

# Social Emotional Learning to Further DEI Goals

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# Meet Your Presenters



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# Let's start with some games



Greeting Frenzy



Name & Motion



Heroes/Villains



Red Light, Green Light, Yellow Light

# SEL is a method that teaches social and emotional skills

We usually talk about developing competence in these areas:

■ Self-Awareness

■ Self-Management

■ Social Awareness

■ Relationship Skills

■ Responsible Decision Making

# SEL in Action





# SEL in Action



Student-designed activities (autonomy, power sharing, collaboration, cooperation)



# SEL in Action Continued



Adapted PE field trips  
for contained  
classrooms in local  
public schools



# Adaptive Field Trips



We offer these year round to public Clarke County School District elementary, middle, and high school students.

These are for adaptive PE classes (moderate to severe disabilities) and follow state standards for physical education and dance.



# SEL in Action



# SEL in Action



Students with disabilities in class and private lessons



# SEL in Action

 Autonomy

 Inclusion

 Differentiation



# SEL in Action



Growth Mindset



Autonomy

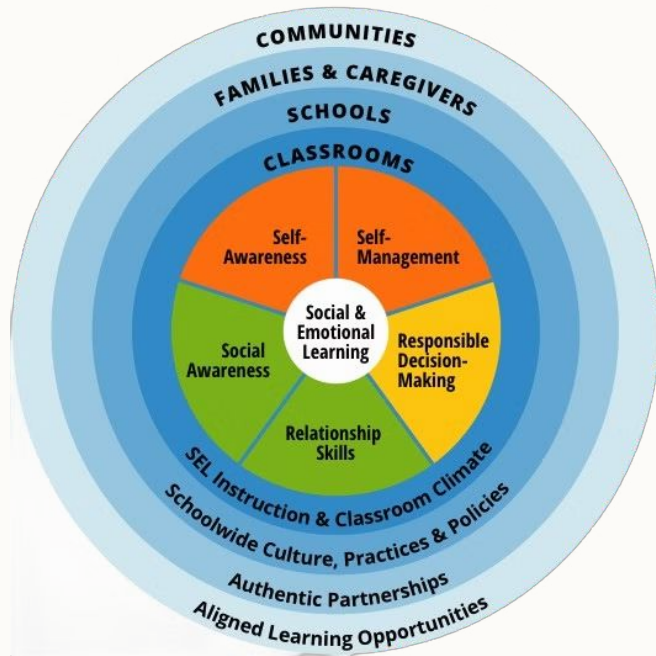




# Why Teach SEL?

- Improves academic (or aerial training) outcomes
- Improves success of teachers who are aware of their own social and emotional competencies
- Higher feeling of community = student retention
- Builds better relationships inside and outside of the classroom/studio
- Removes barriers to learning
- Leads to educational, social, and economic equity (Transformative SEL)
- Leads to "robust equity" when paired with Trauma-Informed Teaching skills

# A Brief History



1960

Initiated at Yale's Child Study Center to support low-income children's social and emotional needs, it expanded to New Haven public schools.

1994

CASEL (The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning) formed. It grew to become an international resource.

2020

CASEL updated its definition of SEL to emphasize its role in addressing equity.

1987

New Haven Social Development Program  
Founded by educators and researchers

2019

Transformative SEL emerged as a concept



# Transformative SEL

- Motivated by social justice
- Culturally responsive \*
- Aimed at equity: production equitable outcomes for all students so that all have what they need
- Places in SEL in cultural/historical context (understanding the issues of inequalities related to race/ethnicity, disability, gender, language, income, etc.)
- Improves vitality of both classroom/studio and larger community

\* SEL's roots are in white, middle class cultural norms, and educators may overlook other identities or cultures. Since SEL is a system, it is often not differentiated for those with greater needs. Some teachers have used SEL as a tool to control behavior rather than the true goal: *empowering students to create their own independence and competency*

# Let's take a brain break...



Hive Mind

# Trauma-Informed Teaching

Trauma, whether it comes from one event or a series of events, results in physical/psychological harm and can have far-reaching effects, even many years later, on both physical and mental health

Trauma impacts behavior and performance in a classroom/studio

Trauma-Informed Teaching creates a safe space for ALL students to self-regulate, build relationships, experience successes, and improve physical/mental health

You don't know who has experienced trauma in your classroom, but that's OK, you can still practice this as it benefits EVERYONE!



# ACEs

- ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) are traumatic events that happen during the ages of 0-17 years
- ACEs impact brain development, immune system, ability to respond to stress, struggles with attention, making decisions, or learning information.
- ACEs/toxic stress influence adulthood, too - education, job opportunities, increased risk of injury and health problems, chronic diseases, difficulty in forming relationships.
- These effects of ACEs can become generational, with parents passing their traumas down to their children.

# Prevent ACEs with SEL!

The CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/fastfact.html>) offers a list of strategies and approaches that can prevent ACEs, including:

- Teaching SEL skills
- Offering high quality child care (Social Circus does this! We aim to do this with summer camp and our children's programming in general)
- Remember that adults who have experienced ACEs benefit from SEL too!

# SEL

school/studio/community-wide system that supports social and emotional development by focusing on mental health promotion and prevention.

# Trauma-Informed

focuses on the *individual student*, providing individual treatment. TSS staff understand trauma and its effects, create safe environments, and are trauma-sensitive instead of re-traumatizing.

Shifting to a Trauma-Informed Mindset	
Traditional View	Trauma-Informed View
Focusing solely on academic performance of students in the classroom	Viewing students from a whole person perspective, including their life outside of the classroom
Challenging behaviors deserve immediate punishment	Challenging behaviors can indicate other issues and should be explored further
Teachers and administrators should be authoritarian in nature	Using language that everyone can understand
Using jargon and acronyms with students and parents/guardians	Focusing on creating a collaborative environment where students are provided options and empowered to make choices
Zero tolerance policies	Listening to the student and attempting to understand the situation better
Using labels and diagnosis when referring to a student	Reframe the behavior/situation to identify strengths
Student has anger management issues	Student is using non-adaptive responses to get their needs met
Student is uncontrollable and choosing to act out	Student has difficulty self-regulating and may have been triggered

Image source: Pennsylvania Dept of Education



# Time for another brain break!



Invent a Tag

# SEL to DEI Goals

Transformative SEL uses social justice as a lens to create more equitable classrooms

These skills can target growth and expressions in identity, intersectionality, agency/efficacy, belonging/engagement

SEL skills in general focus on self-awareness (identity), self-management (perseverance), social awareness (empathize with different cultures/experiences), relationship skills (cooperation), responsible decision making (constructive choices).

These skills pair well with student-centered or student-led approaches and culturally relevant education

# Robust Equity

Research shows that combining SEL and Trauma Informed Teaching skills in a culturally responsive and sensitive way can lead to robust equity

(<https://prevention.psu.edu/sel/issue-briefs/trauma-sensitive-schools-and-social-and-emotional-learning-an-integration/>), and that teachers with strong SEL and cultural competencies have better relationships with students and stay regulated in times of stress. Focusing on robust equity can have positive growth for DEI goals as well.



