

APRIL

The Power to Choose

- Making Choices
 - Consequences
 - Fairness
-

Learning about making good choices, consequences of our actions, and fairness are lifelong skills and essential character traits. Our students are challenged, stressed, and bullied more than ever before. To help them thrive in life they deserve to be taught how to be responsible for their own actions and to use their power to make the right choices.

SAFE & CARING WORDS

Choose Fair
Truth Help
Fun

MONTHLY OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- learn how to make good choices
- learn what it means to be responsible for their own actions
- practice treating people with fairness and respect

TEACHING TIPS

- The key sources of anger in children are stress, frustration, feeling rejected, and isolation.
- Anger is a normal human emotion. Children should not feel bad about being angry, but help them understand that it is not right to hurt others with words or actions when they are angry.
- Teach students how to manage anger and channel its energy in useful and productive ways.
- Children need to learn they have the power to choose to respond to conflict in constructive ways.
- Violence is a learned behavior. With practice and positive reinforcement, students can learn to manage their anger and make good choices.

APRIL INTEGRATED ACTIVITIES

In addition to the specific lesson plans for this month, you can use these optional ideas to integrate and extend the Safe & Caring themes into daily routines and across the curricular areas.

LITERATURE

- Read *The Best Teacher in the World* by Bernice Chardiet and Grace Maccarone. This is a fun story about a little girl who gets lost as she tries to deliver a note for her teacher.
- Read *Kate and the Beanstalk* by Mary Pope Osborne. This clever twist on a classic fairy tale stars a smart girl who makes all the right choices as she finds a way to outsmart the giant and keep the treasure.
- Read *My Big Lie* by Bill Cosby. Little Bill gets in big trouble when he tells a fib to explain why he has come home late for dinner.
- Read *The Greatest Treasure* by Demi. Pang, a rich man, spends all his time counting his money, neglecting his wife and five sons. Meanwhile Li, who is poor, often plays his flute while his wife and five daughters dance.

ART

- Read *The Potter Giselle* by Thomas Aarrestad. King Orville the Great orders Giselle the potter to make him a magnificent pot. His brother, King Ludlow the Grand, insists that she make an even bigger pot for him.

Creative activity: Have children use polymer clay to make their own creations that they can exchange with a friend or take home as a gift to their families. Option: Visit a nursing home where the elders can enjoy hearing the above story and receiving the gifts from the children.

MATH

- Read *The Doorbell Rang* by Pat Hutchins. Victoria and Sam are sitting down to a plateful of Ma's cookies when the doorbell rings; two of their friends arrive to share the feast. The doorbell rings again and again and each time the number of cookies per person dwindles until at last there is only one cookie per person and . . . the doorbell rings again! The book is a mini-lesson in short division, but the arithmetic is so subtly incorporated into the story the children will not even know.

MUSIC

- Listen to the song "Everybody Wants to Find a Friend" from *Ready to Rock Kids, Volume 1* by Dr. Mac & Friends. Discuss the lyrics, which are included in the activity book, or do the related activities.

Safe & Caring Word Find and Vocabulary

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- be introduced to the idea of being fair by treating others with respect
- learn the concept of making good choices to help them get along

MATERIALS NEEDED

The book *Play Fair, Have Fun: A Book About Making Good Choices* by Tisha Hamilton, copies of "Safe & Caring Words" (page 127), puppets, and pencils

LESSON PLAN

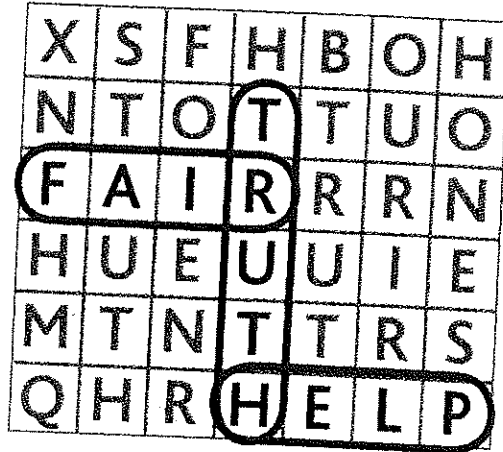
CIRCLE TIME Introduce and define the new vocabulary words. Explain that they make lots of choices that they may not normally think of as choices, such as choosing to tell the truth, choosing to be fair, choosing to help others, and even choosing to have fun. Remind them that every day they will have a chance to get a caring heart when they make a positive choice.

