



The Whole-Brain Classroom: Supporting Educators and Young Children by Understanding Brain Development, Emotions, and Mental Health

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:
Pre-Kindergarten through First Grade

Keywords: brain development, early childhood education, emotions, feelings, kindergarten, mental health, pre-kindergarten, social-emotional learning, whole-brain

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: The Whole-Brain Classroom is a comprehensive curriculum unit that spans across the entire school year to help teachers and young students understand their brain and feelings. The unit fills the gap of social-emotional education and teaches children with their brain in mind first. The whole-brain approach looks at the children in their entirety, as a human who has physical, cognitive, and emotional needs, as well as limits. This unit is designed to be the heartbeat of the classroom, a constant practice that guides teachers and students to a successful emotional regulation and a fuller understanding of their cognitive capacity. Throughout the year educators and students learn basic brain anatomy and use expansive vocabulary and sign language to communicate feelings. Classes also take part in meaningful conversations and read a variety of books to help students understand what emotions they are experiencing and why and how to healthily cope with them. These strategies create a school family where peers help collaborate, problem solve, and help others. Together, caregivers and children learn crucial life-long skills such as compromise and forgiveness that leads them to thrive social-emotionally.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 21 students as a part of Kindergarten's Social-Emotional and Literacy curriculum.

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Caroline Demmitt

Introduction

The objective of school is to prepare students for life. For as long as they have been around, schools have been teaching children math, science, social studies, and how to read and write, but often brush over kids' social-emotional needs, which is a critical part of life. The Whole-Brain Classroom curriculum unit fills that gap of social-emotional education and teaches children with their brain in mind first. The whole-brain approach to child development is a neurological approach to guiding behavior, instead of more common approaches like punishment or discipline. The approach looks at the children in their entirety, as a human who has physical, cognitive, and emotional needs, as well as physical, cognitive, and emotional limits. The whole-brain approach helps caregivers and children to not just survive through hard times, but also thrive. It takes difficult situations and turns them into opportunities for growth and learning "about compromise, sacrifice, negotiation, and forgiveness."¹ Instead of punishing children for being rash and emotional at times, which is human nature, this approach has caregivers sympathize and empathize to help get kids back to a state of calm. And educators know that a state of calm in our classrooms is the ultimate goal.

Teachers see kids coming in and out of our rooms everyday sending little messages to us with their every action. A boy crying for his mom is using his right brain, known for being emotional, and not using his left brain to think logically that mom always has and always will pick him up at the end of the day. A girl throwing a tantrum may be doing so because she is hungry or tired. Her actions are coming from her downstairs brain, where her amygdala is sending messages to her body that her basic needs are not being met. Whether children are crying, breaking things, mumbling, or simply slumping in their seat, they are asking for guidance cognitively, physically, and emotionally. A student of mine showed me that he needed help on all these levels. From the first day of kindergarten, I instantly connected with Jacob's outgoingness, silliness, and constant curiosity. He regularly came into our classroom with a smile and ready-to-learn attitude, until he did not get his way. I quickly learned that Jacob did not want to comply with a variety of requests and rules. If he did not want to do something, whether he deemed it not fun or difficult, he shut down and often became inconsolably sad or angry. He would regularly throw things, push others, and say negative and hurtful things about himself and me. Come to find out, Jacob's parents were living on opposite sides of the country, switching where and when they took care of their son sporadically, providing very little consistency for Jacob to rely on. He had a variety of adverse childhood experiences he was dealing with, that affected both his daily interactions and long-term experiences. I felt like I was failing both as an

¹ Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson, *The Whole-Brain Child*, IX.

educator and as a caregiver; I wish I had known that Jacob needed to be taught on a neurological level. I would have connected his actions to a neurological reason to redirect his behavior cope, communicate, and calm down. While the goal is calm in our classrooms, anyone who has experience with children knows that constant calm is not reality, especially when there are 18 plus students in one class, each requiring attention, direction, and most importantly, love.

Educators can unanimously agree that there are few worse feelings than the feeling of failure in reaching a child. But, year after year, teachers are met with new students from different backgrounds, needs, and struggles that can bring the feeling of hopelessness crawling back. Fast forward a couple years to my current classroom, and I have a student who is struggling with many of the same things as Jacob. Ava stomps around, pulls things off shelves, and says no consistently. However, with the whole-brain approach in mind, I have been able to reach her much quicker than Jacob. I have used several whole-brain strategies with Ava such as engaging her when she is mad that I will not let her play while I am teaching. Instead of raising my voice and getting frustrated with Ava's actions, which would only make her madder, I speak to her matter-of-factly. I let her know that I understand that she is frustrated, I ask her why she thinks it is not a good time to play, and then have her brainstorm alternative options such as fidgets or flexible seating. This strategy not only allows Ava to exercise her upstairs brain by problem solving, but also validates and respects her feelings, leaving her feel seen and heard. We have made progress, with her vocalizing more what she wants and needs and coming up with alternate times to play with mini breaks. Ava still has some trauma she is dealing with and inconsistencies in her home life that make each day different, but I have been able to address her with greater understanding of her physical brain development, physical and mental needs, and approach her with a calmer and more patient mentality. Ava is responding well to the whole-brain child approach as I wish I would have been able to do with my past students. In utilizing the whole-brain approach, I can put my initial frustrations aside and think about my students as a little human, one who wants to be loved and be heard.

All humans want to be loved and be heard. The strategies in The Whole-Brain Classroom curriculum unit put that first, helping educators understand where children are coming from and why they are doing what they are doing so that they can feel loved and heard. Educators who implement the Whole-Brain Classroom unit will be able to determine if problematic student behaviors are a cry for help or a plea for attention. As educators understand the why behind actions, they will be better equipped to help children understand their feelings and emotions. Teachers learn how to facilitate coping skills, rationalizing of thoughts, calm down techniques, and problem-solving skills. This understanding helps children "be more themselves, more at ease in the world, filled with more resilience and strength."² This curriculum unit has been a passion project of mine to help me better understand my young students as they learn and grow as humans in my classroom. With my background in early childhood education, I feel passionately about developing the whole child, social-emotionally and cognitively. As stakeholders read and utilize this unit, I truly hope educators and caregivers find it helpful in reaching all children, regardless of the messages they send.

² Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson, *The Whole-Brain Child*, X.

Rationale

Reaching and developing the whole child can and should be done by fostering quality mental health from an early age. Far too often, mental health is overlooked and not discussed with students due to its perceived complexity, or it is deemed unimportant for young children. Adults can scoff at a child's actions as defiance, lack of self-control, or 'kids just being kids.' But, as readers will find in the research backing this unit, neuroscientists and psychologists alike have found that ignoring proper mental health in early years can be disruptive to child development and their education. Scholars have also found that there are many different factors playing into a child's emotions and actions. Whether the child's action is one of a physical need such as hunger or fatigue, or a plea for help from the trauma they are living through, every action is sending a message. It is unsettling that unless the mental issue is severe, school systems often fail to identify and implement a plan to help the struggling child until later in their academic career when it negatively affects their test grades. Educators need to be advocates for all our students and know that lack of intervention is not acceptable. This unit acts as accessible and adaptable early intervention for addressing mental health in young children. Although mental health may seem like an abstract and complex concept especially to kindergartners, early exposure is key to creating understanding of mental needs and creating a sense of self-acceptance and self-love. This understanding helps to destigmatize and prioritize mental health.

This unit addresses this deficiency in the lack of mental health interventions and preventative mental health strategies. It is designed to help students understand and regulate their emotions all while providing educators with a framework to better comprehend the why behind a child's actions and their brain development. When teachers can identify why students are doing what they are doing, like crying, pouting, or stomping, it creates a more productive environment for learning and growing. Teachers facilitate regular mini lessons on brain development and coping skills, but the unit itself is unique in the sense that the bulk of the learning will come from naturalistic, everyday experiences and interactions. Teachers and students work side by side to use the 12 strategies explained in *The Whole-Brain Child* book. The strategies require teachers to tune-in on a deeper level and as problems arise, take them as teaching moments. While each child's issues are different, teachers strive to create a school family with their class. When a strong sense of trust and community has been created, the teacher can call on peers to help collaborate, problem solve, and help others as a team and a family. Students who feel loved and supported by all are more likely to thrive.

Understanding the cognitive capacities and limits of five- and six-year-old children creates teacher empathy, reduces the need for punitive measures, and increases the self-esteem and resilience of youth because they are able to develop and grow within safe boundaries. A strong school community where everyone is loved and supported allows for more comfort in sharing feelings. The unit allows time to develop a solid vocabulary for emotions and feelings to facilitate more meaningful and impactful conversations. Students and teachers discuss the importance of mental health and what can affect their mentality. Strategies to cope with and manage emotions are discussed to hopes to help prevent potential mental illnesses from arising. While it is helpful that circumstances in the world such as COVID-19 have brought to light many mental health issues for children and adults alike, this is a topic that should extend beyond the

current climate of the world. As an educator, one of my top priorities is to create a welcoming, positive, and inclusive environment for both my students and families. An environment where educators can intervene mindfully creates more sustainable and brain-competent human beings. We need the buy-in of all stakeholders in a child's education to be on board to prevent students from falling through the cracks within the education and societal systems of our schools and communities. I hope that all educators and stakeholders in children's well-being benefit from this unit. Not only do I hope that readers find guidance when working with young ones, but also possibly shed light onto his or her own brain and mental health as we work together to make the world a more aware, understanding, and brain-conscious place.

