

Cultivating a Positive Learning Environment

No matter if you teach elementary, middle, or high school-aged youth, here are two SEL focused strategies to help create a classroom community.

DAILY FEELINGS CHECK-IN

Commit to a daily feelings check-in at the start of each program day. This is a great way to get a temperature check of where the youth are, emotionally when they come to your program. Self-awareness is one of the SEL core competencies and it starts with youth being able to identify or name how they feel.

From a simple thumbs up, sideways, or down type check-in to a QR code they can scan to check-in, the possibilities are endless.

Benefits of a daily feelings check-in include that it builds relationships by letting youth know we care, helps learners build self-awareness, naming emotions can help us cope with those feelings, it is a proactive problem-solving tool, check-ins normalize talking about emotions and can bring calm and mindfulness to the day.

CLASSROOM JOBS

Provide classroom jobs that rotate out every week or month. Not only does this alleviate some of the work for you, but it also allows your classroom to become a team of people working together. It also fosters a sense of community, gives students ownership and purpose.

Common classroom jobs include Line Leader, Caboose, Table Cleaner, and Supply Manager. By simply changing the names, you can adjust these jobs to fit secondary youth as well. Example: Caboose > Line Manager. You can also try jobs that offer more leadership opportunities such as Timekeeper, Board Cleaner, Staple/Hole Puncher, Room Maintenance, etc.

Consider jobs that promote kindness and responsibility such as, Kindness Catcher, Greeter, Encourager, Positivity Spreader, etc.