STORY TIME Read *Play Fair, Have Fun: A Book About Making Good Choices*. This colorful book looks at simple, everyday situations that show the importance of making good choices and doing the right thing. Using the flaps on the pages is a fun and interactive way for children to discover options to problems.

SHARING TIME Use the book as a guide to discuss different situations in which kids need to play fair. Examples include going to a birthday party and sharing treats, toys, and time with friends; getting along on the playground by taking turns on the monkey bars and other equipment; being included in a game; and learning to share when two or more kids want the same thing at the same time. Remind children that they can choose to do the right thing, which will help them get along with their friends, family, and others.

PRACTICE TIME Use puppets to demonstrate fairness and unfairness. Use real-life situations, such as playing by the rules, taking turns, sharing, and helping a friend with cleanup. With help from the children, draw pictures or cut pictures from magazines that show people being fair or getting along. Write new words on the pictures and add them to your word wall.

Do the "Safe & Caring Words" activity sheet. Depending on your group's age, have children work in pairs to help each other or make a transparency and do it on the overhead as a group activity. Discuss what the words mean after completing the page.



CLOSURE Discuss the different ways we can choose to be fair with people around us. Be clear about your expectation that in your classroom everyone will be treated with respect and kindness.

Good Choices

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Students will:

- learn how many good or bad choices they make during the week and the consequences of those choices

MATERIALS NEEDED

The book *Julius' Candy Corn* by Kevin Henkes, copies of the "Making Good Choices" activity sheet (page 128), and pencils

LESSON PLAN

CIRCLE TIME Ask students to think about the kind of choices they make every day. They will most likely suggest choices like what to wear, what to have for breakfast, and who to play with. As the discussion progresses, lead them to think about choices such as, Do you choose to be a good helper? ... be a good listener? ... share with friends?

STORY TIME Read *Julius' Candy Corn*. A young boy learns the importance of listening when the people who care about him ask him to follow the rules.

Optional story for shared reading: *26 Big Things Small Hands Do* by Coleen Paratore. From A to Z, a number of ways are presented in which children help every day—using their hands to feed fish, make music, plant gardens, recycle bottles, and more.

SHARING TIME What did Julius's mom ask him to do? Did he follow his mom's rule? How did his mom feel? What did she say when she found out what Julius had done? Did Julius make a good or a bad choice?

PRACTICE TIME Help children understand the connection between choices and consequences. Practice by having children ask themselves what might happen if they make a certain choice.

- If I choose to hit my friend, what will happen? (*My friend may not want to play with me, or my friend may hit me back.*)
- If I don't follow directions, what will happen? (*I won't know what to do.*)
- If I choose to take things without asking, what will happen? (*My friends will be upset.*)
- If I don't share with my friends, what will happen? (*They will not want to share with me, or they may not want to play with me.*)

Hand out a copy of the "Making Good Choices" activity sheet to each student. At the end of each day for a week, have students color in the happy face if they made mostly good choices, or the sad face if they made mostly poor choices. Option: Make one copy for the entire class and mark at day's end whether or not the class made good or bad choices.

CLOSURE Remind students that it takes practice to learn how to make good choices. Let the children know that making good choices is a continuous process. Continue to catch children making good choices to reinforce desirable behavior. When a poor choice is made, ask the child what he or she can do differently next time to get better at finding positive solutions. At the end of the week, talk about the kinds of good choices the children made individually and as a group.