# Inclusivity: Aim to Remove Barriers to Entry

SEL can help with:



Creating a consistent, studio-wide culture



Making a variety of students feel welcomed, celebrated, and represented at the studio



Differentiating instruction (including accommodations, modifications, universal design)



Safely teaching students with disabilities



Sharing power with students

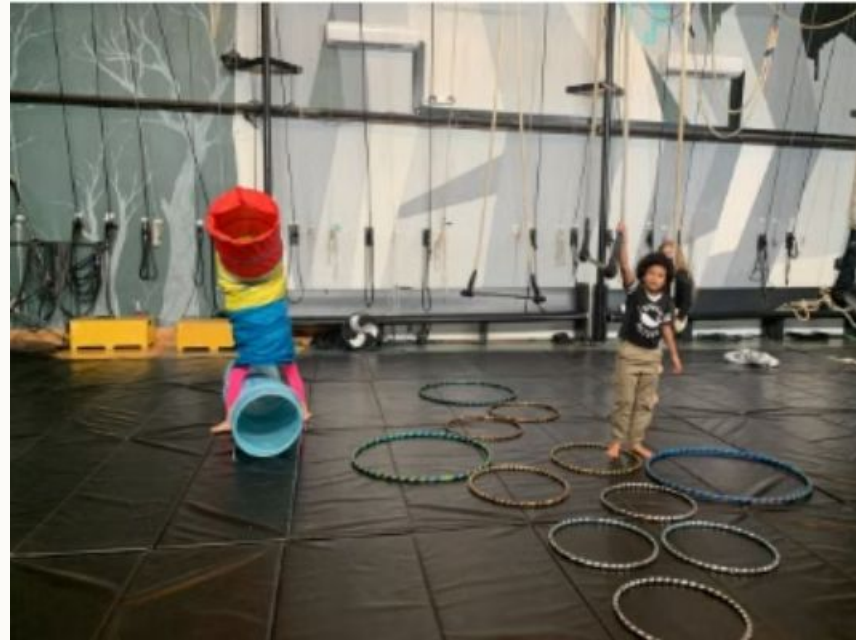
# Quick and Simple ways to Implement SEL

## Relationship Building

1. Greet at door by name
2. Consistent structure and expectations
3. Autonomy - student choices (sharing power, white boards, differentiation/accommodations)
4. “Work the room”
5. Take time to say goodbye

What does it look like to share power?

What does it look like to foster cooperation and collaboration?



“Make a Game” warm up - assign roles, tools, any rules or parameters, let them work. This may or may not warm up their bodies, but it creates a cohesive group dynamic, warms up their brains, and is fun.





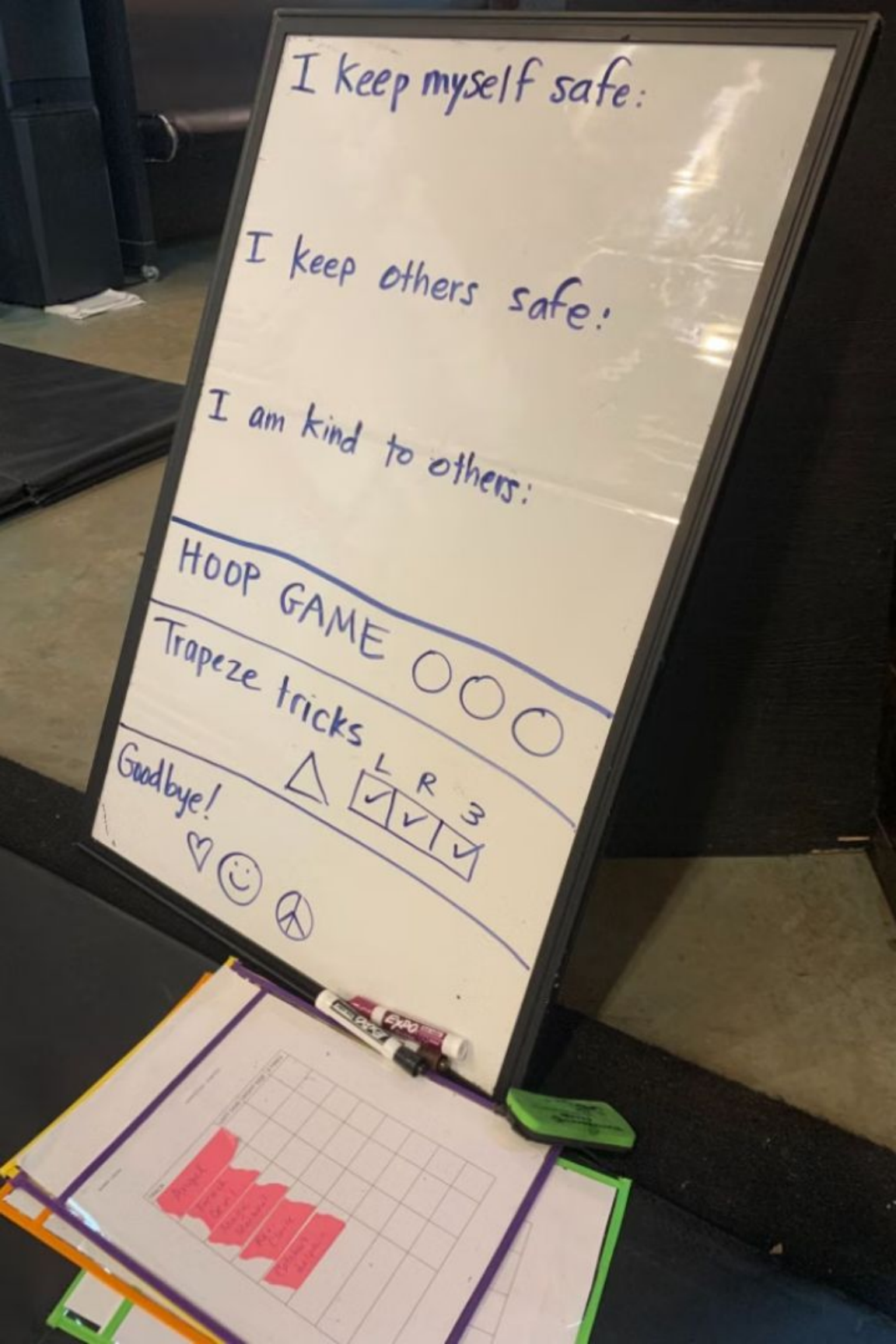
**Design a jungle gym/spider web:** They work together to decide placement of add-on equipment, then swing/move from spot to spot together. These are elementary students

Adults like SEL games too!



# A Whiteboard Story

- To address a class of high need behaviors, we needed to first focus on their SEL skills before they were ready to learn.
- Having the students determine the three rules themselves gives autonomy, allows for more collaboration and cooperation within the class. This was an equitable solution that gave students ownership. This also allowed students with disabilities to feel included and have access to the class = DEI!
- After a few classes that focused on the SEL, they were ready to work as a group and learn trapeze skills.
- Note: SEL is not meant to be behavior control, but it often gets at the root of behavior issues.