School Demographics

Selwyn Elementary School is in the suburban neighborhood of Myers Park in South Charlotte, North Carolina. Selwyn Elementary is a part of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, a public school system made up of 175 schools grades pre-kindergarten through twelve and slightly more than 140,000 students.³ While approximately 37% of all students in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools are Black, Selwyn is quite the contrary.⁴ Of the 592 students enrolled in grades kindergarten through five at Selwyn during the 2020-2021 school year, 74.3% were white, with only 8.6% Black, 8.9% Hispanic, and less than 5% who were mixed and of other nationalities such as Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native American.⁵ Out of the total student population, 13% are Special Education students with Individualized Education Plans.⁶ Selwyn primarily caters to the upper middle class families that surround its beautiful, 120 acre campus that is shared with Alexander Graham Middle School and Myers Park High School. The affluence is shown in the low percentage of students labeled as low to moderate socioeconomic status, at 23.7%.⁷ This is a drastic difference compared to the 43% of students across all Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools who are economically disadvantaged and the 54.6% overall who receive free and reduced lunch.⁸

Selwyn is a well-supported school that is strong with its faculty, academics, and family and community connections. The school is led by one principal and one assistant principal, with 30 classroom teachers in the 2020-2021 school year.⁹ On average, Selwyn's kindergarten through second grades classes have approximately 18 to 21 students each with one teacher teaching all core subjects.¹⁰ Grades three through five numbers are slightly higher, averaging 25 students per class with teachers splitting up subjects.¹¹ Although Selwyn's administration and staff aim to ensure classrooms are well-balanced academically and racially, it can be difficult with such low diversity numbers. Nearly half of Selwyn's students come to with previous schooling experience

³ "District Snapshot for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2020. <https://ncreportcards.ondemand.sas.com/src/district?district=600LEA>.

⁴ "District Snapshot for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards.

⁵ Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools 2020-2021 Diversity Report

⁶ Selwyn Elementary School's 2020-2021 School Improvement Plan

⁷ Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools 2020-2021 SES Distribution Report

⁸ "District Snapshot for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards.

⁹ Selwyn Elementary School's 2020-2021 School Improvement Plan

¹⁰ "Selwyn Elementary, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards. 2020.

¹¹ "Selwyn Elementary, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards. 2020.

and are academically high achieving. 48.1% of the students are proficient upon entering, which often gives these young learners a secure and promising start to their educational career.¹² It does not take long to see the pay off and growth. In 2019, an average of 86.2% of students in grades three through five were labeled grade level proficient by scoring a level three, four, or five on the math, literacy, and science end of grade tests.

Selwyn regularly meets and exceeds test score goals and typically surpasses the district average. For example, during the 2018-2019 school year, 85.6% of third through fifth grade students demonstrated grade level proficiency on their end of year Math assessments compared to the 63.3% of total students in the district who displayed Math proficiency.¹³ Selwyn's end of year English Language Arts scores were similar. Selwyn students demonstrated 79.8% proficiency, whereas 54.4% of all Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools students demonstrated proficiency.¹⁴ Another factor for the high test scores at Selwyn can be linked to high parent involvement, the ability for many families to pay for tutors when needed or wanted, and pre-school readiness, such as attending high-achieving private or parochial pre-schools, pre-kindergartens, and transitional kindergartens.

Unit Goals

Upon completion of The Whole-Brain Classroom Curriculum Unit, teachers will:

- Have basic understanding of brain anatomy and how it impacts child development
- Have strategies to de-escalate temper tantrums without using discipline

Students will:

- Understand their mental states and therefore will be able to be more successful in communication and learning across all subject areas.
- Understand that even if they cannot control the situation they are in, they are in charge of how they manage their emotions and that feelings are fleeting. Students will practice empathy and open-mindedness, collaborate with others, think critically, and effectively communicate. These skills are necessary in creating students and citizens with strong mental health.

Content Research

The Whole-Brain Classroom curriculum unit is based on the whole-brain approach, as explained in Dr. Daniel Siegel and Dr. Tina Payne Bryson's book, *The Whole-Brain Child*. The approach is a neurological approach to guiding behavior, not punishing or disciplining behavior. Siegel and Bryson break down these approaches into twelve easy to use strategies all based on integration of the mind to help nurture their brain development. The brain has many different parts and many different jobs, so "the key to thriving is to help these parts work well together to integrate them."

¹⁵ Recent studies have found that contrary to past beliefs, the brain is actual moldable. As people

¹² "Selwyn Elementary, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards. 2020.

¹³ "Selwyn Elementary, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards. 2020.

¹⁴ "District Snapshot for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools." NC School Report Cards.

¹⁵ Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson, *The Whole-Brain Child*, 6.

go through experiences, the brain cells become active and grow new connections that overtime help to ‘rewire’ the brain, leading to healthier and happier lives.¹⁶ The strategies within the book help caregivers to provide children with “experiences to create connections between different parts of the brain.”¹⁷ Before you can respond to emotional needs, like a student crying or screaming, you must understand them. To understand the emotions and the strategies in the book, it is important to understand the two biggest brain concepts the book utilizes: vertical integration and horizontal integration.

Vertical integration splits the brain into a left side and a right side (Figure 1). The left side is known for its logical and literal response, whereas the right side is known for its holistic and emotional response.¹⁸ For anyone who is around young children, it is easy to see that young children under the age of three are right hemisphere dominant because “logic, responsibilities, and time do not exist for them yet.”¹⁹ When children start asking why, it becomes evident that their left brain is starting to have more control and curiosity. When children connect their left and right brain, they understand their logic and emotions in order to be more balanced human beings.²⁰ A child who falls on the playground and scrapes her knee and is crying is feeling emotional using her right brain. A caregiver can help her integrate her left brain, by having her help retell what happened and why it happened instead of dismissing the pain and emotions by saying “you’re okay, don’t cry, that’s just a little scratch.” An adult who helps the child walk through what happened allows the child to think logically about why they fell, perhaps because they were running too fast and looking behind them, and to understand that the pain does not feel good, but it will go away and the wound will heal, just like any past times she got hurt.

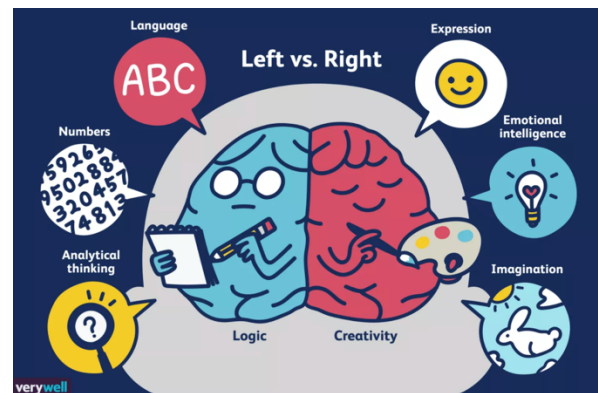
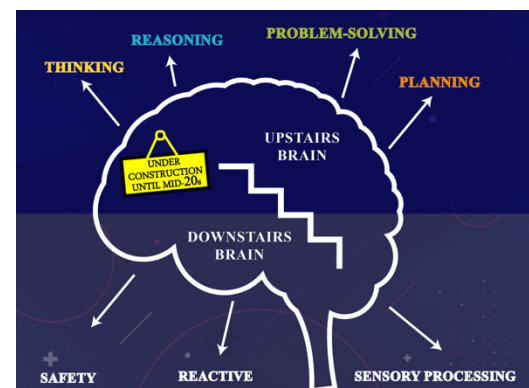


Figure 1. Left versus right brain. (*Left and Right Brain*. 2017. Verywell Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/left-brain-vs-right-brain-2795005>.)

Horizontal integration splits the brain into an upstairs and a downstairs (Figure 2). The authors of *The Whole-Brain Child* use the imagery of the brain as a house. The downstairs brain, or the basement, is where the amygdala is housed, which is responsible for being primitive. It reacts to basic functions such as breathing, and is used for innate reactions and impulses, and for strong emotions like anger and fear.²¹ On the other hand, the upstairs brain is like a “light-filled second-story”



¹⁶ Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson, *The Whole-Brain Child*, 7.
¹⁷ Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson, *The Whole-Brain Child*, 8.
¹⁸ Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson, *The Whole-Brain Child*, 16.
¹⁹ Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson, *The Whole-Brain Child*, 16.
²⁰ Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson, *The Whole-Brain Child*, 18.
²¹ Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson, *The Whole-Brain Child*, 39.

where all the thinking, imagining, and planning occurs.²² The upstairs brain houses the prefrontal cortex, which helps monitor the downstairs brain to make sure that the body is in control of strong reactions, impulses, and emotions that originate in the primal downstairs brain.²³ Young children in schools often do things reactively, on impulse, such as take a toy from another child or push a peer when frustrated. These children are using their downstairs brain because their upstairs brain has not had enough practice to successfully plan and make sound decisions. Teachers can foster horizontal integration by exercising the upstairs brain in many different scenarios by asking questions like “why do you think you made that choice?”, “what do you think made you feel that way?”, and “what could we do to help you feel better?”. Children who reflect on these questions are better problem solvers and are more in control of their actions and reactions.

Figure 2. Upstairs versus downstairs brain. (Santucci, Greg. *Upstairs and Downstairs Brain. Seattle's Child. Seattle's Child*, August 18, 2021. <https://www.seattleschild.com/opinion-upstairs-downstairs-brain-how-that-works/>)

It is crucial to understand both divides of the brain because parents and educators alike may not be able to get children to do what is asked of them if their brain is not yet developed in the area that is being asked to be used. The brain is not fully developed in humans until the age of 25, but trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) such as violence and homelessness, literally hinders brain development.²⁴ While *The Whole-Brain Child* does a wonderful job of explaining the divides of the brain and strategies to help positive brain development, it fails to address the different backgrounds children come from. Therefore, it is important to pair this book with the more common reality; the reality that many children come into our classrooms with ACEs, trauma, and other mental stressors like bullying or pressure from parents. Trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event, but terrible is defined by those who experience it. So, even if something may not seem like trauma to an adult, a child may view it that way. Trauma, no matter the trauma, is internalized the same way. No matter the color of skin, religion, or socioeconomic background, all children have things that they are working through.

