

CARE for Kids Vision and Principles  
Community, Autonomy, Relationships, Empowerment  
Creating A Respectful Environment: building a connected community of learners

### Rationale

Our schools play a critical role in helping children grow up to lead responsible and productive lives in our democratic society. To accomplish this fundamental goal, an intentional focus on children's social, emotional, ethical, and intellectual development must be in place.

These four areas of development are closely interrelated. Intellectual development helps children become academically skilled, knowledgeable, and thoughtful. Ethical development helps children become principled, caring, responsible, and self-disciplined. Social and emotional development help children become interpersonally skilled and adept at functioning within the institutions that comprise our personal, professional, and civic life. To nurture all four domains is to educate a child for life.

In order to help students develop socially, emotionally, ethically and intellectually, schools must deliberately provide significant and engaging learning opportunities, opportunities that allow students to experience membership in a safe and caring community of learners. Building these experiences into the structure, organization, and pedagogy of the school provides the foundation that enables children to become successful lifelong learners.

### Vision

Each CARE for Kids school promotes social, emotional, ethical, and intellectual development in an inclusive, caring, respectful, and supportive learning community that is physically and emotionally safe for all students and engages them as active participants in the classroom, school, and in the larger community.

The following six principles are the foundations for CARE for Kids:

- 1. At the heart of a caring school community are respectful, supportive relationships among and between students, educators, support staff, and parents.** We tend to learn best from, and with, those to whom we relate well. Supportive relationships enable students from diverse backgrounds to bring their personal experiences into the classroom comfortably. Students can voice opinions, make mistakes, tackle new subjects, and otherwise do all the risk taking that true learning entails. Respectful and supportive relationships among educators help them deal with the daily demands of their work and the risks and stresses of changing professional practice. Respectful and supportive relationships help parents, especially those who otherwise might feel vulnerable or ill-at-ease, feel welcomed, valued and therefore more likely to take active roles in the school and in their children's education. Supportive relationships help create a community where students and adults believe, "Everyone is important and together we can."
- 2. Learning becomes more connected and meaningful for students when social, emotional and ethical development is an integral part of the classroom, school and community experience.** Students need to experience fairness, respect, helpfulness, responsibility, kindness, and consideration from adults and peers in order to reciprocate such behavior. In addition, students need guidance in reflecting about the importance of these values, understanding how these values relate to specific behaviors, and applying these values broadly within and beyond the classroom. Developing students' social, emotional, and ethical skills results in students having a positive attitude, healthy self-confidence, and positive interpersonal relationships that include sensitivity to the feelings of others. Students demonstrate basic courtesy in social situations, work well with others, resolve conflicts fairly, and have a sense of obligation to do the right thing. Students know, "My choices make a difference for me, my classroom, my school, my community and the world."



3. **Significant and engaging learning, academic and social, takes place when students are able to construct deep understandings of broad concepts and principles through an active process of exploration, discovery, and application.** Curriculum is focused on important questions that students want to answer and challenge their thinking. Students have lots of opportunities to engage in active learning processes such as exploration, observation and description, collaborative dialogue, prediction, discovery, on-going questioning, reflection, and self-assessment. Understanding is scaffolded, supported, or nudged by connecting new learning to students' lives, past experiences and current understandings. Students are encouraged to express their thinking in multiple ways (e.g., in writing, pictures, graphs, diagrams, and drama), feel safe enough to make mistakes, and are helped to see discrepancies in their thinking. Students say, "We care about what we are learning."
4. **Community is strengthened when there are frequent opportunities for students to exercise their voice, choice, and responsible interdependence to work together for the common good.** We tend to be happiest and most effective when we have some say about what we are doing. Teachers help their students fulfill their need for autonomy by inviting them to participate in setting goals, establishing classroom procedures and norms, and giving them choices about their learning activities. When children genuinely have a say in the life of the classroom – class norms, study topics, conflict resolution, field-trip logistics, and so on – then they are committed to the decisions they have been trusted to make and feel responsible for the community they have helped shape. Students say, "We have a say about what goes on in our classroom and school."
5. **Classroom community and learning are maximized through frequent opportunities for collaboration and service to others.** People are social by nature; therefore, students should have frequent opportunities to collaborate with or help others (e.g., academic group-work, community service, tutoring, mentoring). By reflecting on the successes and challenges of these interactions, students grow socially, emotionally, ethically, and intellectually. They learn how to work well with others, and for the welfare of others, and why it feels good to do so. Students say, "We help each other and I make a difference."
6. **Effective classroom communities help students develop their intrinsic motivation by meeting their basic needs (e.g., safety, autonomy, belonging, competence, usefulness, fun & pleasure), rather than seeking to control students with extrinsic motivators (e.g., rewards and punishment).** If we truly care about helping our students gain the essential skills to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we must begin by helping them develop the internal motivation to learn and act responsibly. Human beings are pre-wired to seek a safe, orderly environment (safety and survival), feel a sense of belonging, be successful and have a sense of importance (competence and usefulness), experience a sense of autonomy (power and independence), and have fun. When we provide opportunities for these needs to be met in our classrooms and schools, students discover the intrinsic value of learning and being a contributing member of a caring community. Students say, "My school is a great place to be."

