



RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN  
EDUCATION INITIATIVE

**A TOOLKIT TO SUPPORT  
YOUR CHILD'S WELL-  
BEING DURING COVID-19:  
GRADES K-7**



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North Shore Restorative Justice Society

147 East 14th Street

North Vancouver, BC

V7L 2N4 Canada

[www.nsrj.ca](http://www.nsrj.ca)

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## What is in this toolkit

This toolkit contains two sections, as follows:

Section 1: Five different activities to do with a child or multiple children

Section 2: Four strategies for a parent/guardian to use with a child or multiple children to support their self-regulation and self-awareness.

In **Section One**, each activity is structured in the same way, with the suitable grade range, duration and purpose of the activity, main themes, materials needed, a step by step description of the activity, and debrief questions.

In **Section Two**, we share some tips, strategies, and tools to help nurture your relationship with your child, support their needs, and heal hurt feelings when conflict arises. Each approach is consistent with restorative values and practices.

The final part of the toolkit has a *Guide to Social-Emotional, Mental Health and Well-being Resources*, which provides curated links to resources and best practices for social and emotional learning, mental health, and well-being for children and youth, so that you can learn more and access additional activities and strategies from sources we trust.

Since 2013, our team has used a strengths-based approach to provide children and youth the skills to transform conflict, heal relationships and create stronger communities. We hope that you will join us on a mission to foster well-being and belonging for children and youth through restorative values.

Please do not hesitate to contact us, if you have any questions, at [info@nsrj.ca](mailto:info@nsrj.ca).

Sincerely,

The Restorative Justice in Education Initiative Team

North Shore Restorative Justice Society

[nsrj.ca/programs/schools-initiative](http://nsrj.ca/programs/schools-initiative)



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## SECTION ONE - ACTIVITIES THAT YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR CHILD




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**Creating A Family Charter: My Best Self at Home** (*Inspired from RULER;*  
<https://ghcds.org/wp-content/uploads/Ruler-Activity-Create-A-Family-Charter-At-Home.pdf>)

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**DURATION:** 60 mins

**GRADES:** K-7

**PURPOSE:** To build understanding and empathy regarding the needs of each member of the family, and reflect on the characteristics of our best self at home

**MAIN THEMES:** Self-awareness and social awareness

**MATERIALS:** Blank sheets of paper, colored pens, flip-chart paper, or poster

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### ACTIVITY:

- Explain that your family will co-develop a Family Charter today.
- The Family Charter creates guidelines for everyone in the family to feel safe, calm, and at ease. The Family Charter also serves as an invitation to bring everyone's best self into the home environment at this time of crisis when we share the same roof all day.
- Everyone is invited to take a blank sheet of paper and will answer the following two questions individually first (for younger children, ask them to respond verbally):
  1. How do you want to feel at home as a family?
  2. What do you need to be at your best self at home?
- Invite everyone to share, one at a time, what they wrote in response to these two questions.
- Ask if anyone was surprised by what has been said. Any commonalities? Any major differences in what has been said or described?
- Then, as a family, please discuss the following question:
  - What can we each do to support these needs?

- You are now ready to create your Family Charter! Based on the family discussion, your family will decide as a group on three sections of the Family Charter:
  1. Which **feelings** are wanted at home,
  2. What **needs** are important to be mindful about, and
  3. What **behaviors** are important to meet these feelings and needs.
- Now be creative, this is the fun part! You can divide the flip-chart paper or the poster into three sections - feelings, needs, and behaviors. Feel free to add drawings and different colors.
- Once you are all satisfied, everyone must sign the Family Charter!
- The final step is to hang the Family Charter in a prominent place in your home so that everyone can keep these feelings, needs, and behaviors in mind daily.
- *Note: The Family Charter is a living document, it can be revisited weekly, and revised as things change.*






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**Falling in Love with the Land: A Poem of Gratitude** (*Inspiration from Greater Good in Education*; [https://ggie.berkeley.edu/practice/a-gratitude-poem-to-the-world/#tab\\_2](https://ggie.berkeley.edu/practice/a-gratitude-poem-to-the-world/#tab_2))