# Start your class with a whiteboard

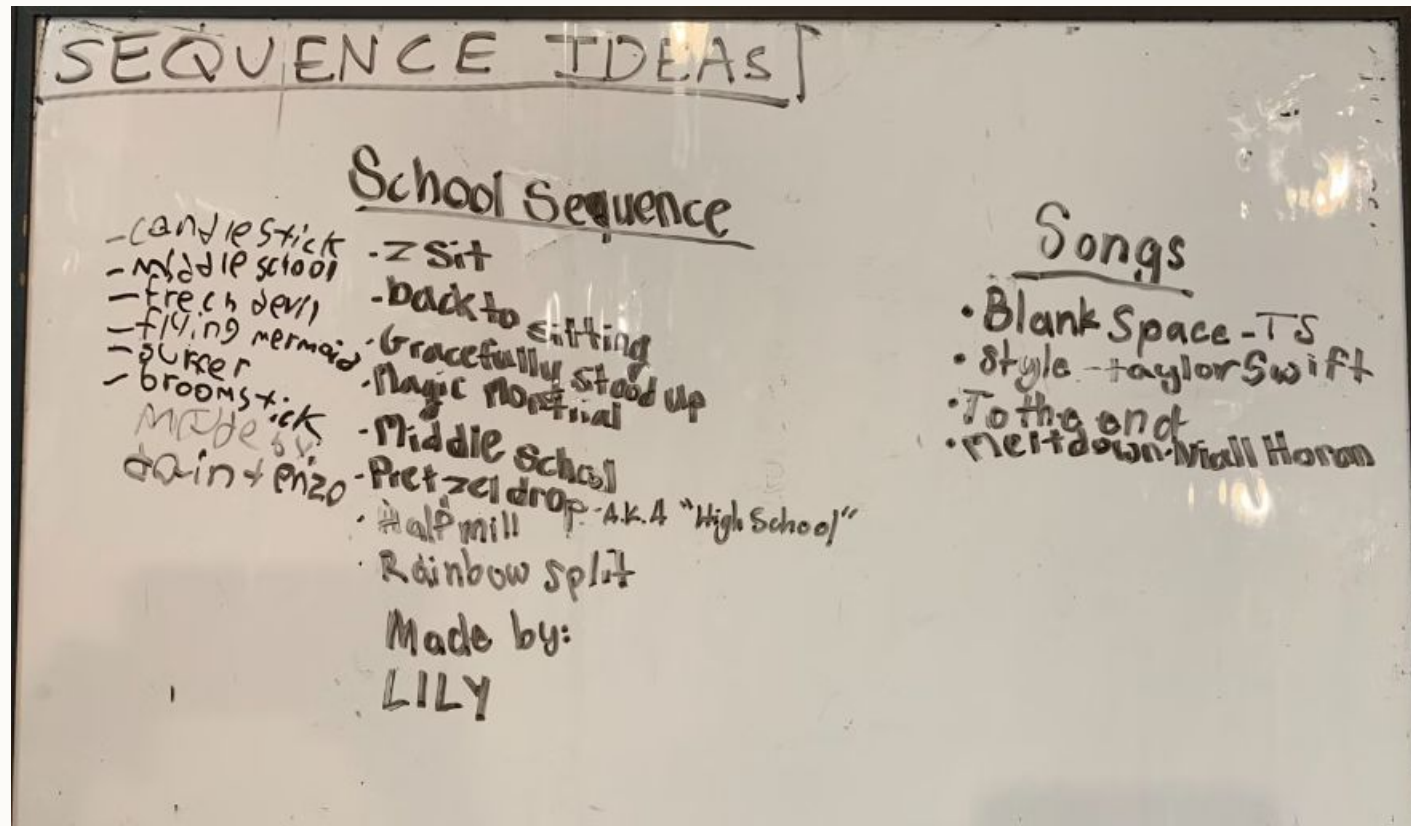


Opening Ritual



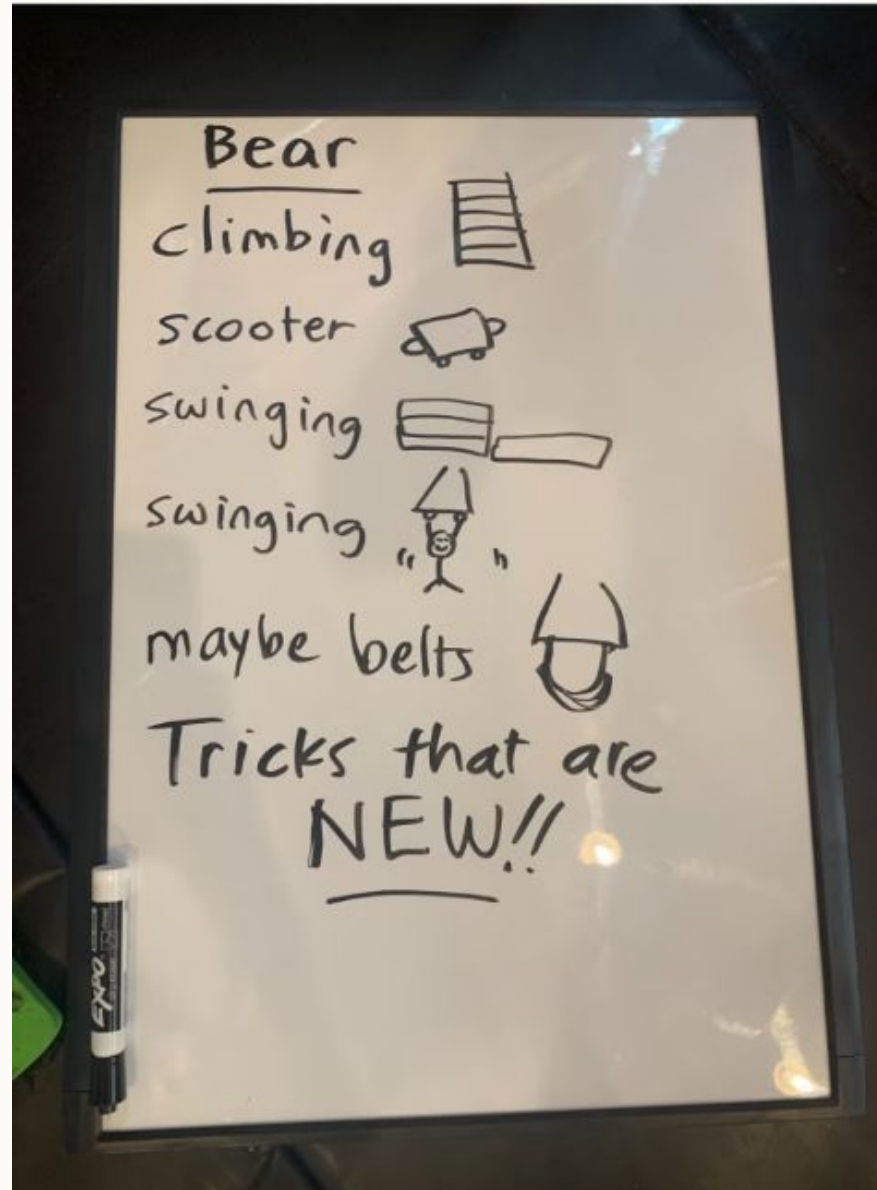
Whiteboard as visual Schedule  
and power-sharing



