

# You Can't Do Bloom Until You've Done Maslow

Connecting Social-Emotional Learning and Literacy Instruction



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## Big Ideas

- *Understand* how trauma impacts learning.
- *Learn* basic principles of trauma informed instruction.
- *Learn* strategies for creating a classroom climate that can reinforce a sense of belonging, relationships, and kindness, and can begin to rewire a brain that has been wounded by trauma, allowing it to learn.
- *Explore* connections between literacy instruction and deepening social-emotional learning.

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## Greetings



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Create a Positive Environment Smile and Relax with a Smile Meditation



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## Dedicating our Study Time Together

- Think about one of your students, now or in the past
- Think about what made them vulnerable
  - Was it their home life?
  - Was it struggles with learning in the classroom?
  - Was it friendship issues?
  - Was it a combination?
- Write down the name of that student and words that come to mind
- Turn to your neighbor and take a minute to discuss this student

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## A Letter from a Foster Child

Things I want in my family:

- I want food and water.
- Don't hit on me.
- A house with running water and lights. I want love.
- Mom and dad don't fight.
- I want no drugs.
- Don't kill my pets.
- Help with school.
- Nice clean clothes.
- No lice. No bug in house.
- Clean house.
- Clean bed with covers.
- Don't sell my toys. Treated fair.
- Don't get drunk. TV in house.
- Let me keep my games. School stuff. Nice shoes. My own comb.
- Soap. Nice house and sofa. K and heater. Coat. Toothbrush.

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Put on your Own Oxygen Mask First

The work is hard but so rewarding!



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**There is no such thing  
as a “bad kid” —just  
angry, hurt, tired, scared,  
confused, impulsive ones  
expressing their feelings  
and needs the only way  
they know how. We owe  
it to every single one  
of them to always  
remember that.**