Regardless of background, children experiencing trauma and ACEs have negative affect their learning and development. This makes it all the more necessary for educators and schools to directly address and understand mental illness when discussing and promoting mental health. Children who are experiencing mental stressors are directly impacted in their interactions with teachers, staff, peers, and self. Like the children described in the introduction to this unit, children with mental illnesses can lack motivation and confidence, exhibit disruptive behaviors, and struggle to appropriately engage with peers.²⁵ Therefore, when the stressors are not only understood but addressed and mental health is prioritized, the results are positive. Ensuring a strong start for children is one of the top ways we can help prevent ACEs and trauma from

²² Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson, *The Whole-Brain Child*, 40.

²³ Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson, *The Whole-Brain Child*, 41.

²⁴ Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson, *The Whole-Brain Child* (New York, NY: Bantam Books Trade Paperbacks, 2012), 41.

²⁵ “Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, April 6, 2021), https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/fastfact.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fviolenceprevention%2Facestudy%2Ffastfact.html.

having long-term negative impacts on children.²⁶ The Whole-Brain Classroom unit is a perfect strong start for children. It provides children with high quality childcare that prioritizes social-emotional learning.

To prioritize social-emotional learning, educators must create a classroom that is inclusive and accepting of different needs and backgrounds. Although many times we want to keep our kids longer than a year, a year is just a glimpse into their lives. Adverse childhood experiences and trauma most times stems from home life and a child's background, so caregivers must understand a child's home life. While *The Whole-Brain Child* is based in a home environment with parents, it leaves out the school point of view. That's where Carla Shalaby's book *Troublemakers* comes in. Shalaby argues that before creating an environment of trust and positivity in your classroom, you need to get to know children as individuals. She spends a year observing children in their school setting, but also ensures she meets families and observes children in the comfort of their own home to get the full picture of a child's life. It is important to understand that children are acting the way they are not just because of their brain development and the school systems, but due to the way they are raised and what their family's value or lack of familiar values and discussions. Shalaby's book studies the situation of four young 'troublemakers' not just at school, but also in their homes.

One of the students highlighted in *Troublemakers* is often viewed by school staff members as loud, bossy, and sporadic, but when Shalaby sees this student at home, it all makes sense. The student's mother expressed that in their home, they highly value creativity, individuality, and curiosity. The young seven-year-old is seen in a positive light, as one who is creative, spunky, and as someone who wants to lead her own path. As educators, we all know a student who has pushed us with the "why" questions and the "I want to do it this way instead." Sometimes it can drive us nuts, but The Whole-Brain Classroom unit allows teachers to understand developmentally why children's brains are wired this way and to appreciate the power and strength our brain's play in all our interactions, especially at school. Shalaby's research lead her to "think of deviance as informative, and often as an exercise of power and free will."²⁷ It is understood that a child's behavior is "a response to context regardless of whether that response is voluntary or involuntary, intentional, or unintentional."²⁸ When students cannot or do not want to meet the demands of schools, the noncompliance shows the need to evaluate the demand.

Shalaby argues that the demands schools "speak of uniformity and conformity, management and control."²⁹ Educators do not typically question or argue with this uniformity and conformity because it is normalized in teacher education. and do not realize that "education is a complex human enterprise requiring creativity and imagination, heart, mind, and soul, struggle and suffering, grit and grace."³⁰ Schools should be a place where youth can "practice

²⁶ "Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences," (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, April 6, 2021).

²⁷ Carla Shalaby, *Troublemakers*, XXXIII

²⁸ Carla Shalaby, *Troublemakers*, XXVIII

²⁹ Carla Shalaby, *Troublemakers* (New York, NY: The New Press, 2017), XI.

³⁰ Carla Shalaby, *Troublemakers* (New York, NY: The New Press, 2017), XI.

their power and master the skills required by freedom.”³¹ Children want to say no, ask why, move, and think independently, but schools do not welcome this developmentally appropriate and natural way of childhood. The issues within the greater societal system of schools that so often neglect to recognize and celebrate children as people instead of just students who come to school for one thing: to learn academics in preparation for adulthood.³² *The Whole-Brain Child* is a celebration of children and where they are developmentally. One study Shalaby highlights found that as many as 46% of kindergarten teachers report that more than half of their class has difficulties following directions and 20% report their kindergarteners as immature, having poor social skills.³³ Shalaby argues that this may be in part due to the fact that these early schooling demands may be unreasonable. And what do schools do with these children who cannot follow these maybe developmentally inappropriate rules and expectations? They identify and label the child as problems.

The labeling of children as problems at a young age without understanding or even trying to imagine where they are coming from cognitively can have many negative long-term effects. Suspending children, removing them from the classroom, and excluding them from their class can lead to many mental issues. When a child is excluded, it teaches children the “belonging to the classroom community is conditional, not absolute”³⁴ which leads to mental blocks and minimizing self-worth. When children see themselves as a problem, other children label them the same way, which further isolates them from what should be their school family. These responses “hinder children’s access to academic content and that also threaten their sense of belonging and their ability to contribute to the community of their classroom.”³⁵ Not only do these discipline and punishment strategies have a negative effect on children, but also on teachers. It makes it difficult for teachers to be effective and successful in their teaching and can create a desire to leave the profession, which, unfortunately, many even great teachers do so too soon, leaving the children, profession, and system behind one less good teacher. As Shalaby says, anyone who cares about educators and schooling, should care deeply about student behavior.³⁶

Children, whether experiencing ACEs or viewed as troublemakers, may not be cognitively aware or ready to meet the demands of their classroom. The whole-brain approach helps caregivers and children to not just survive through hard times, but also thrive. It takes difficult situations and turns them into opportunities for growth and learning “about compromise, sacrifice, negotiation, and forgiveness.”³⁷ Instead of punishing children for being emotional, which is typically developmentally appropriate, this approach has caregivers sympathize and empathize to help get kids back to a state of calm. The whole-brain approach has the children and caregivers use the knowledge of where the child’s actions are coming from and why to connect to the opposite part of their brain to better the situation. The context of child behavior and emotions should not only be looked at from the lens of appropriate asks of a student or not,

³¹ Carla Shalaby, *Troublemakers*, XVI.

³² Carla Shalaby, *Troublemakers*, 158

³³ Carla Shalaby, *Troublemakers*, XXVII.

³⁴ Carla Shalaby, *Troublemakers*, 162.

³⁵ Carla Shalaby, *Troublemakers*, XXVIII.

³⁶ Carla Shalaby, *Troublemakers*, XXVIII.

³⁷ Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson, *The Whole-Brain Child*, IX.

but from a cognitive level. Ensuring a strong start for children is one of the top ways we can help reach children cognitively.³⁸ The Whole-Brain Classroom unit is a perfect strong start for children, as it provides children with high quality childcare that prioritizes social-emotional learning.

This curriculum unit uses the whole-brain approach as the core to creating successful and competent humans. Not only does this approach focus on educating children on the power and science behind their brain, but it also helps adults bring these practices into their own lives. Studies have found that children's brains mirror their parent's brain. Therefore, the brain development and growth, or lack thereof, of a caregiver's brain impacts the child's brain.³⁹ When caregivers are more aware and emotionally healthy, children reap the benefits as well.⁴⁰ One of the most obvious benefits to the whole-brain techniques is that it can help adults reconnect with children with a confidence, competence, and awareness of where children are coming from. Children who learn to be cognitively aware learn the skills of self-reflection and help them to actively choose to have meaningful interactions, avoid chaos and rigidity, and more frequently remain in the "harmonious flow of well-being."⁴¹ When regularly practiced, these skills benefit children well into adolescence and adulthood, helping to create more aware and competent adults who in turn become productive members of society.

Instructional Implementation

Teaching Strategies

This unit uses a multi-disciplinary approach, utilizing discussions, natural teachable moments, movement, breathing, and reading a variety of children's books. One of the first and most important strategies that is used throughout the curriculum is classroom discussions via think-pair-share and turn-and-talk peer conversations. A lot of the unit is centered around raw and personal experiences, which requires students to interact with teachers and peers to share what they are thinking and what they may have been through. Providing students with a safe environment where students can participate in naturalistic dialog is key. A strategy such as think-pair-share helps students develop their own thoughts and then share them with peers, exposing them to other thoughts and opinions. Teachers are encouraged to change partners up regularly during writing, reading, and social-emotional learning. Teachers educate students on how to have accountable, respectful, and meaningful conversations with peers. Children will practice taking turns, using manners, maintaining eye contact, and other conversation norms such as sharing statements like, "I agree" or, "that is a good point, but I think..." Educators also introduce and implement students speaking in full sentences as well as using academic vocabulary to accurately get their points across and more directly connect with others. When children feel respected during thoughtful conversations with their educators and classmates, they are more likely to be more open and allow for flexible discussion.

³⁸ "Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences," (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, April 6, 2021).

³⁹ Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson, *The Whole-Brain Child*, XII.

⁴⁰ Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson, *The Whole-Brain Child*, XII.

⁴¹ Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson, *The Whole-Brain Child*, 147.

The unit will begin on the first day of school and will be heavily implemented during the first quarter in order to create a strong sense of community and develop trust with the teachers and students. However, this is a unit that will spread across the entire year to allow for a deep understanding of the topic that will grow with the children's maturity over the year. This curriculum unit addresses a wide range of kindergarten social-emotional and Social Studies standards and will be taught during Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools' required Morning Meeting time. This part of the day is reserved for social-emotional learning to set students up for success during the day. The children will utilize what they are taught or have practiced in the morning throughout the day. The cross-curricular unit allows students to explore their emotions by working on their communication skills, reading and writing abilities, and social-emotional development.