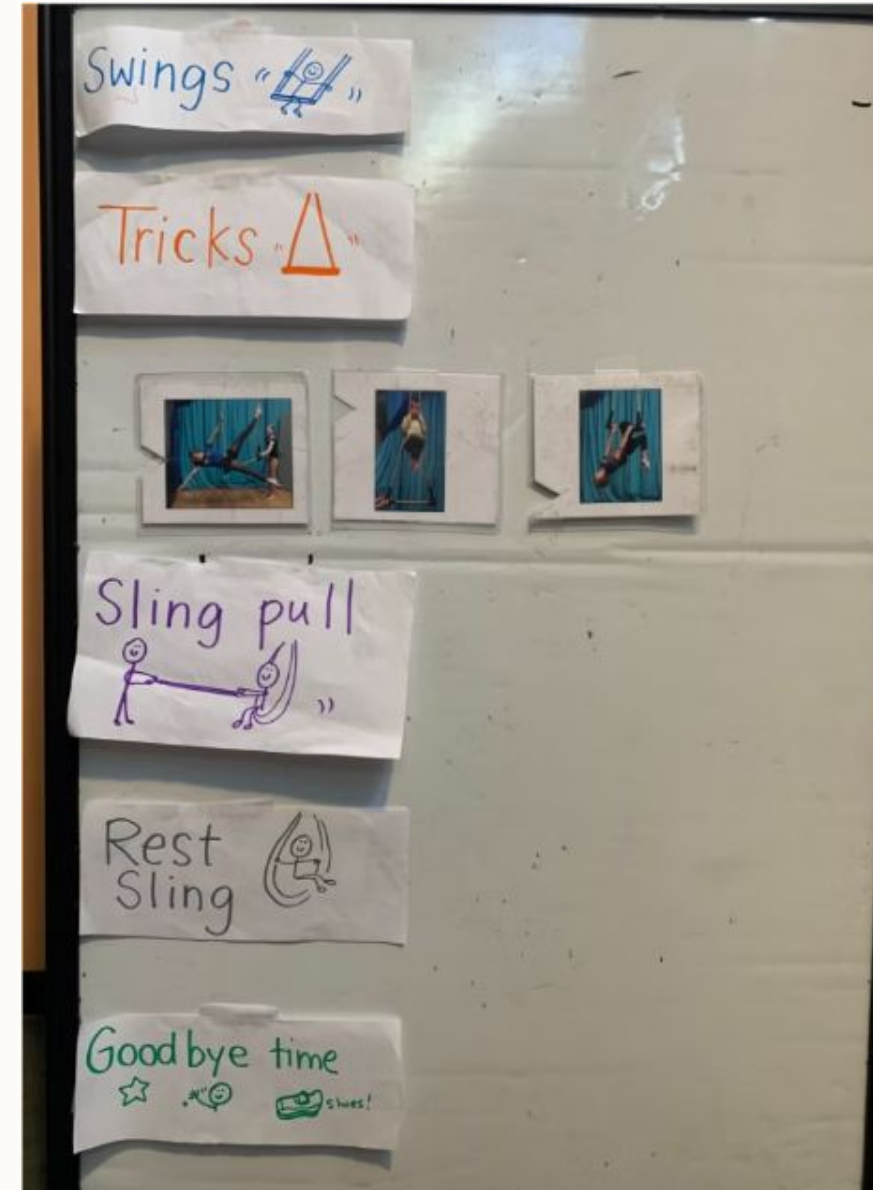


# Sharing Power with Visual Aids

# Whiteboards Continued

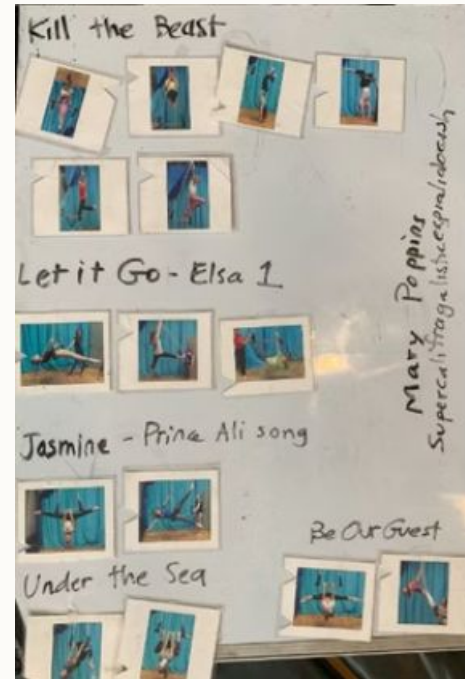
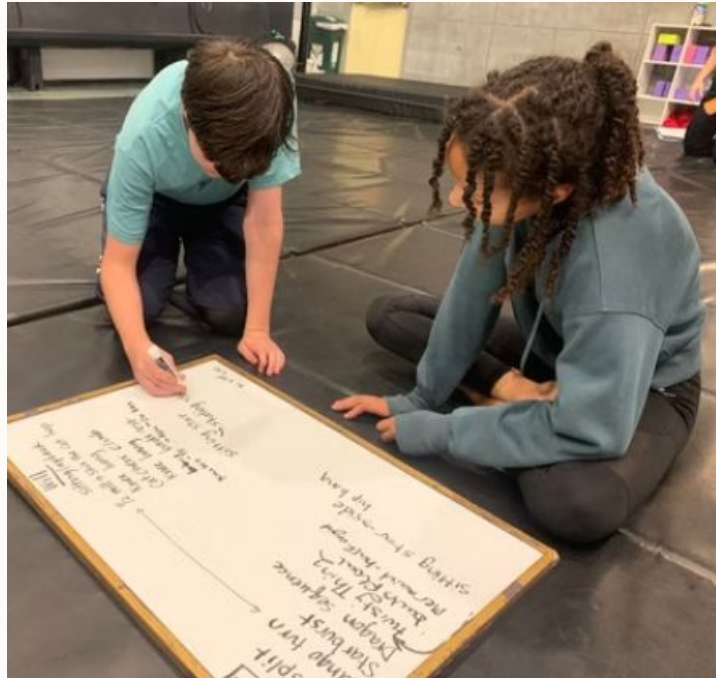


Class plan made in collaborate with a pre-literate 5 y/o



A private lesson for a 5 y/o student with complex needs

# Whiteboards as a Cooperation Tool


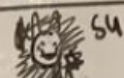






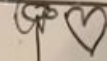




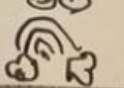






Students of all ages can collaborate and create wordier visual schedules that include brainstorming space

A 5 year old created the trick card board to make his own show choreography



# Whiteboards as Self Management

laire split			
catchers climb			
surrender or wrapped legs			
mermaid			
candlestick			
sitting star			

Earlyy ♥			
Stirrups	✓	✓	✓
Jump the box	✓		
angel	✓		
air split	✓		
sitting star	✓	✓	
skater	✓	✓	
air Plan			
bow split	✓	✓	
also mountain			

	LEFT SIDE	RIGHT SIDE	3 TIMES
sitting	✓	✓	✓
trash			✓
JTB			✓
Stirrups			✓
s.angel			✓
air Plan			✓
skater	✓	✓	✓
bow split	✓	✓	✓
also mountain			

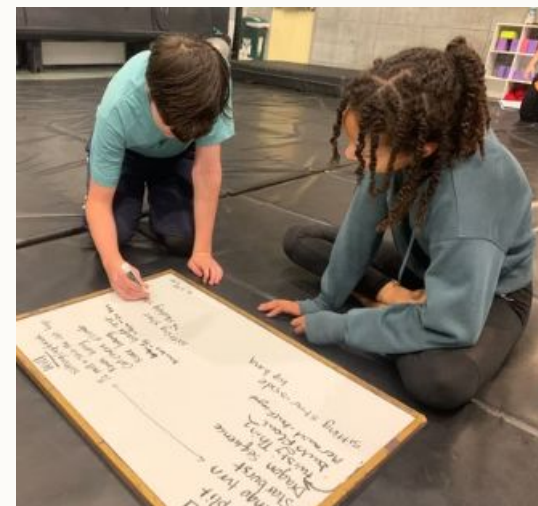
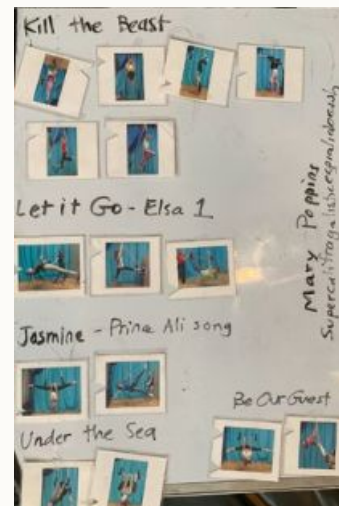
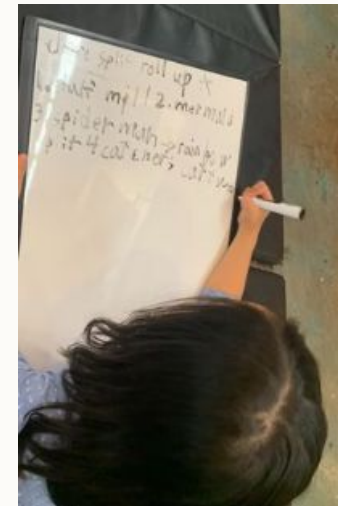
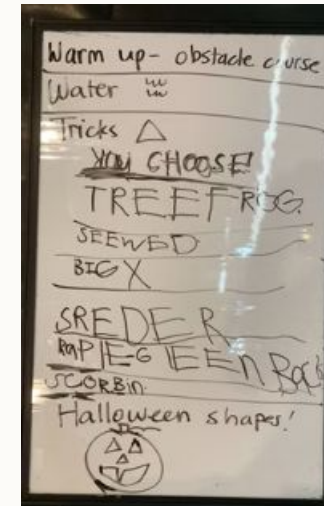
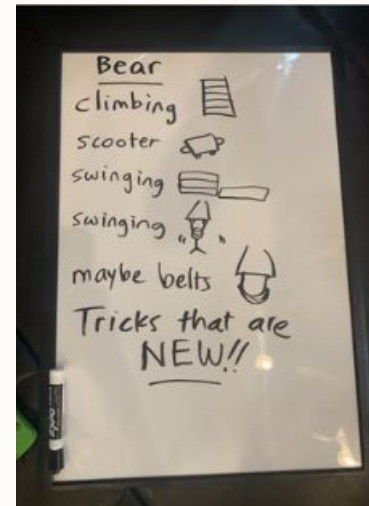
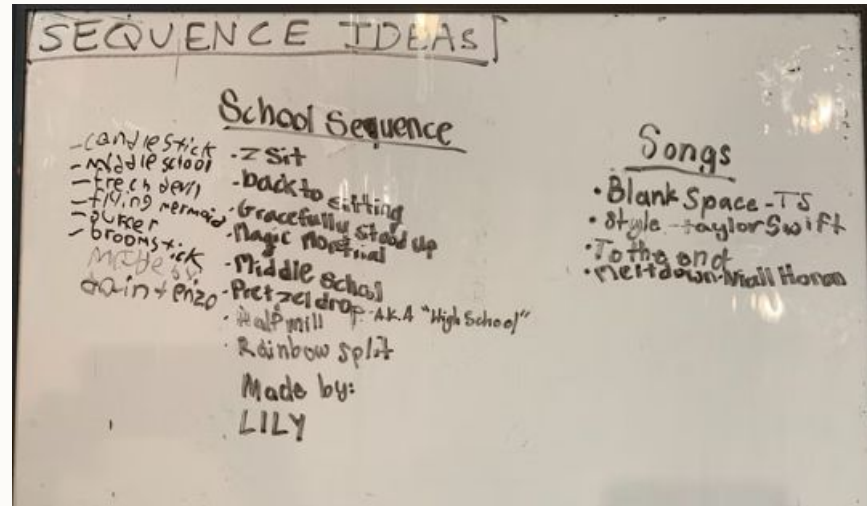
A die

Autonomy > Self-Awareness > Self- Management > Responsible decision making > equity

Checklists can be good motivators and management tools!