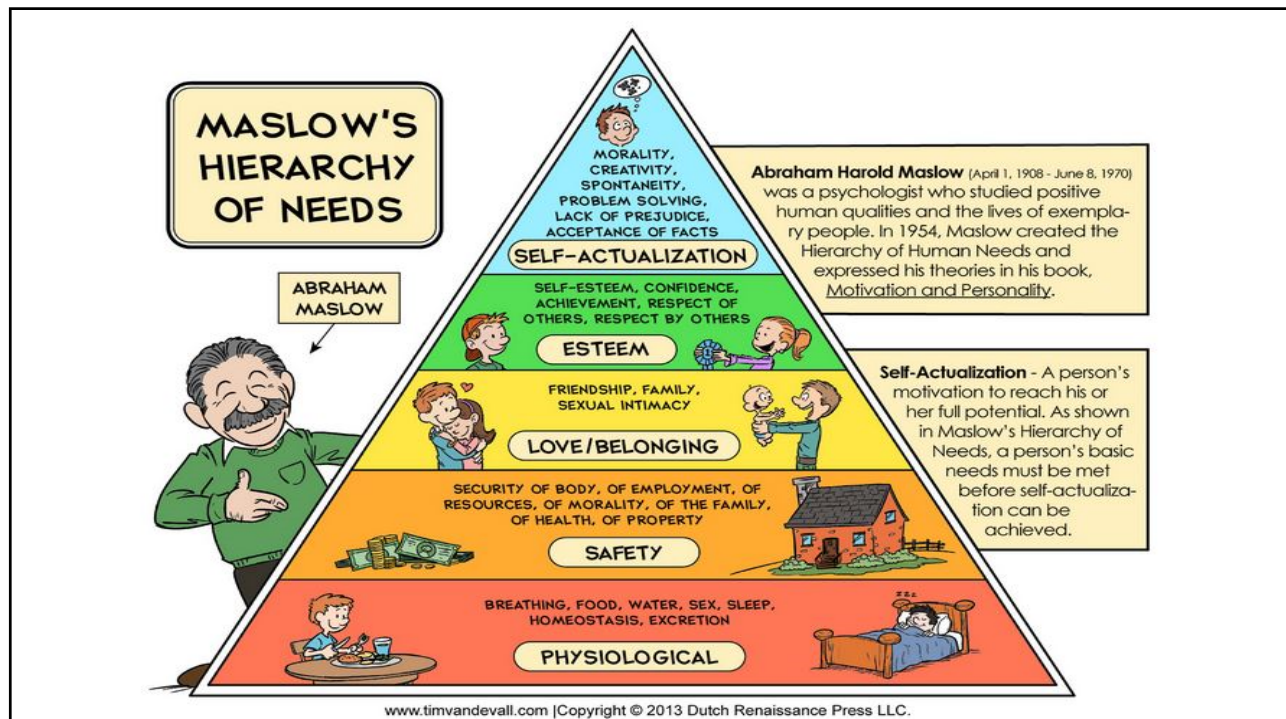
Dr. Jessica Stephens

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## While we Learn to Teach Children to Read Well, What is Left to Consider for Their School Success?

- Social emotional learning
- Self-regulation
- Executive function development in our children
- The language connection that is overarching for all learning
- Trauma informed instruction

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## Traumatic Events that Can Have Negative, Lasting Effects on Health and Well-being Include:

- Parental substance abuse
- Witnessing violence
- Food insecurity
- Racism and bullying
- Mental illness in family
- Chronic poverty
- Physical, sexual, and emotional abuse
- Physical and emotional neglect
- Divorce
- Domestic violence
- Parental incarceration
- Parental death

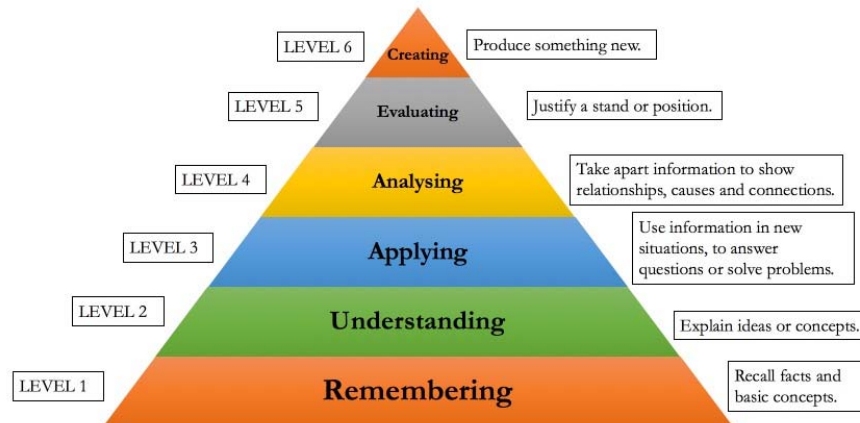
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## Thinking about your Experience

- Turn to your neighbor and share your experiences with students who may come to school with gaps in their ability to learn that may be due to needs on Maslow's Hierarchy that have not been met.
- Do you have some children in your class or school today who may have problems learning because of other experiences?

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## Recalling Bloom's Taxonomy: A Worthy Goal for Learning



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## Trauma Informed Teaching

- What do we need to know?
- Early intervention is critical
- Some of the greatest impacts appear to be on executive function, self-regulation, attention and social emotional weaknesses. These are all mediated by language and if the child's language exposure has been limited their ability to mediate these processes is also weakened.
- ***If we don't also address these concepts as we address achievement, our instruction will not have the impact we need it to have for student success at school.***

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## Neural Pathways Respond to Chronic Stress



- Repeated/chronic activation of stress hormones bypass the thinking part of brain and activate the survival part of brain (fight, flight, or freeze).
- This creates a dominance in these neural pathways and interrupts the normal development, impairing complex thought and novel learning.
- ***The brain develops differently in children who have experienced trauma.***

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## Trauma and Learning

- In addition to impacting behavior, **trauma can wreak havoc on a student's ability to learn.** Scientists have found that children who have been subjected repeatedly to trauma suffer from other social, psychological, cognitive, and biological issues, including difficulty regulating their emotions, paying attention, and forming good relationships—all of which make it very difficult for a child to succeed in school. \*