As a part of meaningful classroom conversations, this unit utilizes the use of vocabulary studies. Teachers will help students explore a richer and more descriptive vocabulary to help them better explain their feelings. Students will help teachers come up with words and phrases that are age appropriate and understandable. Children need to be able to explain how they are feeling and why. After students are given the foundational words to express themselves, they will learn different coping mechanisms. Children will in turn use these words to help their conversations and coping move along and allow for deeper understanding and relation to themselves and others. As young children are still learning to verbalize their emotions, teachers will help give children the vocabulary to share their feelings. Teachers will encourage students to regularly ask 'how am I feeling right now?' and 'how can I manage these feelings safely?'. These questions are central to the curriculum unit.

Another teaching strategy that is used throughout this unit is close readings. Close readings are a way to look at texts in a focused manner by analyzing characters and events. Teachers act as facilitators by asking questions along the way. Teachers stimulate meaningful student discussions about how students may relate to characters, what problems and solutions the characters face, author intention, and how they connect to the text through similarities. However, close readings encourage students to be the ones doing most of the deep thinking. Children evaluate the text on many different levels by answering many "what if" questions. They come to understand the author's purpose, character's traits and evolution, and meaning behind the settings and story line by identifying text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections. During close readings, educators typically choose shorter texts, passages, or choose to read just pieces of a book at a time, often going back and re-reading specific sections. This curriculum unit utilizes a variety of literary resources in order to successfully teach this unit. While there are many great stories with white characters and animals or objects, it is important to address the concern of limited minority characters directly and focus on utilizing works with diverse characters and by diverse authors.

Parents and families will also be an integral part of this unit. Creating strong teacher-family relationships is key and have seen first-hand the benefits of including families closely in a child's social-emotional and academic journey at school. When parents and guardians feel included, they often develop a sense of trust to provide educators with more

information that helps them work better as a team in the learning and growth process. A piece of this unit is meant to help the parents along the journey of the development of their young child. This will begin by sending out a survey to parents and guardians, to see if they are interested in getting help with their child's mental health journey. The survey would ask parents on a simple scale how they would rank their child's happiness, flexibility, coping strategies, and more, and allow the parents to select if and how they would want help. The survey is not meant to create more work or stress for the parent, but rather a brief tool that helps show that the teacher is there to support them and their child. Teachers are a support system for families the entire time to be there for parents to uncover student and familial needs. A post survey will be sent out at the end of the unit as well to see if families see growth from the year of highlighting mental health. It is critical to create a team of support around students consisting of parents, guidance counselors, administrative team, and of course, classroom teachers.

Lessons and Activities

This curriculum unit's lessons and activities are intended to begin on day one of school and continue to be practiced naturally throughout the entire school year. There are six explicit topics in this unit, taking roughly two weeks each, but all topics can be modified by teachers to meet the needs of each unique class and its students. Some teachers may teach a topic in as little as a few days, whereas other topics may need to be addressed over a longer period. Educators are encouraged to make each topic their own to best meet the needs of their students, considering age, ability, and understanding. To keep fidelity and integrity of this unit, teachers are advised to take part in each of these topics in order. However, similarly, to adapting each project to each teachers' class, the activities within the topics themselves may be slightly modified or abbreviated as needed. Some teachers may choose to speed up the process of each topic depending on pacing guides, school curricula, and so forth.

Topic I: Setting Up for Emotional Success - Understanding and Identifying Feelings

On day one of school, children experience many different emotions. Whether they are new to the entire school or just the classroom, children are in a new space with unfamiliar people. Feelings of excitement, nervousness, sadness, or a mix of many other emotions can fill their little mind and bodies and display itself in many ways. This first topic addresses the many different feelings children can have. Teachers will provide the vocabulary words in order to help children more accurately explain how they are feeling. Teachers explain that all feelings are okay and that all feelings come and go.

Objectives: Students will be able to accurately explain how they are feeling with feeling and emotion words. Students will be able to look at their own expressions and mannerisms as well as the expressions and mannerisms of others to determine how they are feeling.

Active Engagement:

- **Discussions and Read-Alouds:** Teachers engage students by asking them a variety of question on a regular basis, allowing for students to tune in to how

they and others are feeling. Teachers use the first few weeks of school to conduct read-alouds and close readings using a variety of books from the suggested text list found in [Appendix III](#) to build a sense of community and trust with peers and adults. Teachers and students respond to guiding questions via turn-and-talk partners and group discussions. Teachers should make a point to teach children that all feelings are okay and that feelings come and go and never last forever.

- **Mirror Technique:** Teachers bring full length mirrors into their classroom to allow students the chance to look at their whole bodies and practice making faces in the mirror. The teacher gathers students in a circle around the mirror and allow students to take turns acting out different emotions in the mirror using both their facial expressions and body movements. For example, the teacher says, “show me how you might look when you are angry” or “show me how you’d look if someone took your toy” and the child may furrow his brow, cross arms, scowl, or stomp his feet.
- **Sign Language:** Often young children are more comfortable with actions as opposed to verbally stating what they need or how they feel. Teachers will use sign language as another tool for children to communicate with. Teachers should practice sign language before introducing it to children but are encouraged to work alongside student to practice the signs. Great videos for sign language can be found in [Appendix IV](#).
- **Calm Down Corner:** In order to set children up for all their emotions, it is important for educators to create a safe, calming area in their classroom where children can go when they need a break. While this area should be tucked away, teachers should always be able to see this area of the class for safety purposes. This area tends to be a class favorite and teachers are encouraged to make it their own by adding things like a pop-up tent, pillows, stuffed animals, feelings chart cards/poster, coping strategies cards/poster, fidgets, stress balls, coloring sheets, and the mirror so children can see how they are feeling. Also in this area should be a think sheet (in [Appendix II](#)) which the children can use to reflect on their behaviors and feelings, whether they want to on their own or a teacher has directed them to complete the sheet. As the whole-brain strategies are introduced to children, these tools should be added to the calm down area as posters or in a book.
- **Parent Survey (pre-unit):** Since this unit is beginning at the start of the school year, teachers are encouraged to get feedback from parents on their child’s mental health. This is meant to give educators more information on each child to help better support them and their family. The suggested parent survey can be found in [Appendix II](#).

Guiding Questions:

- *How are you feeling right now?*
- *What do you think made you feel that way?*
- *How can I manage/control these feelings?*
- *How can we keep that feeling or move on to a more pleasant feeling?*

- *How do you think the character feels? Why do you think so? Is there something the character did or shows in the illustrations that makes you think that way?*

Topic II: Whole-Brain Strategies #1-2 – The Left and Right Brain

Objectives: Teachers will understand and utilize *The Whole-Brain Child* strategies #1-2 with their students; #1: connect and redirect, and #2: name it to tame it. Students will be able to differentiate their emotions and reactions coming from their left versus right brain and use that knowledge to help regulate emotions.

Teacher Knowledge: Teachers should read chapter 2 in *The Whole-Brain Child* to understand how humans use and integrate the left and right brain. When using the connect and redirect strategy, teachers connect with a child's emotions and help redirect them to a place of calm and understanding better suited for discussing the problem or feeling at hand. The second strategy of name it to tame it encourages storytelling in which the adults come to understand what happened and help identify the feeling children may be having so they can show empathy and help calm big emotions.

Active Engagement: Teachers begin by explaining to children that our brain is a giant muscle that helps our body learn, grow, react, and feel. Teachers can give the example that when they were babies, they could not talk or walk and cried for attention, but over time we learned and saw that that is not how people respond. Our brains changed during that time and will change until they are adults. Teachers then explain that understanding how our brain works can help us have better control over our feelings and reactions. Teachers use the Whole-Brain Kids cartoon (in [Appendix II](#)) to explain this concept to students. Similar to the first topic, teachers will choose from a variety of books (in [Appendix III](#)) to use for close read-alouds and discuss whether characters are using their left or right brains.

Guiding Questions:

- *When was a time you were very emotional (right-brained) and didn't want to listen to what others had to say?*
- *When was a time you thought you were correct (left-brained) and didn't want to listen to anyone else's thoughts?*
- *How do you feel when someone ignores your feelings or doesn't want to hear your thoughts?*
- *How can we respond to ourselves or someone who is using their right-brain and is showing a lot of strong emotions?*
- *How can we respond to ourselves or someone who is using their left-brain?*
- *Is this character using their left or right brain? Why do you think that?*

Topic III: Whole-Brain Strategies #3-5 – The Upstairs and Downstairs Brain

Objectives: Teachers will understand and utilize *The Whole-Brain Child* strategies #3-5 with their students; #3: engage, don't enrage; #4: use it or lose it; and #5: move it or lose it. Students will understand the function of their upstairs and downstairs brain.

Teacher Knowledge: Teachers should read chapter 3 in *The Whole-Brain Child* to understand how humans integrate the upstairs and downstairs brain. Teachers help children exercise and use the upstairs brain for decision making, control over body and emotions, self-understanding, empathy, and morality. Teachers also need to understand that the downstairs brain is responsible for our basic functions like blinking and breathing, where our most basic needs are met. Teachers need to work with children when they have strong emotions in order to help activate the upstairs brain. In these strategies, activation comes by thinking about consequences and others as well as exercising to feel better.

Active Engagement: Teachers explain that in addition to our left and right brain, we also have an upstairs and downstairs brain. Teachers use the Whole-Brain Kids cartoon (in [Appendix II](#)) to explain this concept to students. Teachers choose from a variety of books (in [Appendix III](#)) to use for close read-alouds and discuss times that we can use our hand model of the brain to make good choices and control big emotions.

Guiding Questions:

- *When was a time that you had big feelings? Did you flip your lid or make a good choice to calm your emotions? What happened because of your choice or action?*
- *When you make good choices how do you feel after? How do the people you're around feel when you've made good choices?*
- *How could this character have used the hand brain model to make good choices?*
- *What could have happened if this character used their upstairs brain instead of their downstairs brain (or vice versa)?*

Topic IV: Whole-Brain Strategies #6-7 – Making Implicit Memories Explicit

Objectives: Teachers will understand and utilize *The Whole-Brain Child* strategies #6-7 with their students; #6: using the remote of the mind and #7: remember to remember. Students will understand that putting the pieces of their memories together can help make them feel less scared, sad, or angry.