A CARE for Kids school gives our students a vision of the way the world could be.

The following is a framework for reflection and conversation around best practices for social emotional, ethical, and intellectual development, and learning. Each principle is accompanied by examples of teacher practices and student behaviors. Although there are six separate principles, in practice these principles are both interdependent and interrelated. Please focus primarily on the principles at the top of each page and consider the examples as just some of the many ways the principles might be applied. This is not to be considered a checklist or an exhaustive list. Each page includes space for additional ideas and observations.



**1. At the heart of a caring school community are respectful, supportive relationships among and between students, educators, support staff, and parents.**

Examples of Teacher Practices	Examples of Student Behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizes physical classroom to accommodate a variety of collaborative learning structures (e.g., class meetings, partner work, small group work)</li> <li>• Projects a genuine interest in and appreciation for all students, and pays attention to individual students in a positive way (e.g., greet at the door, welcome back after absence).</li> <li>• Provides opportunities for students to discover similarities among themselves and to appreciate and respect differences.</li> <li>• Gives students frequent opportunities to plan together and engage in activities that promote classroom and school unity, spirit, and pride.</li> <li>• Designs opportunities for all students to see their home culture, language, and experiences reflected in classroom activities.</li> <li>• Displays individual and group, student created work (e.g., art, math, science, writing) in the classroom and common areas.</li> <li>• Shares with students meaningful things about his/her personal life, such as hobbies and interests during classroom community building activities or content delivery (e.g., memoir, data collection, read alouds, primary source).</li> <li>• Uses inclusive language, such as “our” and “we” when referring to the classroom, materials, and activities.</li> <li>• Utilizes supportive and respectful language (e.g., calm, avoiding sarcasm, embarrassing comments, avoids referring to themselves in the third person).</li> <li>• Initiates frequent communication and activities/events that link home and school.</li> <li>• Welcomes and encourages the active participation of all families as partners in their child’s learning, and makes sure they are an integral part of the school community.</li> <li>• Utilizes collaborative efforts with all staff to embrace and model these practices throughout the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Displays empathy by exhibiting caring attitude/behavior toward others.</li> <li>• Exhibits helpful and respectful behavior towards others.</li> <li>• Spontaneously includes and invites others into their conversations and activities.</li> <li>• Helps build and support classroom unity and spirit that values and respects all members of the class.</li> <li>• Actively listens and responds to the ideas of others.</li> <li>• Shares ideas and experiences about their own lives and culture.</li> <li>• Participates in classroom and school community building activities (e.g., class meetings, discussions, class/school songs/mottos, family nights).</li> <li>• Demonstrates a sense of pride in their class, their classroom, and their school.</li> <li>• Respects adults’ ideas and work and can trust at least one adult enough to discuss personal concerns.</li> <li>• Shares ideas and experiences about classroom and school with family and friends.</li> </ul>

Other examples:

Other examples:



**2. Learning becomes more connected and meaningful for students when social, emotional and ethical development is an integral part of the classroom, school and community experience.**