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**DURATION:** 90 mins

**GRADES:** 3-7

**PURPOSE:** To develop awareness of the natural world and foster gratitude for it

**MAIN THEMES:** Self-awareness, gratitude, and environmental stewardship

**MATERIALS:** Paper, markers, or color pens

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**ACTIVITY:** This activity is divided into three parts, as follows:

1. Spend 30 minutes walking in nature with your child and ask your child to notice what they like, what makes them happy, or what they are grateful for. These may include things like the sky, sun, clouds, and rain. There may be trees, flowers, or other plants that they appreciate. They may notice birds, insects, or other small animals that they are interested in.
2. Coming back inside, ask your child to engage in a self-reflection/visualization activity using the following text:

*Think of one thing, among the many things that you have noticed on our walk in nature that brings you happiness. Why are you grateful for this particular element of nature?*

*Does this element interact with others in nature? If so, how does it help others? How does it look?*

*Does it change its shape according to the time of day, season, and so on?*

*What color is it? Does it make any sounds?*

3. Thinking about this particular element of nature, please write a poem about it and about why you are grateful that it exists. You can start your poem with "Dear World," "Dear Bird," "Dear Dawn," "Dear Apples," "Dear Snow," "Dear Sun," "Dear Tulips," or "Dear Stars."

**DEBRIEF:**

- Invite your child to read their poem out loud.
- Ask them what they noticed when writing their poem, was it easy or difficult to write about an element of nature they liked and why they are grateful for it?
- Are there other things that they are grateful for that can be found in nature? What are those things?







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## The Feelings Guessing Game

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**DURATION:** 15-20 mins

**GRADES:** K-7

**PURPOSE:** To practice identifying and expressing emotions by paying attention to body language and facial cues

**MAIN THEMES:** Self-awareness, social awareness, and decision-making

**MATERIALS:** A plastic or paper bag, some pieces of paper, and a pen

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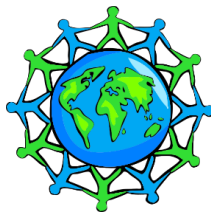
### ACTIVITY:

1. Sitting face-to-face with your child, explain that each of you will get a turn to make a facial expression, and the other will try to guess what feeling they are demonstrating.
2. When it is one person's turn to make the facial expression, invite everyone else to take a guess. Keep everyone guessing until one person guesses the right emotion!

*Note: If needed, you can write down different emotions on different pieces of paper and put them all in a bag to pick and choose from (e.g., happy, sad, confident, scared, tired, angry, calm, curious, bored, bold, annoyed, excited, worried, affectionate, thoughtful, and aggressive).*

### DEBRIEF:

- Were some of the feelings challenging to identify?
  - What are some emotions that you enjoy feeling? Which emotions do you not enjoy?
  - What kinds of cues/hints can we look at to try and figure out how someone feels? (facial expressions, body language, tone of voice...)
  - Why do you think it is important for us to be able to identify each other's emotions?
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**Sending Warm Wishes to the World** (*Inspiration from Greater Good in Education;*  
<https://ggie.berkeley.edu/practice/wishes-for-the-world-a-loving-kindness-activity/>)

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**DURATION:** 20-30 minutes

**GRADES:** K-7

**PURPOSE:** To nurture children's natural capacity for kindness and empathy for others

**MAIN THEMES:** Kindness, prosocial behaviors, self-awareness, and social awareness

**MATERIALS:** Your voice and your energy only

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**ACTIVITY:**

1. Preface the activity by having a conversation about what is going on in the world right now (e.g., about the necessity of staying at home and taking precautions to avoid the virus to spread which serves to protect others and protect the whole world).

2. Activity :

- What does it mean to visualize or imagine something? What are warm wishes?
- We're going to imagine that we're sending our warm wishes into a big, imaginary floating Earth.
- Let's start by pretending to hold the Earth together. Put your hands out and help me hold the Earth, like this.
- What does the Earth look like? What color is it? Is it blue, green, white? Is it flat, round, does it have bumps? Close your eyes and see if you can picture it.
- Now we'll take turns putting our warm wishes in our imaginary Earth.
- Who has a warm wish for the world? (Help your children name their wishes and mime putting them in the ball. Explain that with each wish, the Earth gets bigger and heavier.)
- Once you are done with the warm wishes, let's count to three and then throw the Earth up into the sky together: one, two, three.
- Wave good-bye and imagine that the Earth is bringing our warm wishes to everyone, everywhere in the world.