Teacher Knowledge: Teachers should read chapter 4 in *The Whole-Brain Child* to understand how humans have implicit and explicit memories. Teachers understand the importance of talking through a story and replaying memories in order to make memories more meaningful and accurate. Teachers also understand that making recollection a part of daily life is an important piece to making implicit memories explicit.

Active Engagement: Now that the 4 main parts of the brain have been explained, teachers introduce the difference between implicit and explicit memories. Teachers will use the Whole-Brain Kids cartoon (in [Appendix II](#)) to explain this concept to students. Teachers will choose from a variety of books with themes of anger, madness, and frustration (in [Appendix III](#)) to use for close read-alouds and discuss times when it is helpful to put together the puzzle pieces of memory.

Guiding Questions:

- *Have you ever had feelings that you didn't understand?*
- *Have you ever partly remembered something that happened to you but felt you were missing some pieces of information?*
- *Why do you think you or this character responded that way? What do you think could've happened to them?*
- *Tell me about your day. What was one high point, one low point, and one act of kindness you performed for someone?*

Topic V: Whole-Brain Strategies #8-10 – Integrating the Many Parts of the Self

Objectives: Teachers will understand and utilize *The Whole-Brain Child* strategies #8-10 with their students; #8: let the clouds of emotions roll by; #9: SIFT through emotions; and #10: exercise mindsight. Students will understand that their feelings are not who they are and do not define them; their emotions come and go.

Teacher Knowledge: Teachers should read chapter 5 in *The Whole-Brain Child* to understand that feelings come and go. Teachers understand that it is important to pay attention to what's going on inside your body, use the SIFT acronym to use mindsight to take control of images and using, and helping children to choose what they think about themselves by integrating all the different parts of them that make them unique.

Active Engagement: Teachers explain that the students are continuing to add tools to their mental health toolbox in order to be in better control of their emotions. Teachers will use the Whole-Brain Kids cartoon (in [Appendix II](#)) to explain the concept of integrating the many parts of the self to students. Teachers will choose from a variety of books with themes of coping (in [Appendix III](#)) to use for close read-alouds to discuss the different parts that make us up and the wheel of awareness.

Guiding Questions:

- *What do you like about yourself?*
- *What makes you special?*
- *What are somethings you are good at or are proud of?*
- *Have you ever said something to yourself or others that was untrue? How did this make your mind feel?*

- *What are some things that make you happy when think about them? Let's pick some happy thoughts to add to our bike wheel that we can think of when we have unpleasant emotions.*

Topic VI: Whole-Brain Strategies #11-12 – Integrating the Self with Others

Objectives: Teachers will understand and utilize *The Whole-Brain Child* strategies #11-12 with their students; #11: playful parenting [caregiving] and #12: connection through conflict. Students will understand that mindsight means both looking into their own minds to see their thoughts, emotions, and experiences, but also means to try to look into someone else's mind to see what and why they may be reacting or feeling a certain way.

Teacher Knowledge: Teachers should read chapter 6 in *The Whole-Brain Child* to understand the definition of mindsight. Teachers practice mindsight themselves by enjoying each other and classmates (playful caregiving) and working with students and their peers to provide constructive problem solving in order to connect through conflict.

Active Engagement: Teachers explain now that students have learned a lot about their own brains, they will learn to see how they can use their knowledge to tune in to other peoples' minds. Teachers let students know that when we try to look at others with their mind in our minds, it can make it easier to have fun, solve problems, and make and keep friends. Teachers will use the Whole-Brain Kids cartoon (in [Appendix II](#)) to explain the concept of integrating the many parts of the self to students. Teachers will choose from a variety of books with themes of coping (in [Appendix III](#)) to use for close read-alouds to discuss the different parts that make us up and the wheel of awareness. Teachers bring our more multi-step scenario prompt cards (in [Appendix II](#)) to allow for children to practice conflict resolution and coming up with potential reasons why students may feel certain ways. For example, a prompt card may say "Au'Mari told John he didn't want to play with him on the playground. They usually play every day. Why would Au'Mari have felt that way? What could John say to Au'Mari to help him? Should Au'Mari explain to John what is going on?" Students could reply with a variety of answers such as "Au'Mari is sad or tired" or "maybe Au'Mari does not want to play the same thing as John and needs a break."

Guiding Questions:

- *Have you ever been upset with a friend or felt like they were being unfair to you? You may have had strong emotions yourself, but did you think about how they may have felt? What did you say to that person?*
- *How do you think this character feels right now? What could someone say or do to help make him/her happy?*
- *Was there a time when someone was kind and understanding to you?*

Culminating Task

To wrap up the school year and show what students have learned, students will create their own piece of literature expressing their self, feelings, and how they prefer to cope with their emotions. Student autonomy and choice are key to creating student interest. It is suggested that teachers allow students to pick what type of piece of literature they want to create. Some ideas are poems, books and stories, comics, or drawings/paintings/collages with labels. Teachers should utilize the prompts in [Appendix II](#) to get their students started, but students should have the option to add more information or change what they want to share that they feel is important to their mental health. For children with more experience writing and drawing with detail, teachers can minimize the amount of prompt or eliminate it altogether. For students who are not quite ready to write, teachers should ask students to draw and explain their drawings so the teacher can dictate on the paper when needed. Once complete, students will share with partners. It is suggested that sharing takes place over the course of a week so students can explain their piece to several students and can be exposed to several students as well. Teachers will also send out a final survey to parents to get feedback on parent's thoughts on their child's social-emotional development over the year. A sample survey can be found in [Appendix II](#).

Assessments

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools does not give out number or letter grades to pre-kindergarten through second grade students. Because of this, this social-emotional-based unit does not entail any formal assessments. Instead, teachers are encouraged to use the checklists in [Appendix IV](#) to assess student understanding and engagement. Additionally, the students are intended to be the drivers of these topics. They are meant to allow for creativity and self-expression, therefore may be interpreted in many ways. It is crucial for teachers to objectively look at each student as individuals and ask questions to encourage more details and deeper understanding and provide productive feedback to student growth. It is suggested that throughout the course of this unit, teachers utilize informal assessments. This can include observations and anecdotal notes, checklists, and video or audio recordings to keep track of student responses, conversations, and expression of thought.

Appendix I: Teaching Standards

This curriculum unit addresses a wide range of Literacy, Social Studies, and social-emotional standards. Lessons can be integrated into either Social Studies or Literacy, or both subjects. A list of applicable North Carolina teaching standards are as follows:

Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools' General Learner Outcomes (GLOs)

Creative & Critical Thinker: I think before I act.

Receptive & Reflective to Feedback: I listen to feedback from others.

Collaborator: I listen and share with others.

Effective Communicator: I share thoughts, questions, and ideas.

Open-Minded: I listen and am respectful to others' ideas.

Self-Directed Learner: I can make choices and work independently.

North Carolina State Kindergarten Standards for Literature

RL.K.1 With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

RL.K.2 With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.

RL.K.3 With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

RL.K.4 With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about words in a text that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.

RL.K.6 With prompting and support, define the role of the author and illustrator in telling the story

RL.K.7 With prompting and support, describe how the words and illustrations work together to tell a story

RL.K.10 Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.

W.K.2 Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.

SL.K.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

SL.K.4 Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.

North Carolina State Kindergarten Standards for Social Studies

K.H.1.1 Explain how people change over time (self and others).

K.C & G.1.1 Exemplify positive relationships through fair play and friendship.

K.C.1 Understand how individuals are similar and different.

K.C.1.1 Explain similarities in self and others

Appendix II: Materials

Topic I: Setting Up for Emotional Success - Understanding and Identifying Feelings

Mirror Technique:

- Full-length mirrors
- Social-Emotional Scenario Prompt Cards

Sign Language:

- American Sign Language (ASL) Videos:
 - “Learn How to Sign Feelings and Emotions in ASL - Youtube.” Learn How to Sign. YouTube, March 18, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QY YMBAEs6Vg>.
Learn How to Sign breaks down emotions and feelings words slowly and clearly to make the signs easy to understand and practice with.
 - “Teaching Sign Language to Children of All Abilities & Ages - Youtube.com.” Signing Time, May 17, 2021. <https://www.signingtime.com/>.

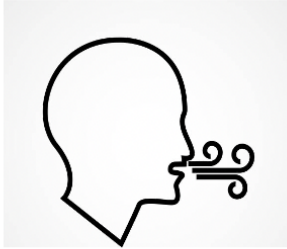

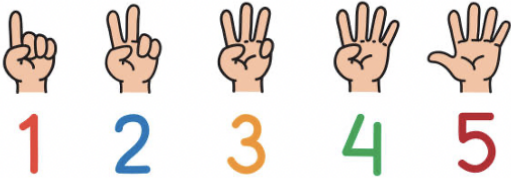




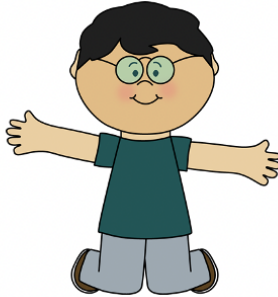
Signing Time is a great online sign language dictionary. Search a word and a brief, slow, and descriptive video shows and explains how to sign the word.

Riddle, Wayne Isaac. "Week 3. Emotions!!!! Upset, Frustrated ... - Youtube.com." Youtube. Youtube, September 12, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0OVcmXmpht0>.
Wayne's videos are easy to follow while learning and practicing sign language.