The Choice Is Mine

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- learn that they are responsible for their own actions
- learn that they can choose how to respond when people treat them unfairly

MATERIALS NEEDED

The book *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* by Caralyn and Mark Buehner, pencils, crayons, and drawing paper

LESSON PLAN

CIRCLE TIME Even when we feel angry, sad, or frustrated, we still can choose what to do with our feelings. We are responsible for the things we say and do when our friends hurt our feelings. (For example, if someone calls me a name or teases me, I can choose to walk away, tell her or him to stop, or ask for help.)

STORY TIME Read *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. This story helps children learn about making good choices, using their good manners, and solving problems.

Optional story for shared reading: *Frederick* by Leo Lionni. While other mice are gathering food for the winter, Frederick seems to daydream the summer away. When dreary winter comes, it is Frederick the poet-mouse who warms his friends and cheers them with his words.

SHARING TIME After the story, review the choices that Goldilocks made. For example, she chose to go into the house even though nobody was home. She chose to eat the porridge, she chose to sleep in the bed, and so on. Relate this to the children's lives. Talk about everyday choices kids make, such as choosing to play by the rules, choosing to be respectful toward one another, and choosing to solve problems in a caring way.

PRACTICE TIME Go over the choices Goldilocks made once more, then have the children draw a picture that shows a positive choice Goldilocks could have made. As an optional activity, role-play with the kids some of these positive possibilities. For example, Goldilocks knocks on the door, nobody answers, so she leaves a note for them and leaves.

CLOSURE During circle time, have children share their pictures. Talk about how making the right choices takes practice. As an optional activity, use the completed pictures to create a classroom book titled *Our Choices*.

What Might Happen?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- learn that there are both positive and negative consequences to their choices
- learn that they can change their behavior to experience good instead of bad consequences

MATERIALS NEEDED

The book *Win-Win Day* by Carol Cummings and puppets

LESSON PLAN

CIRCLE TIME Introduce the idea of *consequences*, what happens after you make a decision. Tell children: When you have a choice to make, there may be good consequences or bad consequences, depending on what you choose.

STORY TIME Read *Win-Win Day*. The book teaches young children problem-solving skills using the phrase, "I'll make it win-win and not lose-lose. It all depends on what I choose."

Optional story for shared reading: *Rainbow Fish and Friends: the Copycat Fish* by Marc Pfister and Gail Donovan. A small fish imitates Rainbow Fish because he likes him, but Rainbow Fish is annoyed until the little fish explains why.

SHARING TIME Help children understand the direct connection between feelings, actions, and consequences. For example: I feel angry (feeling); I choose to hit (action); I get in trouble (consequence). Or, I feel excited about my new crayons; I choose to share them with my friend; My friend draws me a picture.

PRACTICE TIME Use puppets to model consequences of actions. Model and discuss the following examples, and add some examples of your own.

What might happen if children choose to:

- be bossy during play time
- take turns on the playground
- cut in line at the drinking fountain
- say something nice about another child's drawing
- use unkind words

CLOSURE Remind children to think through their feelings, their choices, and the consequences for the choices they make. Review the Stop, Think, Choose process (page 53).

Hard Choices

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- learn to stand up for what is right
- learn to help a friend who might be in trouble

MATERIALS NEEDED

The book *Hunter's Best Friend at School* by Laura Malone Elliot and puppets

LESSON PLAN

CIRCLE TIME Being best friends does not mean doing whatever your best friend does, especially if your best friend makes a bad choice (*hitting, taking things that don't belong to him or her, or not listening to adults*). It's more important that we help each other make good choices. Often, children will not ask for help out of fear that they are tattling and their friend won't like them any more. Explain that everyone has a hard time knowing what to do sometimes, especially when they have problems with friends. Review the difference between reporting (*asking for help*) and tattling (*to get someone in trouble*) on page 88.