**DEBRIEF:**

- Invite your child to describe their experience with this activity: What did you get for sending others warm wishes?
- Ask them what they noticed when they imagined sending warm wishes to the world and others: How do you think others feel when they receive these warm wishes, even if they were imaginary?
- Ask your children: How might you encourage others to be kind, and send warm wishes to others and the world?
- To conclude, ask your child why they think this activity is important.





## My Brain is a Superpower (Inspired from Khan Academy;

<https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/learnstorm-growth-mindset-activities-us/elementary-and-middle-school-activities/the-growth-mindset-02/a/reflect-build-your-growth-mindset>)

**DURATION:** 30 mins

**GRADES:** K-7

**PURPOSE:** To change our perspective from seeing our brains as *inactive* to seeing them as a *shifting superpower*. Our brains can change and form a lot of new connections as we learn and make mistakes. Our brains help us learn and grow from our mistakes.

**MAIN THEMES:** Growth mindset and self-awareness

**MATERIALS:** None

### ACTIVITY:

- Preface the activity by telling your child that you will be talking about how our brain is a superpower.
- Ask your child the following question: "What happens when we have something that may be challenging to complete? For example, what happens when we have a challenging assignment, sport, or we are just trying something new that's tough?"
- Listen to their answers, and mention that we may give up or say, "This is too hard."
- Ask them: "What may help us when we are faced with a challenge or a new task?"
- Build upon their answers and share that we can ask for help and change our mindset if we are faced with a challenge.
- Explain that today, we will be practicing changing our mindset and using the phrase, "This may take time," instead of "This is too hard," when faced with a tough task.
- Indeed, explain that our brains are a superpower because our brains can change and form a lot of new connections as we learn and make mistakes! It just needs time and practice. Sometimes, we need to use a different strategy to be able to arrive at something. Remember, everyone struggles in different situations! Struggles are just part of the learning and growing process.
- Let's try changing our perspective, using our brain as a superpower.
- What can we tell ourselves when we think of the following things:

I'm not good at this....  
I give up...  
I can't make this any better....

This is too hard....  
I made a mistake...  
I just can't do it....

I will never be that smart...  
Plan A didn't work....

My friend can do it...

- What will you do next time you tell yourself these things?
- What can you do to remember that your brain is a superpower?



## SECTION TWO - STRATEGIES AND TIPS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

### Fostering Emotional Resilience in Unpredictable Circumstances

How can we foster emotional resilience for our children during these challenging times?  
Here are a few tips for you to use.

- (1) **Talk about emotions and feelings with your child.** Recognizing that emotions and feelings are part of life and are normal, especially at this time when we may feel lonely, anxious, overwhelmed, and stressed.
- (2) **Mindful breathing helps!** Try Bear Breaths with your child, as follows:  
“Inhale through your nose, pause; exhale out through your nose, pause. Breathe in for a count of 3 or 4, pause for a count of 1 or 2; breath out for a count of 3 or 4, pause for a count of 1 or 2.”  
Repeat a few times. This will help ground and settle kids.
- (3) **Routines create certainty!** Fostering consistency in the wake-up and bedtime helps to maintain normalcy and routines. You can co-create a daily schedule with them or leave them creating their own using these templates:  
<https://www.canva.com/templates/search/daily-schedule/>
- (4) **Do the things they enjoy!** In addition to the activities in Section One, here are a few examples of fun family activities: Trying out a new recipe with them, taking a walk outside, and doing some Land Art (<https://childrenstree.org/land-art-for-kids/>).
- (5) **Create a *Peace Corner* in the house.** A Peace Corner is a special place children can go to take care of their feelings and help their brain be ready to think and learn again. Explain that it is where they can go when their feelings are so big that they feel overwhelmed. It's a safe place to go to calm their brain and body down or whenever they feel the need. Fill the space up with them with things that bring them comforts such as a teddy, paper, pens for coloring, a pillow, and a blanket.