Calm Down Corner - suggested items tools may include, but are not limited to:

- Visual calming bottle (i.e. colored sand, or dyed water and oil with beads)
- Stuffed animals
- Pillows
- Small fidgets or toys (i.e. spinners, stress balls, Play-Doh, Legos)
- Paper and drawing utensils to write or draw
- Calm down, yoga, movement cards
- Feelings chart (with images and/or ASL)
- Books about feelings/emotions
- Timer

Sample Calm Down Coping Cards

<p>Breathe</p> 	<p>Draw</p> 
<p>Count</p> 	<p>Yoga</p> 
<p>Wall Push</p> 	<p>Read</p> 
<p>Fidget</p> 	<p>Movement</p> 

Sample Social-Emotional Scenario Prompt Cards




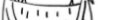

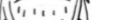

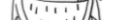
<p>You are playing with your favorite toy in the classroom. A classmate comes and takes it while you're in the bathroom.</p> <p>How do you feel? What do you say or do?</p>	<p>You notice a friend fell on the playground and is crying.</p> <p>How do you think they feel? What do you say or do?</p>
<p>You see that a classmate comes into the classroom but is not playing with anything or anyone.</p> <p>How do you think they feel? What do you say or do?</p>	<p>Someone is bothering you on the carpet by tapping you or fidgeting.</p> <p>How do you feel? What do you say or do?</p>
<p>You are having trouble focusing because you are going to a friend's house after school.</p> <p>How do you feel? What do you say or do?</p>	<p>Someone in class wants to be your partner but you don't want to work with them.</p> <p>How do you feel? What do you say or do?</p>

Sample Think Sheet, made with Amy Mateer, a Selwyn Elementary colleague

My Color Monster Think Sheet

Name _____ Date _____

I feel

<p>Red</p>  	<p>Yellow</p>  	<p>Blue</p>  	<p>Green</p>  
---	--	--	---

I did

--








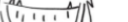
I can

 breathe	 take a break	 use a fidget	 count	 think
---	--	--	--	---

Next time I will

--

Now I feel

<p>Red</p>  	<p>Yellow</p>  	<p>Blue</p>  	<p>Green</p>  
---	--	--	---

Teacher _____ **Parent** _____

*Sample Parent Survey (pre-unit) *could be shared electronically on a survey site or form*

Welcome to Our Class! I am so excited to have you and your student as a part of our school family. Teacher-family relationships are extremely important to me. I believe that your child will be most successful in both their social-emotional and academic development when we work together as a team and have honest, open communication. As a way to get to better get to know your family and your child, please fill out this form. Please only share what you are comfortable sharing, and feel free to reach out at any time to share your thoughts or concerns. Thanks so much for your time!

Student: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

1. How does your child currently feel about school?

2. How often do you discuss feelings/emotions, and what do you discuss?

3. What are some things that make your child happy (hobbies, stories, activities)?

4. How do you feel about your child's overall mental health?

5. What, if any, techniques do you and/or your family do to create a calm and pleasant environment?

6. What concerns, if any, do you have about your child's interactions with teachers and/or other students?

7. In what ways can I help your child?

8. Is there anything else you would like to let me know? And are you interested in more information or support?

Topic II: Whole-Brain Strategies #1-2 – The Left and Right Brain

Whole-Brain Kid: Left and Right Brain Cartoon (for poster, book, or cards)

WHOLE-BRAIN KIDS: Teach Your Kids About the Two Sides of the Brain
YOUR LEFT BRAIN AND YOUR RIGHT BRAIN

<p>DO YOU KNOW THAT YOU HAVE MANY PARTS TO YOUR BRAIN AND THEY ALL DO DIFFERENT THINGS? IT'S ALMOST LIKE YOU HAVE DIFFERENT BRAINS WITH MINDS OF THEIR OWN. BUT WE CAN HELP THEM ALL GET ALONG AND HELP ONE ANOTHER.</p>	<p>OUR RIGHT BRAIN LISTENS TO OUR BODY AND OTHER PARTS OF OUR BRAIN AND KNOWS ABOUT OUR BIG FEELINGS LIKE WHEN WE'RE HAPPY, OR BRAVE, OR SCARED, OR SAD, OR REALLY MAD. IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE PAY ATTENTION TO THESE FEELINGS AND TALK ABOUT THEM.</p>

<p>SOMETIMES WHEN WE'RE UPSET AND WE DON'T TALK ABOUT IT, OUR FEELINGS CAN BUILD AND BUILD INSIDE US, LIKE A HUGE WAVE THAT WASHES OVER US AND MAKES US SAY OR DO THINGS WE DON'T MEAN.</p>	<p>BUT THE LEFT BRAIN CAN HELP PUT OUR FEELINGS INTO WORDS. THEN OUR WHOLE BRAIN CAN WORK TOGETHER AS A TEAM AND WE CAN CALM DOWN.</p>

FOREXAMPLE:

<p>ANNIE GOT SICK AND HAD TO MISS HER FRIEND'S BIRTHDAY PARTY. SHE WAS SO MAD ABOUT STAYING HOME THAT A HUGE ANGER WAVE GREW AND GREW AND WAS ABOUT TO CRASH DOWN ON HER.</p>	<p>ANNIE'S DAD HELPED HER TALK ABOUT WHAT SHE WAS FEELING.</p>	
		<p>WHEN SHE USED HER WORDS TO SAY HOW SHE FELT, HER LEFT BRAIN HELPED HER SURF THE BIG ANGER WAVE FROM HER RIGHT BRAIN, AND SHE RODE IT TO SHORE, CALM AND HAPPY.</p>

Whole-Brain Kid: Upstairs and Downstairs Brain Cartoon (for poster, book, or cards)

FOR EXAMPLE:

THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED TO JEFFREY WHEN HIS SISTER DESTROYED HIS LEGO TOWER. HE FLIPPED HIS LID AND WANTED TO SCREAM AT HER.

BUT JEFFREY'S PARENTS HAD TAUGHT HIM ABOUT FLIPPING HIS LID, AND HOW HIS UPSTAIRS BRAIN COULD HELP HIM CALM DOWN. HE WAS STILL ANGRY, BUT INSTEAD OF SHOUTING AT HIS SISTER, HE WAS ABLE TO TELL HER HE WAS ANGRY AND ASK HIS PARENTS TO TAKE HER OUT OF HIS ROOM.

MAKING GOOD CHOICES

BIG EMOTIONS

SO THE NEXT TIME YOU FEEL YOURSELF STARTING TO FLIP YOUR LID, MAKE A BRAIN MODEL WITH YOUR HAND. (REMEMBER, IT'S A BRAIN MODEL, NOT AN ANGRY FIST!) PUT YOUR FINGERS STRAIGHT UP, THEN SLOWLY LOWER THEM SO THAT THEY'RE HUGGING YOUR THUMB. THIS WILL BE YOUR REMINDER TO USE YOUR UPSTAIRS BRAIN TO HELP YOU CALM THOSE BIG FEELINGS FROM THE DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN.

WHOLE-BRAIN KIDS: Teach Your Kids About Their Downstairs and Upstairs Brain

YOUR DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN AND YOUR UPSTAIRS BRAIN

Thinking

BIG feelings

MAKE A FIST WITH YOUR HAND. THIS IS WHAT WE CALL A HAND MODEL OF YOUR BRAIN. REMEMBER HOW YOU HAVE A LEFT SIDE AND A RIGHT SIDE TO YOUR BRAIN? WELL, YOU ALSO HAVE AN UPSTAIRS AND A DOWNSTAIRS PART OF YOUR BRAIN.

THE UPSTAIRS BRAIN IS WHERE YOU MAKE GOOD DECISIONS AND DO THE RIGHT THING, EVEN WHEN YOU ARE FEELING REALLY UPSET.

NOW LIFT YOUR FINGERS A LITTLE BIT. SEE WHERE YOUR THUMB IS? THAT'S PART OF YOUR DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN, AND IT'S WHERE YOUR REALLY BIG FEELINGS COME FROM. IT LETS YOU CARE ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE AND FEEL LOVE. IT ALSO LETS YOU FEEL UPSET, LIKE WHEN YOU'RE MAD OR FRUSTRATED.

FLIPPING YOUR LID

SOMETIMES WHEN WE GET REALLY UPSET, WE CAN FLIP OUR LID. RAISE YOUR FINGERS LIKE THIS. SEE HOW YOUR UPSTAIRS BRAIN IS NO LONGER TOUCHING YOUR DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN? THAT MEANS IT CAN'T HELP IT STAY CALM.

THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH FEELING UPSET. THAT'S NORMAL, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOUR UPSTAIRS BRAIN HELPS YOU CALM DOWN. FOR EXAMPLE, CLOSE YOUR FINGERS AGAIN. SEE HOW THE UPSTAIRS THINKING PART OF YOUR BRAIN IS TOUCHING YOUR THUMB, SO IT CAN HELP YOUR DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS CALMLY?

Topic IV: Whole-Brain Strategies #6-7 – Making Implicit Memories Explicit

Whole-Brain Kid: Making Implicit Memories Explicit Cartoon (for poster, book, or cards)

WHOLE-BRAIN KIDS: Teach Your Kids About Making Their Implicit Memories Explicit

PUTTING PUZZLE PIECES OF MEMORY TOGETHER

WHEN THINGS HAPPEN, YOUR BRAIN REMEMBERS THEM, BUT NOT ALWAYS AS A WHOLE; PUT-TOGETHER MEMORY. INSTEAD, IT'S AS IF THERE ARE LITTLE PUZZLE PIECES OF WHAT HAPPENED FLOATING AROUND IN YOUR HEAD.

THE WAY YOU HELP YOUR BRAIN PUT THE PUZZLE PIECES TOGETHER IS BY TELLING THE STORY OF WHAT HAPPENED.

