

# COUNSELOR'S CORNER

BRIT DOTY, SCHOOL COUNSELOR

## MINDFULNESS & GRATITUDE ALL YEAR ROUND

### EIGHT GREAT WAYS TO BE THANKFUL

For kids of all ages

Thanksgiving is a time of year when we express our gratitude for all the things we have. Here are eight great ways to show how thankful you are:

**1 Just say "Thanks!"**

Learn how to say "Thank You" in different languages. You never know when it will come in handy.

- Gracias** Spanish (grah-see-uhs)
- Merci** French (mer-see)
- XièXie** Chinese (syeh-syeh [Mandarin])
- Arigatō** Japanese (ah-ree-gah-toh)
- Danke** German (dahng-kuh)

**2 Start your own tradition**

How about asking everyone around the table to share one thing (or several) that they are grateful for, then repeat the process every year? That's tradition!



**3 Offer to help without being asked.**

You can start with helping to prepare dinner, or end with dirty dishes that need cleaning, or many other small things.

**4 Make an example of yourself for younger kids.**

You may not know it, but they are watching you. Set a good example. Or better yet, let them help you with small projects around the house.

KIDS DISCOVER Magazine, Infotoon: Michael Kline (dogfoose.com)



**5 Hug someone for no reason.**

Tell them that you are thankful for them being in your life. Sometimes the simplest things are the best things.

**6 Create a Thanksgiving diary or scrapbook.**

Ask everyone to jot down their thoughts or contribute a photo on this wonderful day. Be sure to get it out and add to it each year, to see how things change.



**7 Remember others that help with the holidays.**

The sacker at the grocery store, the mail person, the trash collectors, they all help. Leave a simple note or small bag of candy. They will really appreciate being remembered.



**8 Be a good listener.**

If you're always talking about yourself, you'll never learn anything about anyone else.



An important part of mindfulness is gratitude. By practicing mindfulness, you become aware of all the things that are going well in your life. Gratitude is developed through practice the way you learn any other skill, like cooking or playing an instrument. The more you practice, the easier feeling grateful becomes. Over time you can actually change the way your brain works by practicing gratitude. You will begin automatically focusing on what's going well in your life and notice those positive things more often — not just at Thanksgiving.

### NOVEMBER LESSONS

**Kindergarten**

Second Step Skills For Learning, Gratitude, Kelso's Choice

**Grade 1**

Second Step Skills For Learning, Gratitude, Kelso's Choice

**Grade 2**

Second Step Skills For Learning, Gratitude, Kelso's Choice

**Grade 3**

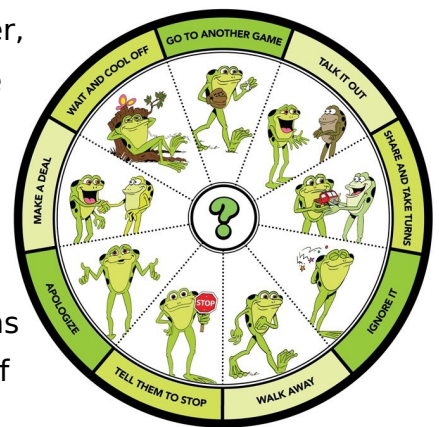
Mindfulness, Gratitude, Problem Solving

**Grade 4**

Mindfulness, Gratitude, Problem Solving

### PROBLEM SOLVING WITH KELSO'S CHOICE

Conflict or disagreement is normal and often happens when children get together. However, hurtful words, gestures or physical attack are unacceptable ways to deal with conflict and disagreement at school. We use the Kelso's Choice program to teach students several positive ways to deal with these difficult situations. Students who have minor problems try at least two of the ideas from the wheel of choices before asking for adult help.



### MONTHLY RESOURCE: PBS PARENTS - [PBS.ORG/PARENTS](http://PBS.ORG/PARENTS)

PBS Parents© is a resource that's filled with information on child development and early learning. It also serves as a parent's window to the world of PBS KIDS, offering access to educational games and activities inspired by PBS KIDS programs.

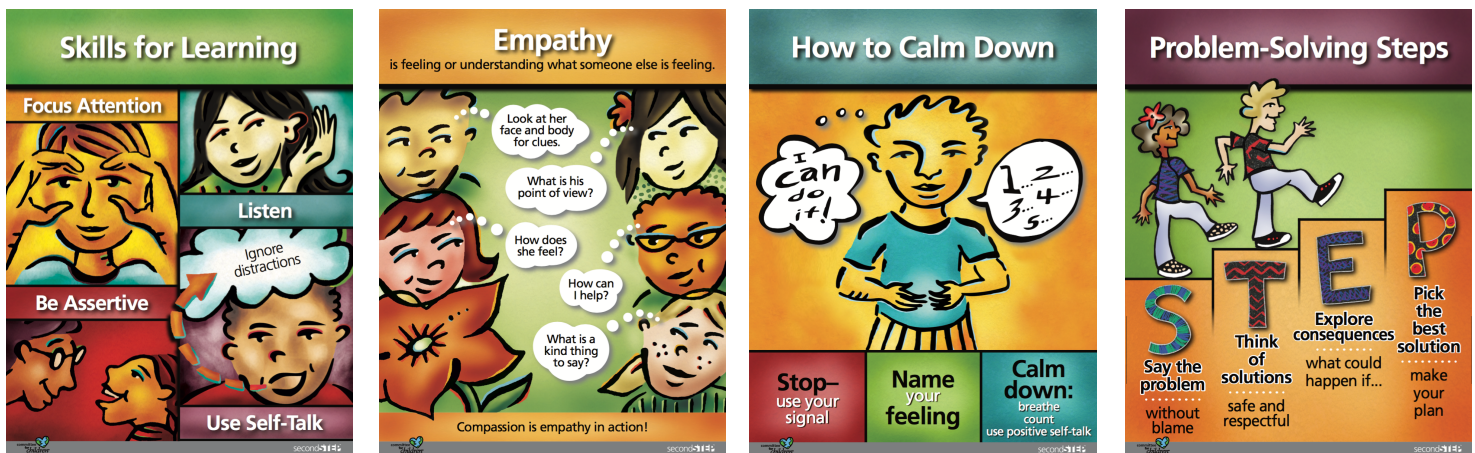
# SECOND STEP SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Success in school is not just about reading and math. It is also about knowing how to learn and how to get along with others. We are using the *Second Step* program as part of the counseling curriculum to teach these critical skills.

The *Second Step* program teaches skills in the following four areas:

- 1. Skills for Learning:** Students gain skills to help themselves learn, including how to focus their attention, listen carefully, use self-talk to stay on task, and be assertive when asking for help with schoolwork.
- 2. Empathy:** Students learn to identify and understand their own and others' feelings. Students also learn how to take another's perspective and how to show compassion.
- 3. Emotion Management:** Students learn specific skills for calming down when experiencing strong feelings, such as anxiety or anger.
- 4. Problem Solving:** Students learn a process for solving problems with others in a positive way.

If you have any questions about the *Second Step* program, please contact me for more information. You can also visit their website at <http://www.cfchildren.org/second-step/elementary>.



“GRATITUDE IS THE BEST ATTITUDE.”

“Be thankful for what you have; you’ll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don’t have, you will never, ever have enough.”

~Oprah Winfrey

“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.”

~John F. Kennedy