# Whiteboards as Visual Aids



# 3 Signature Practices



Welcoming inclusion activities: your warm up



Engaging Strategies: "brain breaks," think-pair-share think time, etc.



Optimistic closure: accolades, "I wonder/am curious about", etc.



Circle ○ I keep my body safe  
I keep others safe  
I am kind to others

Warm Up ☆

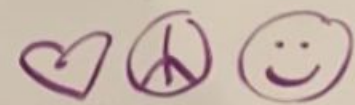
Water w  
w

Tricks △  
Magic - Montreal  
T-bone → d'fly  
gazelle  
seahorse

Picture cards!



Goodbye!



Thur 4:15  
10/26

# First Practice: Welcoming Inclusion

## Activities

Focus: creating a climate of belonging and connection; everyone's voice is heard by at least one other person; there is an element of personal choice; the activity matches the needs of the participants; whenever possible, all are welcomed by name.

### Warm Up Ideas

Greeting Frenzy (page 12 in CASEL Playbook)

Name and Motion (CASEL page 13)

One Two Three Clap (CASEL page 14) - similar to ACE Clapping Games

Mix and Mingle (CASEL page 16) - You can adapt this to movement mirroring as a warm up. It can also be an activity post-warm up using the trapeze trick picture cards to create 2-move sequences

# Canopy-style SEL Warm Up: Green Light, Yellow Light, Red Light

## Instructions:

- Each student has a turn determining how to move across the floor (crawl, jump, run, stretch, etc).
- They announce how to move, then “Green light!” to signal its time to move.
- “Yellow light” = get ready to stop
- “Red light” = “Freeze your body” (ie: sit on the floor and be still)

## Benefits

- Can be adapted for adults
- All voices are heard, personal choice
- For kids with special needs, helps with following directions, being part of the group, understanding "freeze your body" for safety



# Second Practice: Engaging strategies

*Focus: Building relationships with each other and the content; support everyone's learning; help all stay focused and ready to learn; include a variety of activities to honor different cultural norms and ways of learning and working.*

## Card Sorts (CASEL p.22)

Give students a short list of moves and have them write down them in their preferred sequence on a small piece of paper, first individually and then in small groups. Emphasize equity of voices and check in at the end to ask how it helped to get others' perspectives.

## Fishbowl (CASEL p.25)

Divide the class in half. One half silently witnesses the other half move on equipment (improv or otherwise). Witnesses are free to take notes of positive/constructive feedback. They switch places. At the end, they can share and debrief.

# More Engaging Strategies

## Jigsaw (CASEL p.29)

Create a sequence. Divide class into small groups and give each group a multi step move in that sequence that they work together to learn. Then, number off in students in the small groups, and have 1s, 2s, 3s, etc. join their new groups, where they can teach new students their short sequence.

## Maitre d' (CASEL p.30)

Adaptable for trapeze in a number of ways. One idea: Have any number of trick cards arranged at stations around the room. Spontaneously call, "Table for two!" "Table for four!" etc. Students quickly join small groups according to the number to work on combining the tricks in an order they like. However you do this activity, the details are secondary to the fact they are working together and communicating across several social interactions.

## Card game

- ① Get a partner.
- ② Go to a station.
- ③ Look at the cards.  
Work together to decide the order and make a short sequence.
- ④ Each partner tries the sequence on the bar.
- ⑤ Go to the next station and do it again.
- ⑥ More cards will be added as you play, so your sequences will grow longer.



# Third Practice: Optimistic Closure

*Leaving the group on an optimistic note, feeling connected, productive and wanting to return; giving time to reflect; be forward/future focused; respect the diversity of experiences of the group; everyone's voice is heard by at least one other person or in writing.*

## “I Am Curious” (p.39)

In partners or in the whole group, students can complete the sentence, “I am curious about...” Ie: “I am curious about whether I can find a new entry to this new trick/straighten my leg next time/keep practicing this skill/what that trick would look like if I tried this next time...”

## “One Minute Accolate” (p.41)

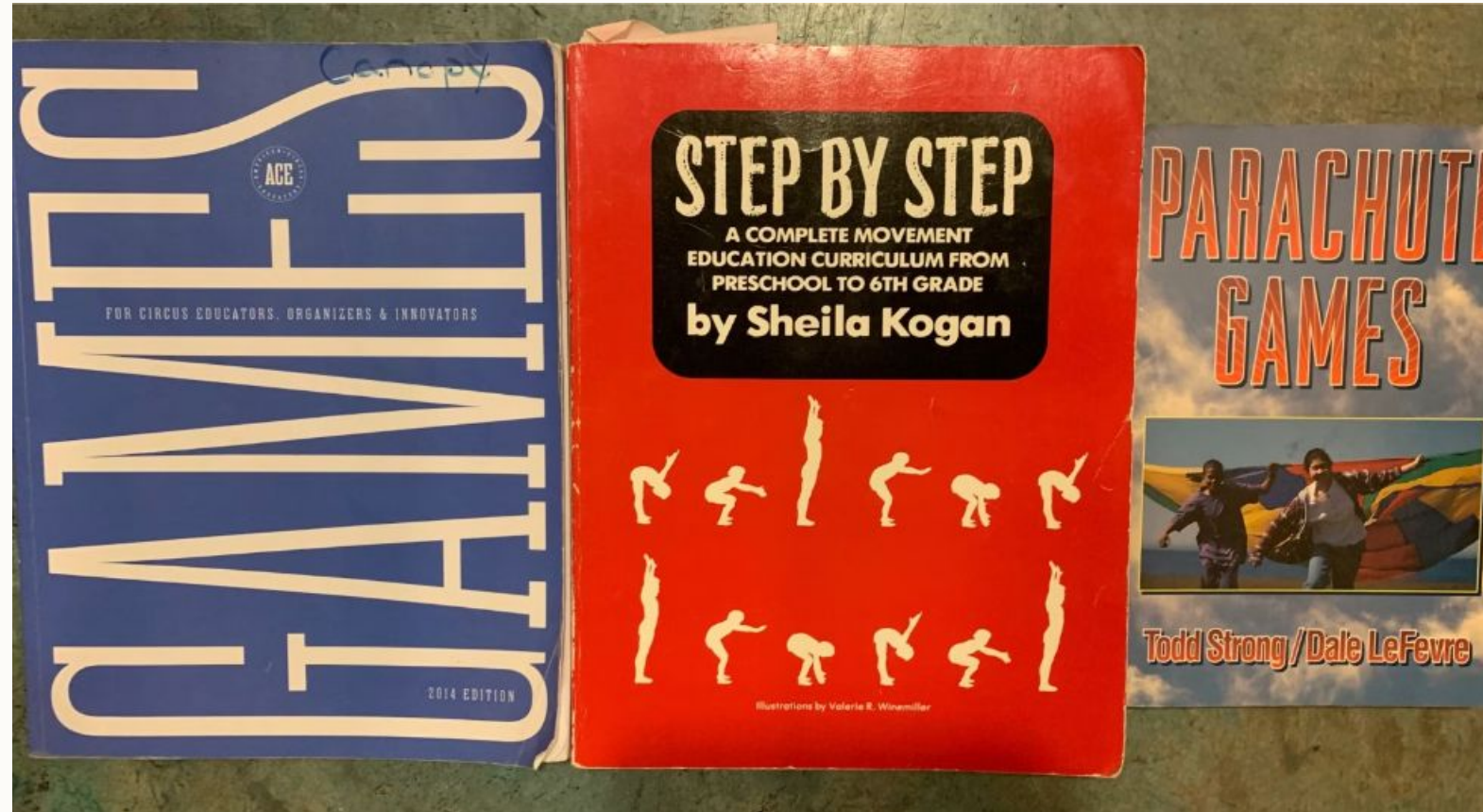
This doesn't have to last a minute for very young students, but have them silently think of something they appreciated in class that day, or something they learned...after the reflection period, they can share with the group if they want.