Example of Peace Corner: <https://www.edutopia.org/video/creating-dedicated-space-reflection>



## **Ask, Listen, and Validate Your Child Feelings**

In these challenging times, it is normal for your child to feel stressed, anxious, sad, scared, upset, or lonely. Whenever you feel the need to check in with your child, we recommend using the ALV technique, which is quick and easy. This technique helps your child feel heard and understood. They will know that you love and accept them no matter what they're feeling or thinking. It does not try to fix a problem and instead gives them the space to share without judgment.

### **Ask.**

How are you feeling today?

### **Listen.**


Attentively and wholeheartedly.

### **Validate.**

I hear you.

You feel really sad right now.

It is normal to feel this way.



## Calming Strategies

The ALV technique may not be enough to help your child calm down if they feel upset. Here are additional tips and strategies for when they are feeling big emotions.

### (1) Stay curious

Emotions matter and often steam from unmet needs such as the need to feel understood, connected, or the need for freedom and choice. Be curious and ask questions to your child to uncover these needs.

Use open-ended questions such as:

“What happened?”

“What’s going on?”

### (2) Use phrases reaffirming that you are at their side:

“I’m right here”

“You are safe”

“I’m here to help you”

“I understand”

“I love you”

“It’s okay to cry”

“I’ll be right here for as long as you need me”

### (3) Use mindful breathing

Deep breathing using shapes: <https://copingskillsforkids.com/deep-breathing-exercises-for-kids>

Mindful breathing:

<https://www.yourtherapysource.com/blog1/2019/08/01/mindful-breathing-for-kids-2/>



## When Things Go Wrong: Navigating Conflict

When conflict arises or harm has been caused, you can use restorative questions. These questions are open-ended and have the potential to develop empathy and encourage your child to take responsibility. **At all times, avoid asking the WHY (why did you do that?) question.**

**Instead, try asking simply** “What happened?”

Restorative questions are open-ended and offer the possibility to generate authentic dialogue. These questions aim to address challenging situations and explore harmful situations from a perspective of care, non-judgment, and curiosity, as followed:

- What were you thinking about at the time?
- What have your thoughts been since?
- Who has been affected by your actions?
- In what way have they been affected?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

To respond restoratively, ask for and listen to your child's responses. Enter these situations with an open mind about your child's perspective and foster a space where they can take responsibility for their actions, understand what other options exist or existed and find a way to make things better or do better in the future.



## GUIDE TO SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL, MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING RESOURCES

### Resources



**Social Emotional Learning and Mental Health page:** North Vancouver School District provides information and resources for parents.



**Dalai Lama Centre for Peace + Education:** A non-religious, non-political charitable organization located in Vancouver that works to inform, inspire and engage parents and their children. Find current research, scientific knowledge, resources and best practices related to social and emotional learning.



**Vancouver Public Library:** A list of children's books and other resources for parents.



**Teen Mental Health:** A resource for quality mental health information addressing the needs of youth (ages 12 to 25 years) and their families.



**Sounds True:** A list of children's books on mindfulness, compassion, kindness, self-care, and other personal growth skills.



**Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL):** A trusted source for knowledge about high-quality, evidence-based social and emotional learning. CASEL supports parents and families which are critical partners in helping their children develop social and emotional know-how.



**Greater Good in Education:** An organization developed at UC Berkeley that provides parents with practical insights that help bring the science of a meaningful life into their lives and the life of their child, drawing on disciplines such as social-emotional learning, mindfulness, and character education.



**Susan Kaiser Greenland:** An internationally recognized leader in teaching mindfulness and meditation to children, teens, and parents. She played a foundational role in making mindfulness practices developmentally appropriate for young people and helped to pioneer activity-based mindfulness.



**Child Mind Institute:** An independent, national nonprofit dedicated to transforming the lives of children and families struggling with mental health and learning disorders. They deliver the highest standards of care, advance the science of the developing brain and empower parents to support children when and where they need it most.