STORY TIME Read *Hunter's Best Friend at School*. Hunter and Stripe are best friends. One day Stripe makes a bad choice, and Hunter follows along. His mom explains that being a best friend does not mean following along with the wrong choices.

Optional story for shared reading: *The Obvious Elephant* by Bruce Robinson. One day the town awakes to find a strange gray animal sitting in the square. No one knows what it is or what to do with it, until a young boy points out it is an elephant.

SHARING TIME Review and discuss the story. What kinds of things did Hunter and Stripe like to do together? What did Stripe decide to do one day that got him in trouble? What did Hunter do? How did Hunter's mom help him make a better choice? Explain to the children that it's important to make choices for themselves, especially when they know something is wrong or will get them in trouble.

PRACTICE TIME Ask children to think about a time they or a friend needed help to make a better choice (for example when fighting with a friend over the same toy or book). What can they do to help their friends make better choices? Using puppets, demonstrate how to help out by taking turns, offering to play, or sharing a book. If nothing seems to work, then the puppets reach out to an adult for support.

CLOSURE Review the importance of helping each other every day, and remind the children to ask for help when they can't solve a problem on their own.

Choosing to Share

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Children will:

- learn the steps to finding positive solutions to problems

MATERIALS NEEDED

The book *Sheila Rae's Peppermint Stick* by Kevin Henkes, drawing paper, and crayons

LESSON PLAN

CIRCLE TIME Introduce the importance of sharing. Ask children to think of times when they need to share. Sometimes even best friends or brothers and sisters have a hard time sharing, and that can cause problems. What do the children need to remember to do when this happens?

STORY TIME Read *Sheila Rae's Peppermint Stick*. Sheila Rae does not want to share with her younger sister. Eventually, they find a way to work out a good solution for them both.

Optional story for shared reading: *The Doorbell Rang* by Pat Hutchins. Victoria and Sam are just sitting down to a plateful of Ma's cookies when the doorbell rings, and two of their friends arrive to share the feast. The doorbell rings again and again and each time the number of cookies per person dwindles until at last there is only one cookie per person and . . . the doorbell rings again!

SHARING TIME Why did Sheila Rae have a hard time sharing? How did Sheila Rae's little sister feel? How did they work out the problem by the end of the story?

PRACTICE TIME Have children brainstorm a list of things they have to share (*books, time, toys, reading, listening, supplies, food, etc.*). Have each child draw a picture showing one of the items on the list. Make a book of the children's drawings called *What We Share*.

CLOSURE Review the children's pictures and discuss how sharing is an important part of getting along with our family and friends.

Let's Compromise

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- learn that compromise is part of negotiation
- learn the steps of negotiation

MATERIALS NEEDED

The book *I Wanna Iguana* by Karen Kaufman Orloff and puppets

LESSON PLAN

CIRCLE TIME Define the words *negotiate* and *compromise*. When people negotiate, they talk about something in order to come to an agreement. A compromise is when each side in a disagreement gives up something in order to reach an agreement. Brainstorm some of the things children ask for and how they go about asking. How do they feel when a friend or a grown-up does not let them have what they want? Do they pout? Whine? Beg? Get angry? Cry? Are they asking for what they need or want?

STORY TIME Read *I Wanna Iguana*. A boy pesters his mother for a pet, and in the end they work it out.

Optional story for shared reading: *Earrings* by Judith Viorst. A little girl begs her parents to have her ears pierced. More than anything in the world, she wants a new pair of earrings.

SHARING TIME What did the boy want from his mom? What did he do to try to get what he wanted? What did his mom say? Ask children to suggest good ways people can ask for things they want from friends and family. Talk about the importance of listening when negotiating. What can we do when we can't have something right away?

PRACTICE TIME Describe for children the steps of negotiating:

1. I say how I feel.
2. I ask for what I want using my kind words.
3. I listen to the other person.
4. We think of ideas that will work for both of us.
5. We agree on an idea.