Examples of Teacher Practices	Examples of Student Behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaches, models, demonstrates, and provides opportunities to develop essential social skills (e.g., empathy, cooperation, respect, responsibility, self-control, problem solving).</li> <li>• Incorporates prosocial values (e.g., helpfulness, kindness, fairness, respect, responsibility) as an integral part of academic lessons.</li> <li>• Provides frequent opportunities for students to work collaboratively with an intentional focus on the development of prosocial skills necessary to be an effective group member.</li> <li>• Provides frequent opportunities for students to discuss, reflect, and seek help with their social and academic issues.</li> <li>• Provides frequent opportunities for students to engage in prosocial activities on various levels (e.g., classroom, school, community).</li> <li>• Provides opportunities through service learning for application of curriculum to real-life situations in order to make a positive difference in the world.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for students to reflect upon the meaning and evaluate the impact of service learning activities.</li> <li>• Designs frequent opportunities for students to develop their understanding of and empathy for people of diverse cultures, ages, and backgrounds.</li> <li>• Helps and encourages students to understand the thoughts, feelings, motives, and perspectives of others.</li> <li>• Helps students to understand and value the reasons for rules and procedures through ongoing discussion and reflection.</li> <li>• Teaches, models and demonstrates by words and deeds his/her commitment to the principles of helpfulness, kindness, fairness, respect and responsibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps others and works with others in a positive manner.</li> <li>• Engages in acts of kindness and includes others in activities and conversations.</li> <li>• Listens and responds to others respectfully.</li> <li>• Avoids putting others down or making fun of others and helps other students not to do so.</li> <li>• Works toward finding fair solutions to problems.</li> <li>• Makes a difference by engaging in prosocial activities (e.g., buddies, service learning, relief efforts, recycling).</li> <li>• Asks for help with their social as well as their academic issues.</li> <li>• Respectfully disagrees.</li> <li>• Cares about the feelings of others.</li> </ul>

Other examples:

Other examples:



**3. Significant and engaging learning, academic and social, takes place when students are able to construct deep understandings of broad concepts and principles through an active process of exploration, discovery, and application.**

Examples of Teacher Practices	Examples of Student Behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consciously evaluate lesson design and planning to ensure relevance to learners, using feedback from their students.</li> <li>• Helps students connect new experiences, information, or ideas to their prior knowledge or experience.</li> <li>• Focuses instruction on developing students’ conceptual understanding and application through questioning that clarifies and deepens thinking.</li> <li>• Encourages and promotes student conversation and discussion with minimal teacher talk.</li> <li>• Connects learning activities to a purpose or idea that students can see as meaningful.</li> <li>• Routinely asks students inquiry-based questions that promote thinking and build their understanding, rather than questions that merely assess their knowledge (i.e., that look for the “right” answer).</li> <li>• Encourages students to try to solve problems by engaging in trial-and-error explorations based on their own understanding, rather than simply following memorized procedures.</li> <li>• Encourages students to pursue their own interests and explore answers to their own questions.</li> <li>• Frequently encourages students to self-reflect on their own learning and experiences.</li> <li>• Structures or designs learning activities that require genuine intellectual effort, yet allows most or all students to find a successful way to complete them.</li> <li>• Offers students opportunities to approach assignments in ways that allow them to incorporate their own ideas, interests, observations, &amp; experiences into their work.</li> <li>• Makes connections across disciplines to help reinforce important concepts and address real-world problems (e.g., service learning, project work)</li> <li>• Has high expectations for all students and provides students with multiple opportunities to succeed and the necessary supports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates an interest in and responsibility for their own learning by asking reflective questions and suggesting ideas for exploration.</li> <li>• Accepts mistakes as a natural part of the learning process.</li> <li>• Accepts constructive criticism as a natural part of the learning process.</li> <li>• Participates in all classroom discussions.</li> <li>• Focuses on their work and expresses interest and excitement about learning activities.</li> <li>• Persists in their efforts, and are less inclined to become easily discouraged with a task.</li> <li>• Takes the time to complete the assignment to their satisfaction, rather than merely racing to get the job done.</li> <li>• Self-assesses and reflects on their progress, and identifies areas for growth.</li> <li>• Takes pride in their work and accomplishments.</li> <li>• Eager to display their work.</li> <li>• Connects ideas to other ideas, to their own knowledge and experience, and makes connections to real-world application (e.g., service learning, project work).</li> <li>• Takes risks and is willing to try new ways to demonstrate their learning.</li> </ul>

Other examples:

Other examples:



**4. Community is strengthened when there are frequent opportunities for students to exercise their voice, choice and responsible interdependence to work together for the common good.**