TELLING THE STORY IS GREAT WHEN WE DO SOMETHING FUN, LIKE HAVING A BIRTHDAY PARTY. JUST BY TALKING ABOUT IT, WE GET TO REMEMBER HOW MUCH FUN WE HAD.

BUT SOMETIMES, SOMETHING UPSETTING HAPPENS TO US, AND WE MIGHT NOT WANT TO REMEMBER. THE PROBLEM IS THAT WHEN WE DON'T THINK ABOUT IT THOSE PUZZLE PIECES NEVER GET PUT TOGETHER, AND WE MIGHT FEEL SCARED, SAD, OR ANGRY WITHOUT KNOWING WHY.

FOR EXAMPLE:

SHE SAW THAT HER FEARS WERE ABOUT THAT TIME AND NOT ABOUT DOGS SHE MEETS NOW.

THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED TO MIA. SHE DIDN'T KNOW WHY SHE WAS SCARED OF DOGS. THEN ONE DAY HER DAD TOLD HER A STORY SHE'D FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE TIME A BIG DOG HAD BARKED AT HER.

NOW SHE LIKES TO PET FRIENDLY DOGS IN HER NEIGHBORHOOD, AND SHE EVENS WANTS A PUPPY OF HER OWN.

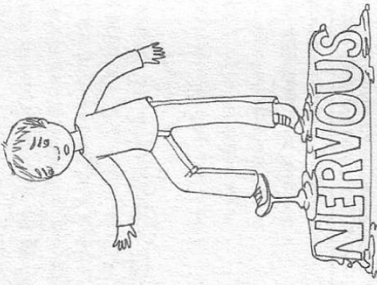

WHEN YOU TELL THE STORY ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED, YOU PUT THE PUZZLE PIECES TOGETHER AND YOU FEEL LESS SCARED, SAD, OR ANGRY. YOU WILL ALSO FEEL BRAVER, CALMER, AND HAPPIER.

Topic V: Whole-Brain Strategies #8-10 – Integrating the Many Parts of Themselves

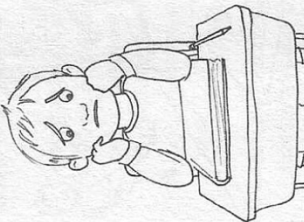
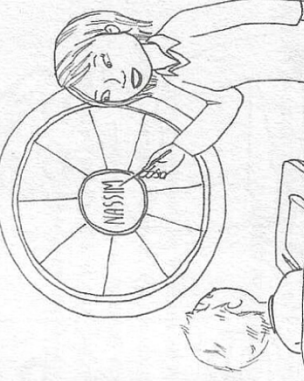
Whole-Brain Kid: Integrating the Parts of Themselves Cartoon (for poster, book, or cards)

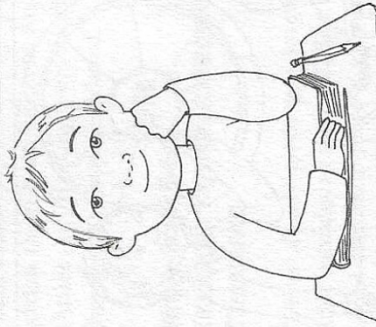
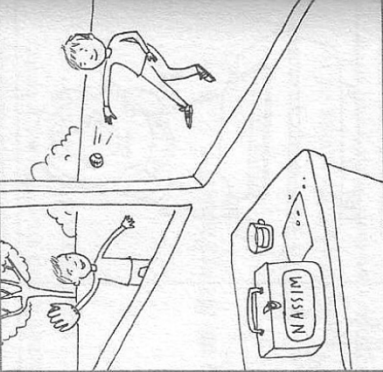
WHOLE-BRAIN KIDS: Teach Your Kids About Integrating the Many Parts of Themselves

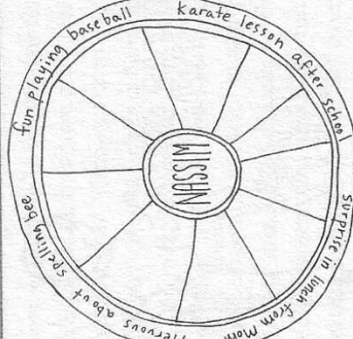
CHOOSING WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT

	
<p>DO YOU EVER FEEL LIKE YOU "GET STUCK" ON A FEELING OR A THOUGHT? MAYBE AN UNHAPPY ONE THAT'S SO POWERFUL IT MAKES YOU FORGET ABOUT OTHER FEELINGS AND THOUGHTS THAT MAKE YOU HAPPY OR EXCITED?</p>	<p>THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO STAY STUCK ON FEELINGS THAT UPSET YOU. YOU CAN LEARN TO FOCUS ON OTHER PARTS OF YOURSELF AND GET UNSTUCK.</p>

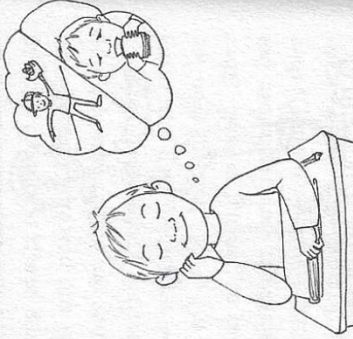
FOR EXAMPLE:

	
<p>NASSIM COULDN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT THE SPELLING BEE. HE EVEN HAD A STOMACHACHE. HE DIDN'T FEEL LIKE EATING HIS LUNCH OR PLAYING AT RECESS. ALL HE COULD THINK ABOUT WAS SPELLING. HE WAS NERVOUS.</p>	<p>THEN HIS TEACHER, MS. ANDERSON, TAUGHT HIM ABOUT HIS WHEEL OF AWARENESS. SHE EXPLAINED THAT OUR MINDS ARE LIKE A BICYCLE WHEEL. AT THE CENTER OF THE WHEEL, CALLED THE HUB, IS OUR SAFE PLACE WHERE OUR MIND CAN RELAX AND CHOOSE WHAT IT THINKS ABOUT.</p>

	
<p>WHEN NASSIM OPENED HIS EYES HE FELT BETTER. HE HAD USED HIS WHEEL OF AWARENESS TO FOCUS ON OTHER FEELINGS AND THOUGHTS. AND HE HAD CHANGED HOW HE FELT. HE WAS STILL A LITTLE NERVOUS, BUT HE WASN'T STUCK ON JUST THE NERVOUSNESS.</p>	<p>HE LEARNED THAT HE DOESN'T HAVE TO THINK ONLY ABOUT NERVOUS FEELINGS. AND THAT HE CAN USE HIS MIND TO THINK ABOUT OTHER THINGS THAT CAN HELP HIM HAVE FUN AND NOT FEEL SO WORRIED. NASSIM ATE HIS LUNCH AND RAN OUTSIDE TO PLAY BASEBALL.</p>



ON THE RIM OF THE WHEEL ARE ALL THE THINGS NASSIM COULD THINK ABOUT AND FEEL: HOW HE LIKES PLAYING BASEBALL AT RECESS, WHAT SURPRISE HIS MOM COULD HAVE PACKED IN HIS LUNCH, AND, OF COURSE, HIS NERVOUSNESS ABOUT THE SPELLING BEE. SHE EXPLAINED THAT HE WAS ONLY FOCUSING ON THE NERVOUSNESS POINT ON HIS RIM AND IGNORING THE OTHER PARTS.



MS. ANDERSON HAD NASSIM CLOSE HIS EYES AND TAKE THREE DEEP BREATHS. SHE SAID, "YOU'VE BEEN FOCUSING ON YOUR WORRIES ABOUT SPELLING. NOW I WANT YOU TO FOCUS ON THE PART OF YOUR WHEEL THAT HAS FUN PLAYING BASEBALL, AND THE PART THAT CAN IMAGINE A YUMMY LUNCH." HE SMILED AND HIS STOMACH STARTED TO GRUMBLE.

Topic VI: Whole-Brain Strategies #11-12 – Integrating the Self with Others

Whole-Brain Kid: Integrating Self with Others Cartoon (for poster, book, or cards)

<p>WHOLE-BRAIN KIDS: Teach Your Kids About Integrating the Self with Others</p> <p>ME AND WE</p>		<p>FOR EXAMPLE:</p>	
<p>JUST LIKE "EYESIGHT" IS SEEING WITH YOUR EYES, "MINDSIGHT" IS SEEING WITH YOUR MIND. IT MEANS TWO THINGS...</p>		<p>HE EXPLAINED THAT SINCE HE WAS THE GUEST, HE FELT THAT TIM SHOULD HAVE LET HIM USE THE NEW WATER GUN. DREW'S DAD LISTENED AND SAID, "WHY DO YOU THINK TIM WANTED TO USE IT SO MUCH?"</p>	
<p>FIRST, IT MEANS LOOKING INSIDE YOUR OWN MIND TO SEE WHAT'S GOING ON IN THERE. MINDSIGHT LETS YOU PAY ATTENTION TO THE PICTURES IN YOUR HEAD, THE THOUGHTS IN YOUR MIND, THE EMOTIONS YOU EXPERIENCE, AND EVEN THE FEELINGS IN YOUR BODY. IT HELPS YOU KNOW YOURSELF BETTER.</p>		<p>DREW CAME HOME FROM A PLAYDATE AND TOLD HIS DAD THAT HE AND TIM HAD ARGUED OVER WHO GOT TO USE TIM'S NEW WATER GUN. THEY HAD EVENTUALLY DECIDED TO TAKE TURNS, BUT WHEN DREW GOT HOME, HE STILL FELT ANGRY.</p>	
<p>THE SECOND PART OF MINDSIGHT IS SEEING SOMEONE ELSE'S MIND AND TRYING TO LOOK AT THINGS THE WAY THEY DO.</p>		<p>DREW THOUGHT FOR A SECOND, "BECAUSE IT WAS NEW, AND HE HADN'T GOTTEN TO PLAY WITH IT YET?" IN THAT MOMENT, DREW USED HIS MINDSIGHT TO UNDERSTAND TIM'S FEELINGS. HE DIDN'T FEEL AS MAD ANYMORE.</p>	
<p>THE NEXT TIME YOU'RE UPSET WITH SOMEONE, USE YOUR OWN MINDSIGHT TO SEE HOW THE OTHER PERSON FEELS. IT CAN MAKE YOU BOTH FEEL A LOT HAPPIER.</p>		<p>THE NEXT TIME YOU'RE UPSET WITH SOMEONE, USE YOUR OWN MINDSIGHT TO SEE HOW THE OTHER PERSON FEELS. IT CAN MAKE YOU BOTH FEEL A LOT HAPPIER.</p>	

Culminating Task

Teachers are encouraged to allow students to pick their own medium and materials for their project to show self-expression and promote further interest and investment. Some suggested materials are, but not limited to:

- Large, blank paper (construction, poster, or cardstock)
- Writing utensils (pencils, crayons, markers)
- Scissors
- Glue
- Scrap paper of various colors
- Other various craft supplies (tissue paper, yarn)

Sample Writing Prompts

My name is _____ and I have lots of feelings.