Using puppets, model the right way to negotiate using these scenarios: a) two kids want the same color crayon, b) two children argue over whose turn it is to feed the classroom pet, c) two kids want the same picture book for quiet reading time, d) there is a conflict over dividing snacks for a group. You can also have children role-play some of the scenarios or create scenarios of their own.

CLOSURE Recognize children for good listening skills and for being patient during story time and role-play. The toughest lesson for children to understand is that they cannot always get what they want when they want it. Teaching them about patience is an ongoing process.

I Can Be Responsible

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- learn that they are responsible for their own actions
- learn that responsibility is a part of cooperation

MATERIALS NEEDED

The book *Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter

LESSON PLAN

CIRCLE TIME Define *responsibility* (*being reliable and doing what you are expected to do*) and review different ways children can show they are responsible. Part of being responsible is being a good listener, respecting others' wishes, and making good choices to stay out of trouble.

STORY TIME Read *Peter Rabbit*, the classic tale about a youngster that makes bad choices and gets into trouble.

Optional story for shared reading: *Wemberly's Ice Cream Star* by Kevin Henkes. It is a hot summer day and Wemberly is given an ice-cream star as a special treat. She worries that it will drip on her dress, and feels bad that her stuffed rabbit did not receive a treat as well.

SHARING TIME What kind of trouble did Peter Rabbit get into? Did he listen to his mom? Did he respect Mr. McGregor's wishes to stay out of the garden? How did Peter's mom feel when Peter got home? Who was responsible for Peter losing his clothes?

PRACTICE TIME Explain what it means to be "responsible for your own actions." Ask for volunteers to help you role-play some bad choices. Then give the children the opportunity to demonstrate making a good choice. Use these real-life situations: a) A person in front of you in line drops a one-dollar bill. You pick it up and pocket it. What are the consequences? What other choices do you have? What is the best choice? b) You are on the way to the bathroom when you see someone knock down another child. You turn around and go the other direction. What are the consequences of your actions? What is a better way to handle the situation?

CLOSURE Review the positive choices the students made. Tell the children how much you appreciate it when they choose to be responsible and helpful.

I Can Get Along

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- understand how choosing to treat others the way they want to be treated will help them get along
- learn that they have the power to make good choices

MATERIALS NEEDED

The book *We Can Get Along: A Child's Book of Choices* by Lauren Murphy Payne, poster board or butcher paper, drawing paper, glue, and crayons

LESSON PLAN

CIRCLE TIME Ask children to share how they feel when they get along with their friends. How do they feel when they are not getting along with their friends? Sometimes we might choose to argue or say mean things and hurt each other's feelings. What kind of choices can we make in our classroom to help us get along with our friends?

STORY TIME Read *We Can Get Along: A Child's Book of Choices*. In this book about getting along with others, the message is the golden rule, or choosing to treat others the way we want to be treated.

Optional story for shared reading: *Owen* by Kevin Henkes. This tale takes up the case of a wee mouse's devotion to a no-longer-fuzzy blanket named Fuzzy.

SHARING TIME Review the concepts of getting along from the book. Discuss real-life situations where children found themselves in conflict because of the choices they made (*hitting, pushing, arguing, bullying*).

PRACTICE TIME Have students work cooperatively as a class. Use poster board or butcher paper to create a picture that shows the entire class. (Hint: create a border similar to the pretty pattern from *We Can Get Along*). Have each child draw a picture of himself or herself, color it, cut it out, and glue it to the butcher paper. Label the poster "Our Cooperative Classroom."

CLOSURE Display the poster on a wall. It is a great way to remind the students they do know how to get along.

Safety Is a Good Choice

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- learn that part of personal safety is choosing to follow the rules
- review and practice following safety rules

MATERIALS NEEDED

The book *Shortcut* by Donald Crews

LESSON PLAN

CIRCLE TIME Sometimes it is hard to listen and pay attention to what others want done. When students listen to and follow the rules, they can stay safe. Have children brainstorm times when following the rules helped them stay safe and stay out of trouble.