\* How to Help a Traumatized Child in the Classroom; Dorado, J and Zakrzewski, V The Greater Good Magazine, October 23, 2013

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## Learning about Social-emotional Development (SEL):

- Healthy social-emotional development allows children to:
  - understand and manage emotions
  - set and achieve positive goals
  - establish and maintain positive relationships
  - feel and demonstrate empathy for others
  - make responsible decisions

*Children who are **not** able to control their emotions at four years of age are unlikely to be capable of following instructions or directions at six years of age and, in middle and high school, may never become reflective learners. (Bodrova & Leong, 2005)*

(Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), 2017)

<https://casel.org/>

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## Achievement Gap Related to Trauma

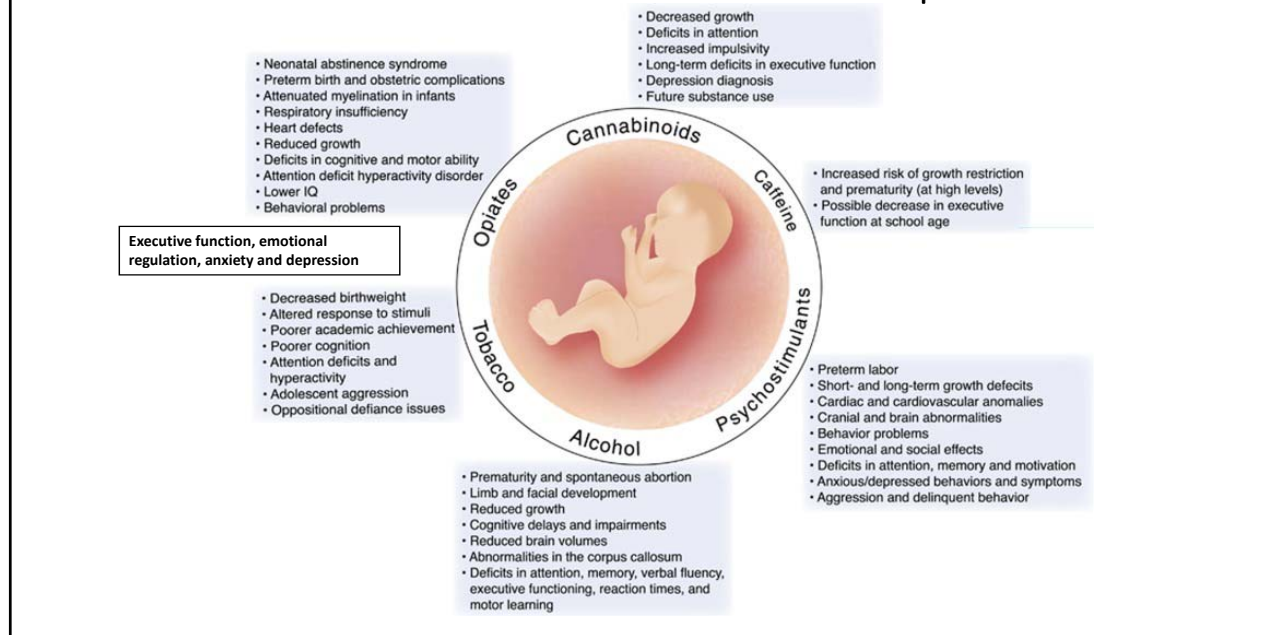


- Stress sensitivity developed by trauma leaves children without access to their cortex where learning takes place.
- Novelty (which is the center of all learning) is seen as dangerous and makes them not able to learn the way a child whose neuro-biological development is typical and is “open for business” when it comes to learning.

Dr. Bruce Perry - Early Brain Development: Reducing the Effects of Trauma,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hp6fZrzgiHg>

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## How Does the Trauma of Neonatal Addiction Impact Children?