# Resources



# Circus and theater games have a lot of SEL overlap!



For example, every game in the ACE Games book could fit into one of the CASEL signature practices!

These 3 books are super handy for this.

# Other Games/Tools that Foster SEL Skills

## "While you Wait" Boards

Have predetermined options for early finishers to practice review while you assist other students 1:1

## Dice

Put pictures/names of tricks one each side, throw to student, they review what they catch

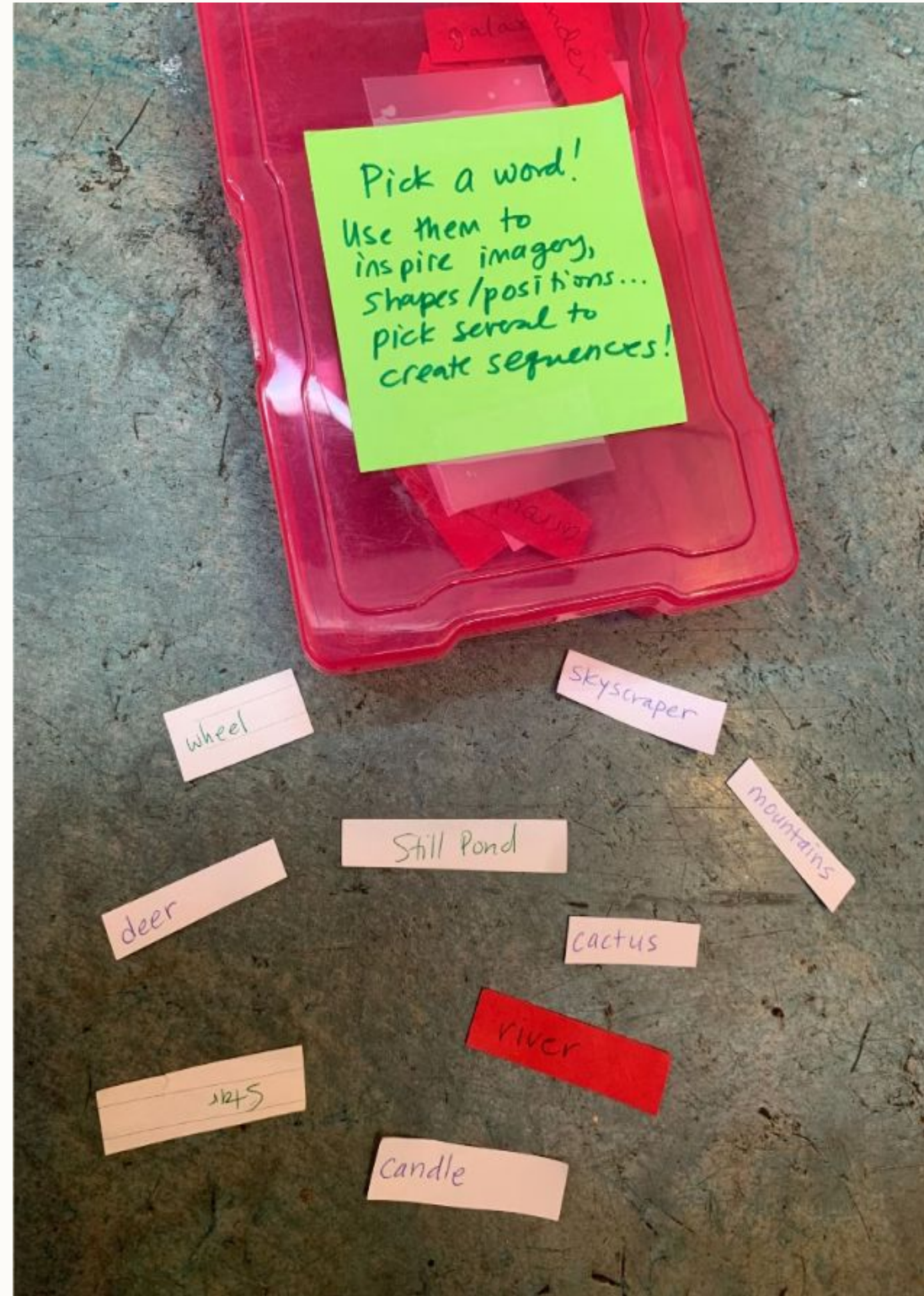
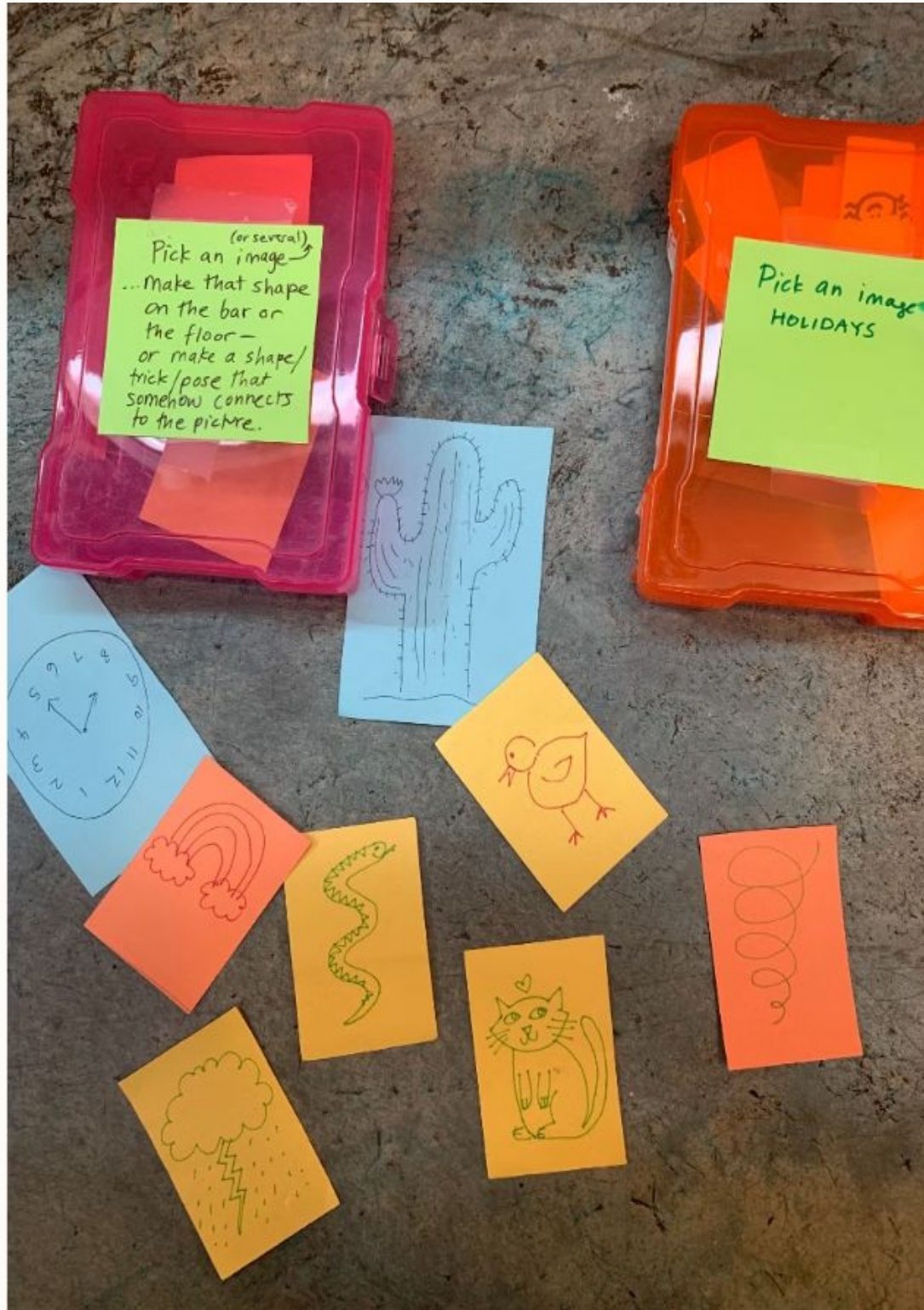
## Design an Obstacle Course