Examples of Teacher Practices	Examples of Student Behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involves students in setting goals for their learning and in evaluating and self-reflecting on their progress.</li> <li>• Solicits student input and questions that help guide the direction of the lesson, unit of study and/or curriculum.</li> <li>• Encourages students to make suggestions that influence the activities, events and procedures in the classroom and school.</li> <li>• Involves students in establishing class rules and norms within a class meeting/team town hall.</li> <li>• Provides students opportunities to have dialogue and negotiations centered on classroom/student issues (i.e., class meetings/team town hall).</li> <li>• Provides students meaningful and purposeful tasks to perform in the classroom.</li> <li>• Offers students opportunities to approach assignments in a variety of ways through differentiated instruction.</li> <li>• Gives students opportunities to practice decision-making skills.</li> <li>• Provides opportunities for students to create, plan, and lead service learning activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflects on goals, effort and progress individually and/or collectively during check-in meetings, class meeting, student-led conferences etc.</li> <li>• Demonstrates an interest in and responsibility for their own learning.</li> <li>• Suggests ways to improve their classroom community and curricular processes.</li> <li>• Participates and exercises voice in designing, delivering and assessing the learning experience.</li> <li>• Takes action to support the classroom community (e.g., greeting visitors, managing and organizing material).</li> <li>• Participates and exercises voice in a class meeting/team town hall.</li> <li>• Takes an active role in supporting the larger community.</li> </ul>

Other examples:

Other examples:



**5. Classroom community and learning are maximized through frequent opportunities for collaboration and service to others.**

Examples of Teacher Practices	Examples of Student Behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaches the four basic elements (i.e., positive interdependence, social skills, individual responsibility, group evaluation) and corresponding procedures needed to make cooperative learning work.</li> <li>• Provides students with collaboration and discussion strategies (e.g., agree/disagree, consensus building, task management).</li> <li>• Structures opportunities for students to use different skills and talents within a group setting (e.g., analytical, graphic, musical, interpersonal).</li> <li>• Varies the formats for learning activities (e.g., whole class discussions, small group discussions, partner chats, silent reflections).</li> <li>• Intentionally engages all students in discussions and activities.</li> <li>• Intentionally engages all students in service learning activities that reach beyond the classroom.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages team members to do their best because everyone benefits.</li> <li>• Shares leadership responsibilities with other team members.</li> <li>• Focuses on both the academic assignments and the skills they need to work together.</li> <li>• Takes responsibility for group management.</li> <li>• Contributes freely to discussions and does not appear to be intimidated by other students, by the teacher, or by the classroom or school environment.</li> <li>• Values the skills, talents, and differing perspectives of their classmates.</li> <li>• Undertakes new learning activities and makes presentations to the class with confidence.</li> <li>• Applies positive prosocial skills in a collaborative setting (e.g., respects others' ideas, takes turns talking and listening).</li> <li>• Works cooperatively with peers in service-learning activities.</li> <li>• Exhibits an awareness and understanding of others, their values, needs, and perspectives.</li> </ul>

Other examples:

Other examples:



6. Effective classroom communities help students develop their intrinsic motivation by meeting their basic needs (e.g., safety, autonomy, belonging, competence, usefulness, fun & pleasure), rather than seeking to control students with extrinsic motivators (e.g., rewards and punishment).