STORY TIME Read *Shortcut*. Children decide it would be fun to take risks, and then learn about the trouble and fear involved in doing something irresponsible.

Optional story for shared reading: *Smoky Night* by Eve Bunting. Bunting addresses urban violence in this thought-provoking and visually exciting picture book inspired by the Los Angeles riots. Although they're neighbors, Daniel's cat and Mrs. Kim's cat don't get along.

SHARING TIME What did the children in the story choose to do on their way home? What happened to them when the train came? How did they feel? What did they do? Did the kids tell the truth about where they were? Did they make a safe or a dangerous choice?

PRACTICE TIME Have the children pair and share. Ask the pairs to discuss with each other what it looks like, sounds like, feels like, smells like, and tastes like to follow the rules. Then, have the pairs discuss the opposite—not following the rules.

CLOSURE Children share their ideas about their senses and following the rules. Reinforce that paying attention to safety is one of the most important choices they can make. Making the choice to follow the rules is one step in being safe. Remind students you will give them a Safe & Caring Heart (page 9) to reinforce good choices on a regular basis.

SAFE & CARING WORDS

APRIL

Word Find
Find and circle
these words:

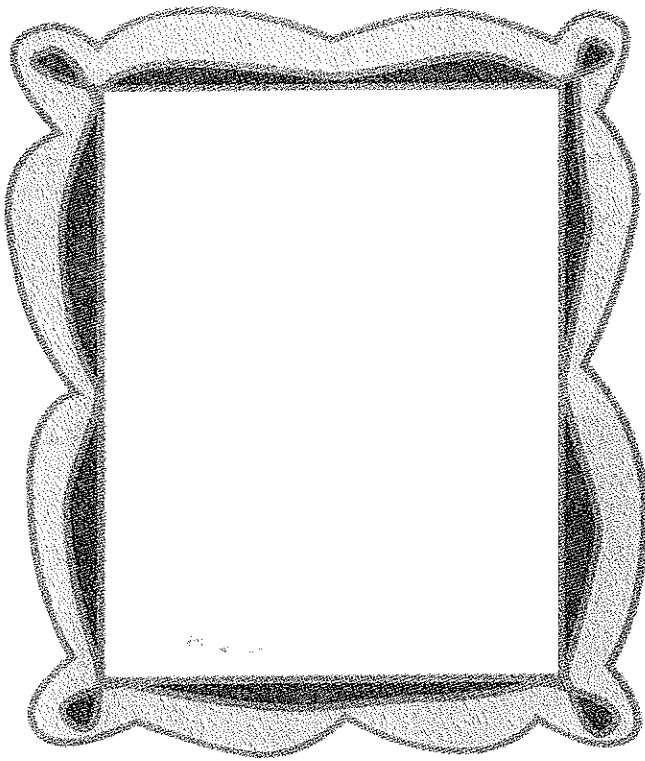
FAIR

TRUTH

HELP

(HINT: Words can
go across or down)

X	S	F	H	B	O	H
N	T	O	T	T	U	O
F	A	I	R	R	R	N
H	U	E	U	U	I	E
M	T	N	T	T	R	S
Q	H	R	H	E	L	P



Draw a self-portrait or
glue a picture of yourself.

Write your name.

can

choose!

Our Safe & Caring School is...

fun!

**we are
a safe
& CARING
SCHOOL.**



MAKING GOOD CHOICES

APRIL

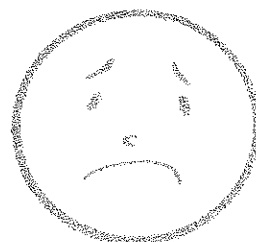
Good Choices

Poor Choices

Monday



Tuesday



Wednesday



Thursday



Friday



**We are
a safe
& CARING
SCHOOL.**