## Guided Creative Movement

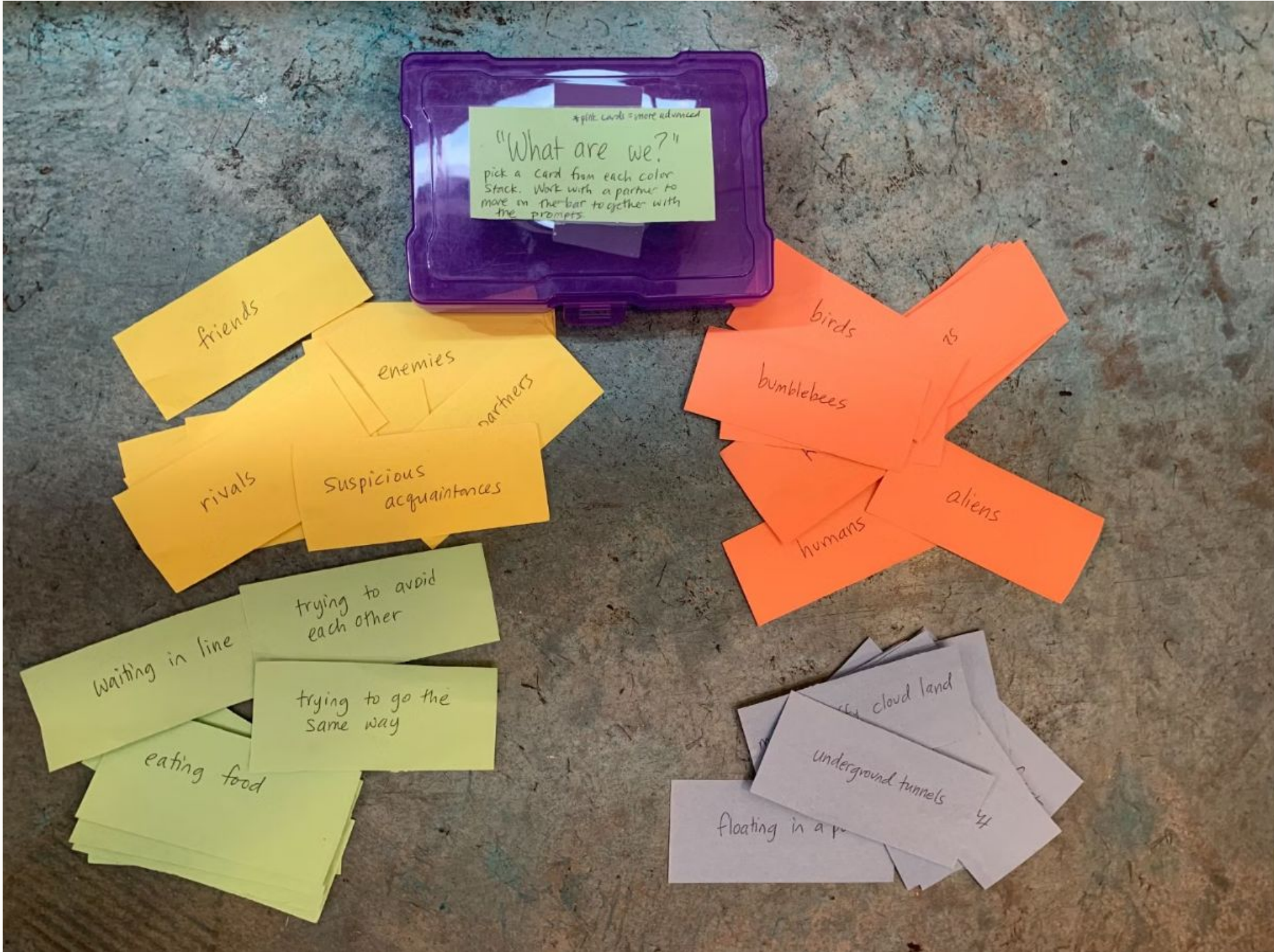
Planting Seeds/Eggs Hatching/Baby Mice

Curl up and be little seeds ready to be planted - or eggs getting ready to hatch - or baby mice under your blanket to be taken to the cheese store - something that gets them small, playful but quiet. Lead the movement of them growing, hatching, traveling. You can be the farmer and “plant” the seeds by walking around, pretending to shovel dirt and water. You lead the movement of them growing into plants, becoming compost, etc.













SHAPES  
-they each pick a shape that will be their  $\square, \triangle, \circ$   
-call shapes as they move through them  
-they each pick a small, big, neutral version of the shape  
-then, a way to expand/contract the shape  
-then, a way to turn it sideways/invert  
-call the terms as they move.





AWESOMEST GAME EVER (2 rolls)

① trick	① other side
② trick	② add a split
③ trick	③ connect to #??
④ trick	④ Go upside down
⑤ trick	⑤ start from #??
⑥ trick	⑥ Add Jazz hands!

Roll 1st for the trick! roll 2nd for the challenge.

Roll the Dice - deepen a skill

▣ 1: invert, flip, turn sideways	▣ 4: different entry
▣ 2: change level	▣ 5: different exit
▣ 3: Switch hand/ knee/ leg/ foot	▣ 6: expand/ contract

Partner Work - Roll the Dice! / Improv

How You See each other	How you are feeling	Your environment
① enemies	① playful	① fluffy clouds, magical unicorns, glitter
② nurturing	② powerful	② velvety dark night, mystery
③ mirror/relating	③ light/flighty	③ hot sand cool water, waves