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## Early Executive Function Development

- The ability to recognize a growing array of feelings in one's self and others
- The ability to identify solutions to simple problems
- With support, the ability to use strategies like deep breaths and self-talk to calm down – mindfulness strategies
- The ability to focus attention and persist on difficult tasks for increased lengths of time
- The ability to develop beginning perspective-taking and early empathy

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## What Do we Mean by Self-Regulation

- Self Regulation is an internal mechanism that underlies intentional and thoughtful behavior.
  - It helps us to control impulses. This helps us start and stop activities in a manner that is expected in school.
  - It helps delay gratification and to control impulses long enough to think about the consequences of one's actions or to consider other choices.
  - The development of self-regulation skills is related not only to social interactions but also to academic persistence and achievement.

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## Our Children are Vulnerable



- Studies demonstrate that children with limited social competence are at risk for a variety of psychological and adjustment-related problems.
- These children are more likely to develop juvenile delinquency, drop out of school, and experience mental health problems in adulthood, whereas children who are more socially competent have better academic achievement and interpersonal adjustment in later life.
- **Social competence and problem solving skills are attributes present in resilient children. Just as we need to build academic skills for children who do not have them, it is also appropriate for us to build skills that lead to resilience for children who have a deficit in that area.**

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## Intentional Teaching

- Intentional teaching of the pro-social skills children need in a direct and systematic manner, with opportunities for practice and reinforcement can reduce the need for a more reactionary approaches of responding to negative behavior.
- Comprehensive social skills support relies heavily on teachers' modeling of reinforcement, empathy and problem solving.

Paulson, Lucy Hart, Van den Pol, R; Good Talking Words; VoyagerSopris Learning, 1998

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## How Can Educators Respond?

- Trauma-Sensitive Schools are ones where the educators:
  - realize the [impact of adverse childhood experiences](#) on neurobiological development and attachment
  - recognize the [impact trauma has on learning and behavior](#)
  - respond by [building resilience and avoiding re-traumatization](#)
- Perry & Daniels, 2016; SAMSHA, 2015)
- Implementing Trauma—Informed Practices in the School Setting: A Pilot Study

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## Teachers Reframe the Way in Which they Think About Vulnerable Students:

- Instead of viewing a misbehaving child as a bad kid or a mean or oppositional kid - teachers can see them as a frightened child, whose behavior is the result of chronic exposure to traumatic events beyond his or her control.



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## Changing the Question and Doing More...

It can make a big difference when:

- Adults adaptively change attitudes and behaviors, changing the question from:
  - **“What’s wrong with him? To What happened to him?”**
- Adults share information about neuroscience.
- We change adult attitudes and behavior to ensure that schools become safer environments.
- We analyze which aspects of our schools are already appropriate to support students and which parts of the structures need to be adjusted and aligned at the school, district and state level.
- PD, practice, coaching and reflection with **all** staff in trauma-informed practices.
- Student engagement in school and classroom – school becomes a nurturing, stable and engaging environment.

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## Get to Know CASEL

- Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning
  - **CASEL's mission is to help make evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) an integral part of education from preschool through high school.**



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## What Teachers Think

- **The Missing Piece:** 93% of teachers believe that the inclusion of social, emotional learning in schools is very important, based on a national teacher survey on how social and emotional learning can empower children and transform schools.
- The central message of this report is that teachers across America understand that social and emotional learning (SEL) is critical to student success in school, work, and life.

<https://casel.org/>; APA Citation: Civic Enterprises., Bridgeland, J., Bruce, M., & Hariharan

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## CASEL Meta-Analysis

- The positive impact of these programs on academic outcomes:
  - Improved school grades
  - Improved standardized achievement test scores

Thinking about SEL and rigor:

Although some educators argue against implementing this type of holistic programming because it takes valuable time away from core academic material, **findings suggest that SEL programming not only does not detract from academic performance, but actually increases students' performance on standardized tests and grades.**

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## CASEL Meta-analysis

SEL programming yielded an average *gain on achievement test scores of 11 to 17 percentile points.*

Students in SEL programs demonstrated improvement in multiple areas of their personal, social, and academic lives. SEL programs fostered positive effects on:

- Attitudes towards self, school, and others
- Social behaviors; conduct problems; stress
- Academic performance.

