

Social Emotional Learning at PS 24

See video clips of SEL at PS 24 in action:

http://dww.ed.gov/topic/?T_ID=25 (US DOE)

<http://www.edutopia.org/peace-helpers-video>

www.morningsidecenter.org

At PS 24 we have a comprehensive approach to social/emotional issues. We approach children's misbehavior with the assumption that it presents a learning opportunity for the child. Staff members serve as role models for other adults and students at the moment of conflict (in the lunch room, for example) to get children to problem-solve right away and to engage in self-reflection that gives them insight and perspective into their own motivations, triggers, and the impact of their behavior on others. The perspective is to develop student leadership. This is carried out through collaboration between Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility, Lutheran Medical Center on-site mental health services and the PS 24. All adults regularly consult one another and make sure follow-up occurs with children, teachers and parents. This approach is multi-layered and has the following components:

Diversity Month: annual month of special school-wide and classroom activities to celebrate diversity.

Peer mediation: selected group of 3-5th graders are trained to provide mediation for their peers at lunchtime and recess.

Lunch clubs: Small groups of children composed of both those with difficult behavior patterns and those with positive behavior experiences meet on a weekly basis with the guidance counselor and Morningside Center consultant to address and develop social emotional skills.

Diversity panels: Groups of children who have experienced acts of discrimination based on physical appearance, gender, nationality, language, religion, etc. share their stories in front of a class and enter into a dialogue around how they feel and what can they do to interrupt prejudice and stand up for themselves and others. Panels take place during the "Annual Diversity Month" at our school.

Classroom lessons: Teachers have a classroom curriculum called *The Four R's* developed by Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility. Classroom teachers schedule weekly lessons. The lessons include a children's book that involves a theme (eg., dealing with our feelings), there's a book talk and then several activities to explore the theme.

Peacehelpers: 4-5 students in every K-2nd grade classroom are selected to be trained by older students to take leadership in their classroom to help manage conflicts and support children when they are upset. They use the Peace Corner in their classroom.

Peacecorners: Every K-2nd grade classroom has a small desk with a sign, posters and books that provide for a quiet space for children to think, talk, draw and write about their feelings. Peacehelpers use the space to support children in their classroom.

Community service: All fifth graders do a community service project for the school as part of the legacy they leave behind when they graduate from the school. It involves activities like, reading partners, tutors, health information providers, etc.

Counseling: Our own, in-house guidance counselors, psychologist and social worker regularly provide mandated, at-risk or crisis counseling for students. These professionals also provide supportive and crisis counseling with an individual parent as well as with parent and child together. A team of professionals in the building utilize as needed the Functional Behavior Assessment Tool to collectively assess and plan an intervention for a child to help prevent problems and encourage optimal functioning in the classroom.

Mental Health Clinic: In collaboration with Sunset Park's Lutheran Medical Center, PS 24 houses a mental health center where trained psychologists provide consistent professional support to a substantial number of children in the school setting. These same professionals are available to support the families in their neighborhood clinic.

Parent workshops: In-house personnel as well as consultants from Community Based Organizations (CBO's) provide educational workshops for parents related to family needs from parenting, health, sex education and domestic violence to economic planning and English as a Second Language. These workshops provide an opportunity for our parents to take action to improve their families' lives.

Professional Development for Teachers: Consultants from Morningside Center provide one-on-one coaching for classroom teachers classroom as well as modeling whole-class lesson in conflict resolution, group problem solving and the 4R's curriculum.