Examples of Teacher Practices	Examples of Student Behaviors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops consistent classroom/team and schoolwide routines, procedures, and transitions that provides structure and a sense of security.</li> <li>• Designs opportunities for students to set behavior and academic goals, reflect and self-assess.</li> <li>• Works with students to establish developmentally appropriate classroom/team norms/rules and expectations that support safety, both physical and emotional.</li> <li>• Uses the Classroom Instructional Framework to teach norms/rules, routines, procedures, and transitions.</li> <li>• Purposefully uses teacher-language, verbal and non-verbal, (e.g., to direct, to reinforce, to remind, to redirect) which encourages and empowers students to learn and develop self-control.</li> <li>• Utilizes logical consequences that allow students to assume responsibility, make amends, and learn from their inappropriate behavior (e.g., restitution, restoration, restriction, reflection).</li> <li>• Provides prompt and specific feedback to students to assist them in self-assessing and self-reflecting on their performance.</li> <li>• Helps students recognize progress by comparing present and past performances/behaviors.</li> <li>• Encourages students to work hard for their own personal growth rather than to get good grades or to do better than others.</li> <li>• Minimizes academic competition among students whenever and wherever possible.</li> <li>• Refrains from using stars, stickers, rewards, and other extrinsic motivators to promote academic or behavior performance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independently follows classroom/team and schoolwide routines and procedures.</li> <li>• Feels a sense of order, predictability, and trust in the classroom.</li> <li>• Engages in “play” without aggression or chaos.</li> <li>• Knows that what they care about matters in school.</li> <li>• Takes ownership in their classroom and personal learning.</li> <li>• Understands how expectations or rules are consistent with their own sense of fairness or kindness, and how behaviors affect the well-being of others.</li> <li>• Increases level of self-control.</li> <li>• Sees the connection between their behavior and the effect it has on themselves and others.</li> <li>• Fixes problems, makes amends, regains control, and feels safe.</li> <li>• Uses constructive feedback to improve performance.</li> <li>• Feels pride in recognition and understands why.</li> <li>• Shows interest in exploring ideas and focuses on purposeful learning rather than grades or credits.</li> <li>• Expresses interest and excitement about learning activities.</li> <li>• Regularly reflects and celebrates social and academic progress.</li> <li>• Strives to put forth good effort.</li> <li>• Sees classmates as colleagues instead of competitors.</li> </ul>

Other examples:

Other examples:



## Curricula that Support the Principles

### Morning Meeting/Circle of Power and Respect (CPR) – year 1 training

- Students begin each day by meeting for 15-30 minutes in a circle to explore and practice social skills, and to merge social, emotional, and intellectual learning.
- Four Components
  1. Greeting: Students greet each other by name through structured activities.
  2. Sharing: Students share some news of interest, and respond to each other, articulating thoughts, feelings, and questions in a positive manner.
  3. Group Activity: The whole class does a short activity together, building class cohesion through active participation.
  4. News & Announcements: Students practice academic skills and build their sense of community by reading and discussing a daily message written by the teacher.

### Class Meeting - Developmental Studies Center (DSC), year 1 training

- Provide a forum for students and teachers to come together as a class to build a community of learners, to get to know each other, reflect, problem-solve, and make decisions together
- *Class Meetings Kit* Includes
  - Teacher's Calendar: Introduces and Incorporates Informal Cooperative Structures
  - Beginning-of-Year Class Meetings: Team Building, Setting the Stage, Setting Class Norms/Rules
  - Daily Check-In Meetings
  - Anytime Class Meetings: Planning/Decision-making, Problem-Solving Class Meetings
  - End-Of-Year Class Meetings

### Buddy Program/Cross Age Mentoring – DSC, year 2 training, elementary

- Matches every older student in the school with a younger buddy for a series of collaborative learning activities facilitated by the teachers
- *Cross-Age Buddies Activity Book*
  - Collection of 40 activities including language arts, math, science, social studies, art, music, & PE
  - Includes set-up, activity, wrap-up and reflection
  - Suggested timeline of once or twice a month

### Homeside Activities/Home School Activities – DSC, year 2 training, elementary

- Designed to stimulate conversations between the students and their family members to link home and school
- *Homeside Activities*
  - Grade Level book including 18 activities, written in both English and Spanish
  - Includes set-up, activity (black-line master), and follow-up in class
  - Suggested time-line of once or twice a month

### Schoolwide Community-Building Activities – DSC, year 2 training, elementary

- Designed to link the students, parents, teacher and other adults in the school with a focus on inclusion and participation, cooperation, helping others, taking responsibility, appreciating differences, and reflection
- School-Wide Community-Building Activities
  - Collection of non-competitive schoolwide activities: including ones to build community within the school, ones to link the school and family community, and ones to reach out to the broader community
  - Suggested timeline of a couple per year

### Developmental Discipline – DSC & Developmental Designs for Middle School, year 1 & 2 PD,

- Based on the assumption that children are disposed to learn and adopt the values of their community, to construct a personal moral system, & to act to benefit others as well as to satisfy personal needs.
- Focuses on helping children develop an internal disposition toward prosocial action.
- Is a teaching/learning approach with an emphasis on relationships, modeling, skill development, moving students to self-control and responsibility; focuses on pro-active and intervention strategies
- Includes a hierarchy of responses to behavior
- *The Caring Teacher's Guide to Discipline – Helping Young Students Learn Self-control, Responsibility, and Respect – Gootman*