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## Creating a Trauma Sensitive School

- Creating a Trauma Sensitive School is about creating a culture that prioritizes safety, trust, choice, and collaboration.
- Everyone (e.g., teachers, administrators, support staff, paraprofessionals, cafeteria staff, bus drivers, etc.) learns about the prevalence and impact of trauma in the lives of children and families.



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## Poverty of Relationships

- Children living in poverty and with chaos or insecurity often have relational poverty and social isolation.
- We cannot do much about the past experiences a child has had, but we can do something about the present experiences of connection and relationship.

- Dr Bruce Perry - Early Brain Development: Reducing the Effects of Trauma, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hp6fZrzgiHg>

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## Seven Words to Change a Life

- “I love having you in my class.”
  - Educator, Brian Mendler



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## Language mediates self-regulation and social-emotional development:

- The relationship between social-emotional development and language and literacy development are impossible to separate.
  - teaching is best when it integrates social-emotional, cognitive, language, and literacy development.



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## Resiliency Touch Points

- Brief personal encounters and connections that occur throughout the day with school personnel
  - From 30 seconds to five minutes in length
  - “These **brief intentional minutes**, when consistently shared by a variety of ‘caring adults’ can lessen the feelings of despair and hopelessness of students who are bringing their significant adversity and trauma into our schools.”
- 
- Perry & Daniels, 2016; SAMSHA, 2015
  - Implementing Trauma—Informed Practices in the School Setting: A Pilot Study;

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## Triggers Are Not Just on Guns

- Repeated trauma leads children into a fear response, never giving them time to recover from the first trauma. After frequent triggering due to traumatic experiences in other circumstances, triggering can begin to happen out of context. Something as innocent as a teacher raising her voice in class can lead a student to react disproportionately.

[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/the\\_silent\\_epidemic\\_in\\_our\\_classrooms](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/the_silent_epidemic_in_our_classrooms) 3/5  
10/30/2018 How to Help a Traumatized Child in the Classroom

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## What Might it Look Like When a Fear Trigger is Activated?

- Get a “deer in the headlights look”
- Turn red and clench fists
- Breath more rapidly
- Begin moving as he gets ready to run or react
- Tear up or actually begin crying
- **The teacher who responds in a calm way, offering something that the child can do as an alternative and showing that she cares may diffuse the situation and build on their trusting relationship.**

[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/the\\_silent\\_epidemic\\_in\\_our\\_classrooms\\_3/5](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/the_silent_epidemic_in_our_classrooms_3/5)  
10/30/2018 How to Help a Traumatized Child in the Classroom

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## Transitions Can be Triggers

- Create calm, predictable transitions. Transitions between activities can easily trigger a student into survival mode. That feeling of “uh oh, what’s going to happen next”
- This can be associated with a situation at home where a child’s happy, then a calm and loving daddy can, without warning, turn into a monster after he’s had too much to drink.

[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/the\\_silent\\_epidemic\\_in\\_our\\_classrooms\\_3/5](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/the_silent_epidemic_in_our_classrooms_3/5)  
10/30/2018 How to Help a Traumatized Child in the Classroom

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## Ways of Making Transitions Safer

- Some teachers will play music or ring a meditation bell to signal it's time to transition.
- The important thing is to ***build a routine around transitions so that children know what the transition is going to look like and what they will be doing next.***

[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/the\\_silent\\_epidemic\\_in\\_our\\_classrooms](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/the_silent_epidemic_in_our_classrooms) 3/5  
10/30/2018 How to Help a Traumatized Child in the Classroom

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## Creating Safe Transitions

- Have you had students who have difficulty with transitions?
- Turn to a neighbor and share what you do already or what you might do in the future to create safer transitions for those students?