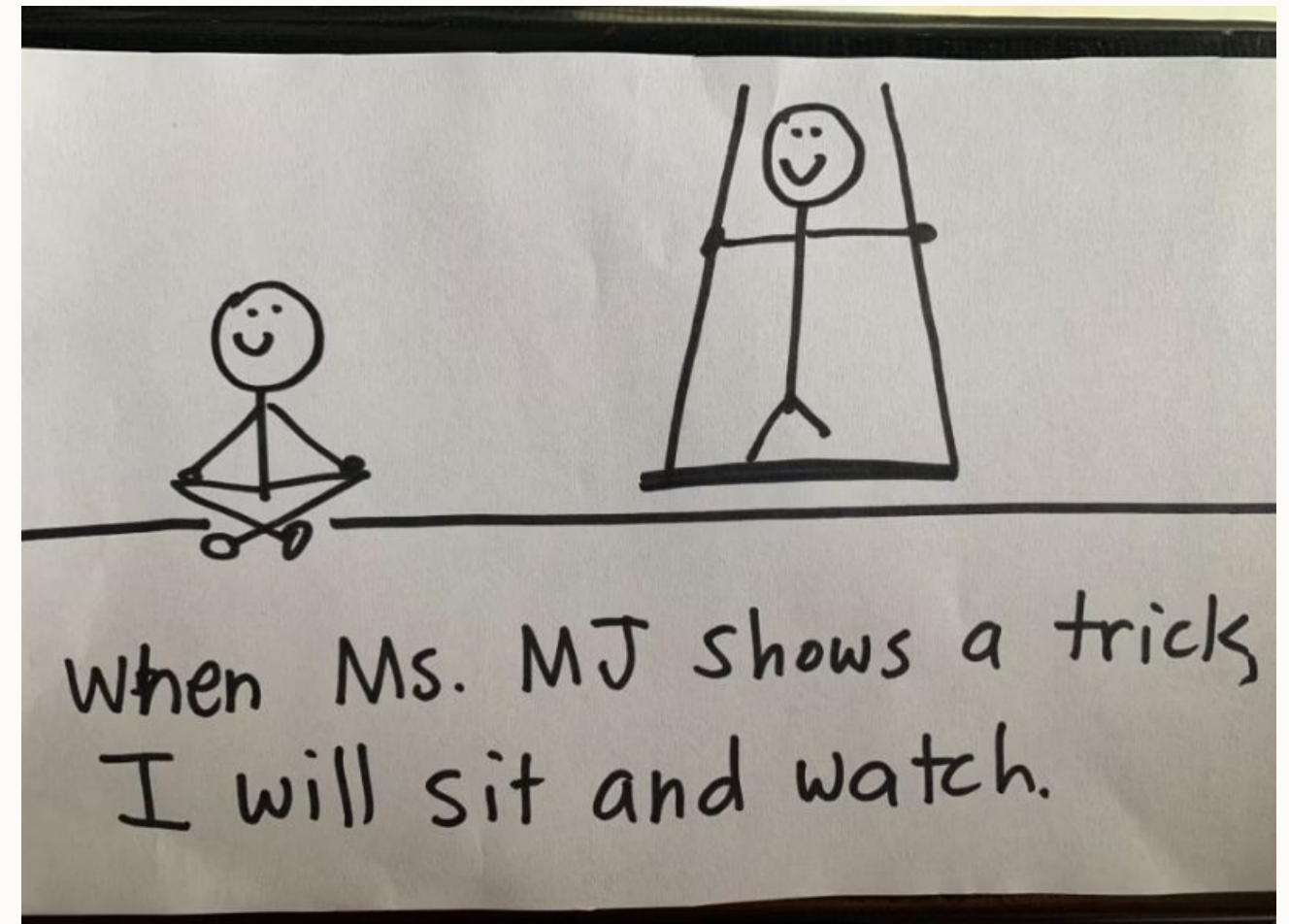
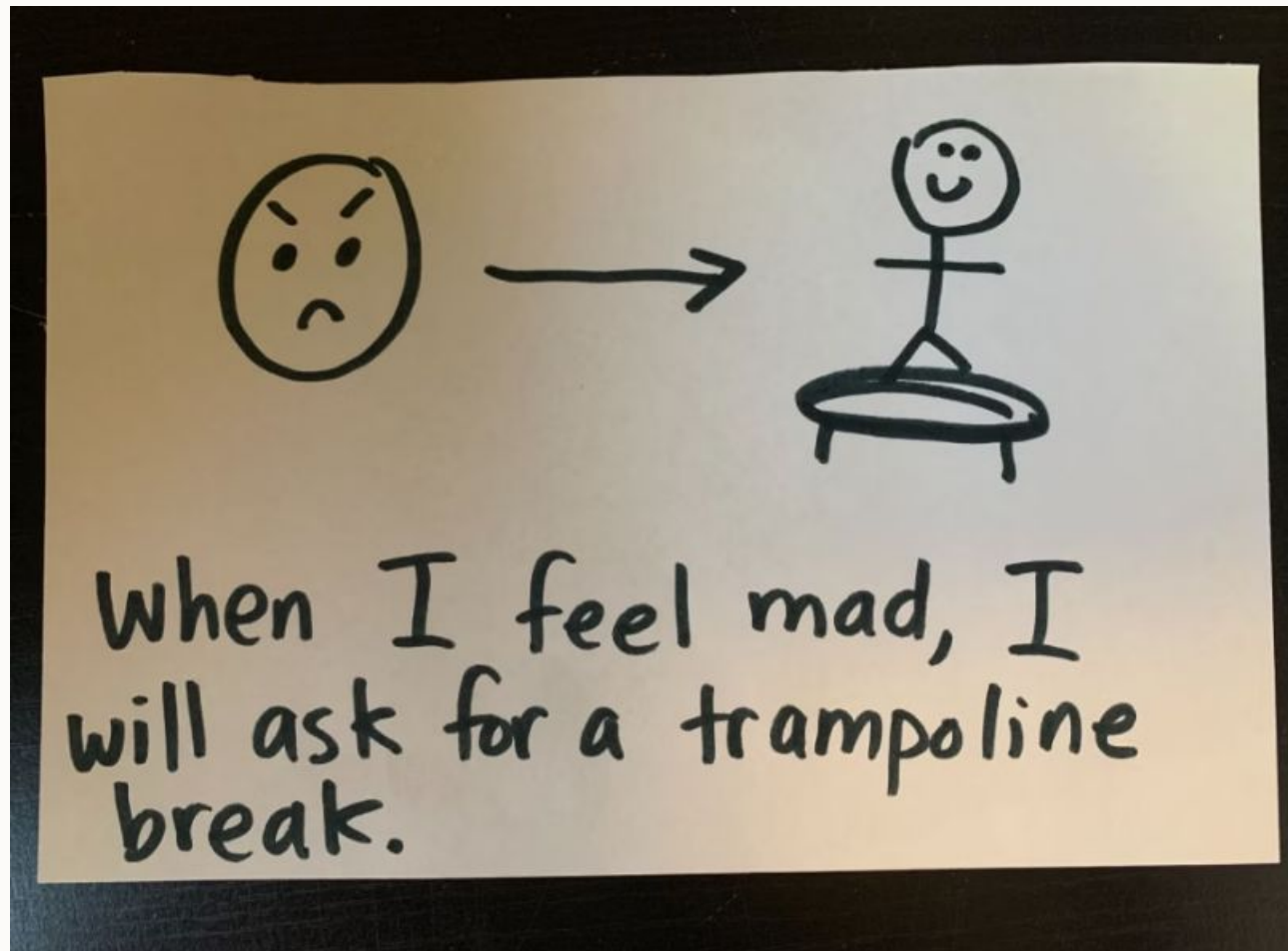


# All the Tags!

## Freeze Tags

Bridge and Tunnel (when frozen, make a “tunnel” with your body - to get unfrozen and keep playing, another player crawls through the tunnel); Hot Dog (tagged person lies flat to be a hot dog, gets unfrozen when 2 friends lie on either side to be the “bun”); Caterpillar (tagged person lies flat on tummy; teacher or other friend holds a hula hoop up to them on the floor, and they crawl through to keep playing); Octopus (tagged people link arms with “It” to become one massive chain of “it” to chase others); Refrigerator (tagged person freezes with arms in front of them like refrigerator doors; another player has to open the door, take something out of it, eat/drink it, close the door); Sneak (this is done with partners and lines - one set of partners stands at one of the room, their backs turned to their partners standing on the other side of the room. Person in the back tiptoes up to person in the front, lightly taps shoulder, and gets chased back to their starting point, trying not to get tagged. You can use hula hoops to designate the starting place); Make a Tag

# Social Stories



Social Stories can help some kids with special needs know what to expect - some research is required, but drawings are simple, and statements focus on positive behavior.

# Free Resources

ACE Games Book: <https://www.americancircuseducators.org/gamesproject/>

CASEL intro video on SEL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-XNp3h3h4A>

CASEL video on SEL in the larger community: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouXhi\\_CfBVg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouXhi_CfBVg)

ACES/Toxic Stress: [https://nfg-dm-bee.s3.amazonaws.com/images/canopystudio/ACEsInfographic\\_080218.pdf](https://nfg-dm-bee.s3.amazonaws.com/images/canopystudio/ACEsInfographic_080218.pdf)

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/fastfact.html>

Do's and Don'ts of Trauma-Informed Teaching: [https://nfg-dm-bee.s3.amazonaws.com/images/canopystudio/Echo\\_dosdents.pdf](https://nfg-dm-bee.s3.amazonaws.com/images/canopystudio/Echo_dosdents.pdf)

What do I do? [https://nfg-dm-bee.s3.amazonaws.com/images/canopystudio/Echo\\_whatdodido.pdf](https://nfg-dm-bee.s3.amazonaws.com/images/canopystudio/Echo_whatdodido.pdf)

CASEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook: [https://casel.org/casel\\_sel-3-signature-practices-playbook-v3/](https://casel.org/casel_sel-3-signature-practices-playbook-v3/)

Step by Step movement curriculum book: <https://www.sheilakogan.com/step-by-step>

Trauma Informed Teaching infographics: <https://www.echotraining.org/infographics/>

Research that shows that SEL & Trauma Informed Teaching are more powerful when combined (“Robust equity”):

<https://prevention.psu.edu/sel/issue-briefs/trauma-sensitive-schools-and-social-and-emotional-learning-an-integration/>



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