This year I learned that feelings change and I am in control of them.

When I feel _____,

I like to _____.

When I feel _____,

I can _____ to feel better.

When my friends feel _____,

I can _____.

*Sample Parent Survey (post-unit) *could be shared electronically on a survey site or form*

Thank you for an amazing year! I cannot believe that our school year is coming to a close. We have spent so much time this year learning and growing and a huge part of that has been because of your parental support. We focused on mental health and feelings throughout the year and I would love to reach out one more time to get your feedback on our social-emotion unit. As always please only share what you are comfortable sharing, and feel free to reach out at any time to share your thoughts or concerns. Thanks so much for your time!

Student: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

1. How does your child currently feel about school?

2. After this year, how often do you discuss feelings/emotions, and what do you discuss?

3. Do you feel like your child grew social-emotionally this year? If so, what helped? If not, what hindered it?

4. What techniques, if any, do you see your child doing now to calm down or get to a pleasant feeling?

5. How do you feel about your child's overall mental health compared to the beginning of the year?

6. Do you/your family use any of the information and techniques at home that I have used with students? If so, what have you noticed?

7. Is there anything else you would like to share? Please let me know if I can support your family in any way.

Appendix III: Student Resources

Mentor Texts

The following list is an abundance of titles that lend themselves well to this curriculum unit. They are picture books and are appropriate for ages pre-kindergarten through first grade. Depending on each school's unique demographics and the surrounding communities, teachers may want to choose some of these works of literature to help their students connect to similar characters or authors and have exposure different races, religions, ethnicities, families, and lifestyles. There are many other wonderful books that discuss emotions and trauma. However, it is crucial that when using new or unfamiliar books, teachers first analyze the book or resources to make sure it is appropriate for their specific students. Educators can do this by checking for stereotypes, characters in power, author perspective, and even the copyright date, among other things.⁴²

Books About Labeling Emotions (in general)

- *Big Feelings* by Alexandra Penfold
- *Visiting Feelings* by Lauren Rubenstein
- *My Body Sends a Signal: Helping Kids Recognize Emotions and Express Feelings* by Natalia Maguire
- *The Great Big Book of Feelings* by Mary Hoffman
- *The Feeling Flower* by Leah Dakroub
- *Today I Feel Silly and Other Moods That Make My Day* by Jamie Lee Curtis
- *The Feelings Book* by Todd Parr
- *My Many Colored Days* by Dr. Seuss
- *The Color Monster* by Anna Llenas
- *Glad Monster, Sad Monster* by Ed Emberley and Anne Miranda
- *The Way I Feel* by Janan Cain
- *How Are You Feeling Today, Baby Bear?* by Jane Evans
- *Today I Feel...* by Madelina Moniz
- *Tough Guys Have Feelings Too* by Keith Negley
- *The Boy with Big, Big Feelings* by Brittney Winn Lee
- *My Heart* by Corinna Luyken
- *Tiger Days: A Book of Feelings* by M.H. Clark
- *All About Feelings* by Felicity Brooks and Mar Ferro
- *How Do You Feel?* by Lizzy Rockwell
- *La Catrina: Emotions – Emociones* by Patty Rodriguez and Ariana Stein
- *Your Fantastic Elastic Brain: Stretch It, Shape It* by JoAnn Deak
- *Feelings* by Libby Walden

Books Including Themes of Anger, Madness, and Frustration

- *Sometimes I'm Bombaloo* by Rachel Vali
- *Grumpy Monkey* by Suzanne Lang

⁴² Bill Honig, "10 Quick Ways to Analyze Children's Books For Racism and Sexism." (Sacramento, 1998).

- *Mouse Was Mad* by Linda Urban and illustrated by Henry Cole
- *When Sophie Gets Angry...Really, Really Angry* by Molly Bang
- *Llama, Llama, Mad At Mama* by Anna Dewdney
- *The Very Cranky Bear* by Nick Bland
- *Listening to My Body* by Gabi Garcia
- *Millie Fierce* by Jane Manning
- *The Unbudgeable Curmudgeon* by Matthew Burgess

Books Including Themes of Happiness and Excitement

- *Taking a Bath with a Dog and Other Things That Make Me Happy* by Scott Menchin
- *Where Happiness Begins* by Eva Eland

Books Including Themes of Sadness, Grief, and Loss

- *I'm Sad* by Michael Ian Black
- *When Sadness Comes to Call* by Eva Eland
- *The Rough Patch* by Brian Lies
- *The Princess and the Fog* by Lloyd Jones

Books Including Themes of Anxiety, Worry, and Fear

- *The Huge Bag of Worries* by Virginia Ironside
- *Jabari Jumps* by Gaia Cornwall
- *Ruby Finds a Worry* by Tom Percival
- *The Day You Begin* by Jaqueline Woodson
- *Life Without Nico* by Andrea Maturana
- *Wemberly Worried* by Kevin Henkes
- *I'm Worried* by Michael Ian Black
- *A Terrible Thing Happened* by Margaret M. Holmes

Books Including Themes of Coping

- *Breathing Makes It Better* by Christopher Willard and Wendy O'Leary
- *The Rabbit Listened* by Cori Doerrfeld
- *Listening to My Body* by Gabi Garcia
- *After The Fall (How Humpty Dumpty Got Back Up Again)* by Dan Santat
- *B Is for Breathe* by Dr. Melissa Munro Boyd
- *The Barefoot King* by Andrew Jordan Nance

Appendix IV: Teacher Resources

Required Texts

The following texts give educators a deeper understanding of the content explained and practice within the unit. Both books are concise and easy to understand, regardless of the difficult topics.

Siegel, Daniel J., and Tina Payne Bryson. *The Whole-Brain Child*. New York, NY: Bantam Books Trade Paperbacks, 2012.

Shalaby, Carla. *Troublemakers - Lessons in Freedom from Young Children*. New York, NY: The New Press, 2017.

Suggested Texts

The following texts are great for those who want to dive deeper into the topics of mental health, emotions, trauma, and how it affects both adults and students.

Achor, Shawn. *The Happiness Advantage*. New York, NY: Random House, 2011.

Ayers, William, Rick Ayers, and Bernardine Dohrn. *Zero Tolerance: Resisting the Drive for Punishment in Our Schools: A Handbook for Parents, Students, Educators, and Citizens*. New York, NY: New Press, 2002.

Brackett, Marc A. *Permission to Feel: Unlocking the Power of Emotions to Help Our Kids, Ourselves, and Our Society Thrive*. New York, NY: Celadon Books, 2019.

Hart, Sura, and Kindle Victoria Hodson. *The Compassionate Classroom: Relationship Based Teaching and Learning*. Encinitas, CA: PuddleDancer Press, 2004.

Rosenberg, Marshall B. *Teaching Children Compassionately: How Students and Teachers Can Succeed with Mutual Understanding*. Encinitas, CA: PuddleDancer Press, 2005.

Perry, Bruce Duncan, and Maia Szalavitz. *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog: And Other Stories from a Child Psychiatrist's Notebook: What Traumatized Children Can Teach Us about Loss, Love, and Healing*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2017.

Assessments and Checklists

Sample Observation Checklist (to be used throughout the unit)

The Whole-Brain Classroom: Social-Emotional and Speaking and Listening Checklist

[illegible]

Additional Suggested Online Resources

Calm, 2012. <https://www.calm.com/>.

Headspace, 2010. <https://www.headspace.com/>.

Smiling Mind, 2020. <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/>.

These free sites offer a variety of music, videos and lessons for adults and children alike for mediation, breathing, education, and calming down.

Epic! Creations, Inc. Epic Books, 2013. <https://www.getepic.com/>.

Epic! Books is an online digital library with thousands of books suitable for children of all ages. It is free to educators and can be set up with student accounts to be used inside the classroom. Teachers can search by theme, title, author, and assign books for students to read or be read to. Some books even come with comprehension quizzes or teachers can make their own comprehension quizzes with any books that do not have aligning questions.

GoNoodle, 2015. <https://www.gonoodle.com/>.

Go Noodle is a free website designed for teachers filled with hundreds of engaging videos that guide students through brain breaks and movement breaks to help keep children moving and learning. Their videos range from dancing and yoga to brain teasers and breathing techniques.

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- Bishop, Rudine Sims. "Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors." *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom*. 6, no. 3, (Summer 1990).
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Siegel, Daniel J., and Tina Payne Bryson. *The Whole-Brain Child*. New York, NY: Bantam Books Trade Paperbacks, 2012.

Shalaby, Carla. *Troublemakers - Lessons in Freedom from Young Children*. New York, NY: The New Press, 2017.

Van der Kolk, Bessel. *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2015.