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## Make Space and Time for Comfort and Kindness in your Classroom

- The 30 Second Conversation
- Random Words of Kindness
- The Compliment Box
- Belly Buddies
- Smile Meditation
- Let's Have Tea
- Mirror Mirror on the Wall
- Bibliotherapy: Use Books Related to Social Emotional Skills
- Emotional Word Visual Dictionary
- Lunch Bunch
- Nicknames are Nice Names

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## Literacy as a Healing Tool

- How can literacy heal?



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## What Makes a Resiliency Touch Point?

- Connection with people the student trusts, who see and notice their strengths, interests, passions, and challenges.
  - **Listening** – to the student to learn about his life
  - **Questioning** – asking about how things are going, his interests, challenges etc.
  - **Observing** – something new about the student (hair, sneakers, work, smile)

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## The 30 Second Conversation/Connection

Make time for intentional and authentic conversation and connection



Dodson, J. Fifty Nifty Speaking and Listening Activities, Voyager Sopris, 2011

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## Deep Reading

- Deep Reading involves:
  - Applying background knowledge
  - Analogical thinking
  - Making inferences
  - Deduction and Induction
  - Perspective Taking
  - Empathy
  - Critical thinking
  - Insight and Reflection

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## Our Moral Laboratory

- Empathy and Perspective Taking are our moral laboratory
  - When we teach students to read automatically, we free them up to read deeply and ultimately reach the level of reflection that allows for empathy and perspective taking.
  - These qualities transform books into tools for healing ourselves and the world.
  - Reading becomes an act of love and peace.

Maryanne Wolf

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## Random Words of Kindness: Affirmations!



- Have you ever worked for a principal or other boss who left you positive notes, thanked you for your work, and showed his or her appreciation on a regular basis?
  - On the other hand, have you ever worked for someone who didn't show their appreciation—even if they cared?
  - If you think about how those situations felt different, you can assume it feels the same for children.
  - Giving positive affirmations to students can have a powerful impact and one that is often missing anywhere else in their lives.
- Dodson, J. Fifty Nifty Speaking and Listening Activities, Voyager Sopris, 2011

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## The Compliment Box

Write compliments

- Teacher to student
- Student to teacher
- Student to student
- Parent to child



Create a compliment box and regularly revisit and read them

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## Belly Buddies: Mindfulness through connection and breath!

Mindfulness through connection and breath!



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## Trauma Sensitive Mindfulness

If you use mindfulness in your classroom, you might consider using the following adaptations created by the UCSF HEARTS program and Mindful Schools:

- Tell students that, if they wish, they can close their eyes at the beginning of the practice. Otherwise, they should look at a spot in front of them so that no one feels stared at.
- Instead of focusing on how the body feels, have students focus on a ball or other object they're holding in their hands—what it feels like and looks like in their palm.
- Focus on the sounds in the room or of cars passing outside the classroom—something external to the body.

By breaking mindfulness practice down into these elemental components, the child is more likely to have a successful experience—and thus be more willing to practice in the future.

<http://hearts.ucsf.edu/>

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## Smile Meditation



It only takes 30 seconds to calm children down—close your eyes, breathe, and smile!

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## Let's Have Tea

When two students finish their work they may go to a small table and have a cup of 'tea' together. They can talk quietly or read a book while having 'tea.'



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## Super Hero Sentences

- Kindness matters as much as academics. Combine them in this fun activity.
- Create a kindness superhero
- Students are asked to create sentences about a classmate that relates to friendship, cooperation, playing together, working together etc.
- All students repeat sentences orally.
- Students then write about the Super Hero. This can be guided and modeled by the teacher, as needed.

