to better understand others. Try using these Frameworks [Conversation Cards](#) for thought-provoking questions grounded in the five core competencies of SEL.

## DEEPENING RELATIONSHIPS

by Saima Qadree

Program Development Officer

In these unprecedented times, our children are in critical need of being surrounded by meaningful and positive relationships. Relationships are an integral part of social and emotional learning (SEL). The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning ([CASEL](#)) identifies relationship skills as a core SEL competency and defines this as the ability to maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. Relationship skills include clear communication, active listening, cooperation, resisting social pressure, navigating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed.

Relationships are especially important for children who have faced trauma so that they can feel safe again. If children have NOT faced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), relationships are like insurance—so that when children *do* inevitably face challenges, they feel safe and supported, and they know where to go for help and encouragement.

This month's newsletter will provide strategies, research, and resources to support the deepening and strengthening of relationships.



## RELATIONAL MINDFULNESS STRATEGIES

by Charese Cook  
SEL Program Specialist

We all lead busy lives, so it can sometimes be difficult to be fully present in our relationships. Enter: the power of mindfulness. Try these tips to take your relationships to the next level.

- 1. Set Your Intention on Paying Attention:** Before participating in a conversation, remind yourself to be present and actively engage in dialogue. Purposefully setting down your cell phone, closing your laptop, and making eye contact can set you up for success.
- 2. Mindful Pause During Conversation:** Allow yourself to absorb and reflect on your conversation by taking mindful pauses before, during, and after discussions. Taking a deep breath or counting to 10 can help you connect.
- 3. Listen Deeply:** Use mindfulness to listen to others by letting each moment unfold in front of you, even if you are short on time.
- 4. Face Challenges Head On:** Invite and welcome uncomfortable feelings or emotions that may arise in difficult conversations. Learning to find comfort in our discomfort can be challenging but empowering.
- 5. Take Responsibility:** Instead of judging or blaming others, look within yourself to find compassion and understanding. This allows us to take responsibility for our thoughts and actions. Speak your truth: share your gift of honesty even when it's difficult, and listen to your inner guide.
- 6. Compassionate Action:** Listen to your heart and reflect on your insights to take action to support others.

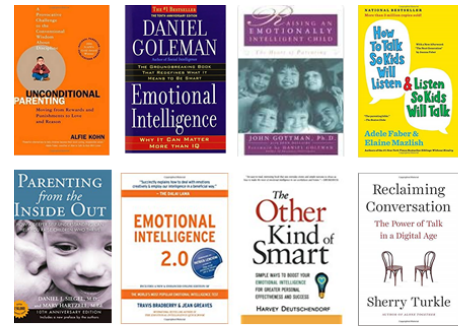
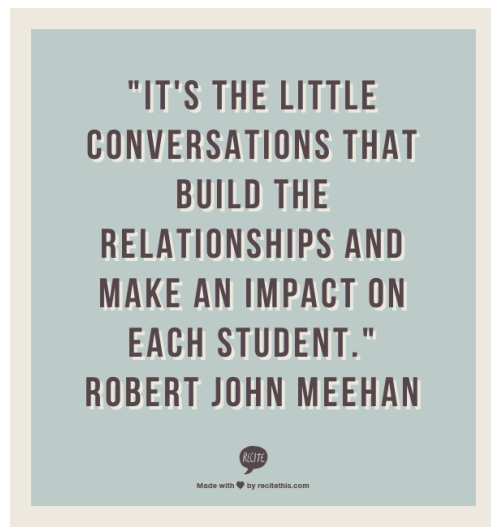
## A CO-REGULATION STRATEGY TO DEEPEN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS

by Siomara Bridges-Mata  
Community Programs Specialist

A powerful way to deepen your relationship with another person and build trust is to show your support during an emotional time. Acknowledging someone else's pain before offering advice, a correction, or a positive thought lets them know that you want to hear them, that you care, and that their feelings matter.

The next time a student or friend is having an uncomfortable, emotional moment, before stepping in to share what you think, try SEL expert R. Keeth Matheny's 3-step process to support them and help regulate the emotion:

- 1. Connect:** Honor their voice first. Let them express how they feel, and truly listen.
- 2. Relate:** Don't say you know exactly how they feel, but find a way to relate what they've expressed to how you may have felt before.
- 3. Help Regulate:** Ask how you can help, or offer your support to solve the problem together.



## RESOURCES AND READINGS

by Shea Quraishi  
Chief Academic Officer


Relationships are foundational to a child's success personally, socially, academically, and one day professionally and as a thoughtful citizen. We know this from decades of research, yet it also makes sense intuitively—when we feel supported and know that we have a safe place to land when challenges arise, we are more likely to be motivated, to take risks, to push ourselves, and to grow.

Yet, as many as 40 percent of kids do not feel that they have a supportive relationship in their lives. This is a startling statistic given the foundational importance of relationships for all learning and for lifelong success.


If we know that relationships matter, how do we make them a priority? What does this look like at home, at school and in youth-serving programs?

[This report](#) from Search Institute outlines five key steps and gives helpful examples for parents/guardians, educators, and youth program leaders for investing in relationships in ways that will help children learn, grow, and thrive.

## UPCOMING EVENTS



**2020 Head & Heart Match Challenge**  
**DONATE TODAY!**  
Now through September 30, 2020



**Frameworks Online Art Auction**  
**No More 'Masking' Your Feelings**  
**To bid or submit your artwork, click here!**  
Now through October 31, 2020

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