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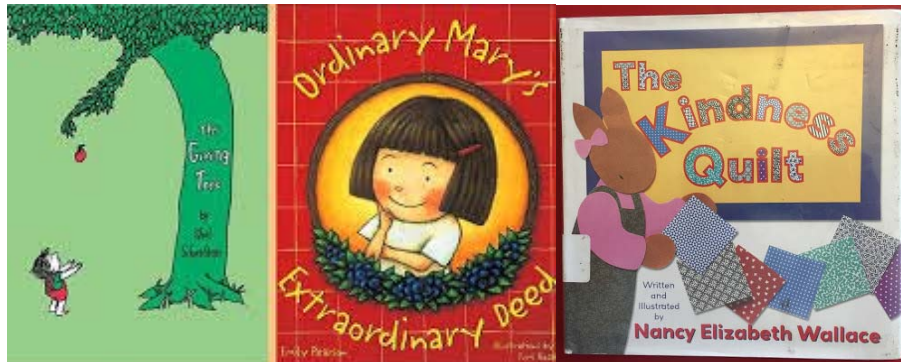
## Kindness Superhero Award



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## The Highest Level of Response to Reading is Empathy

- Read Alouds:



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## Bibliotherapy: Teach Values and Compassion through Books and Stories

*Ana Dodson—A Young Hero with a Heart*

- Read the book
- Discuss the possibility of a young person changing the world
- Write to the author
- How do you want to change the world?
- How can you change your world?



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## Bibliotherapy Oral Responses



- Words from the Heart:
  - Talk about it using a heart as a touch stone. Students talk to a buddy about their response to a structured question related to the reading.
  - The reading is about friendship – This can be done with more or less scaffolding
    - Teacher models brainstorming on the board in response to the following questions
    - What do you think are some qualities of a good friend?
    - Students choose a buddy and discuss what they think are the qualities of a good friend.

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## Bibliotherapy Written Response

- Create a class poster – “Scribblegram” with friendship words on it.



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## Bibliotherapy Write It Up:

- A good friend is a person who...



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## Caring Relationships Can Take Many Forms



Deborah Linder, V09, SK16, co-director of the Tufts Institute for Human-Animal Interaction,

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## Mirror, Mirror On the Wall

- Place mirrors up around your class and school featuring positive messages.
- YOU are welcome here! YOU are brave! YOU are a good friend!



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## The Class Greeter!

- Choose one child each day to stand outside your classroom and greet the children as they come in.
- Watch this video:



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## Give Children Relationship and a Sense of Belonging



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## Fifth Grade Relationship Building Through Greetings



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## The Power of Relationships

- Lack of connection and relationship changes the brains of young children. Research clearly points to the power of relationships and attachment to help students create a new patterned memory template that embraces a safe and predictable connection, so that attachments begin to grow, spreading the seeds of resiliency.
  - These new attachments can change patterns of being shut down and disengaged, negatively challenging attempts at connection to patterns of belonging and valuing connection as one feels valued.
- 
- Perry & Daniels, 2016; SAMSHA, 2015)
  - Implementing Trauma—Informed Practices in the School Setting: A Pilot Study

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## Resiliency Can Be Built and Wounds Can Be Healed

- Create a safe climate at school that gives students a sense of belonging
- Create a climate of kindness and empathy
- Use alternative discipline that doesn't trigger old responses – school and community service
- Teach self regulation skills directly within a safe setting
- Use language to mediate self-regulation and social skill development
- Use opportunities for sensory learning to build new pathways – music, art, dance.

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## A Change in Language and in Mindset Can Change A Life

- “What’s wrong with him?” to “What happened to him?”
- We cannot always change the parent and home environment but we can change the school environment!



Merck, Amanda; mSalud America! Community Health Program University of Texas Health San Antonio

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## Repeated Experiences Create Wiring in the Brain

- Just as adverse experiences create wiring that is maladaptive to learning, positive, safe and nurturing experiences at school can begin to create the wiring that is adaptive to learning and a fuller and happier life.



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## Caring Matters



- *Students don't care about how much you know, until they know how much you care!*
- Share your thoughts on this idea with your neighbor.



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## Advice from Maya Angelou

I've learned that people  
will forget what you  
said, people will forget  
what you did, but  
people will never forget  
how you made them  
feel.

Maya Angelou



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## Someone is Waiting – You Can be the One!

Students come to school for a person and a sense of belonging and connection. They do not come to school for a program alone. **Be the ONE!**

