

## **Tips for Incorporating Social Skills into Everyday Life at School**

**"Character education should imbue students with the full range of school experiences - the human curriculum as well as the academic curriculum. It should not be limited to classes on civics, nor is it only a matter of curriculum content. The way sports are conducted, grades are allotted, teachers behave, and corridors and parking lots are monitored all import moral messages and significantly affect character development."**

*From Character Education by William Damon*

### **Modeling**

Modeling is an important key to instilling social skills into our youth. As a teacher, you serve as one of the primary role models for your students. The students learn how to deal with differences from you, so take all opportunities to show them the honorable, respectful path to correcting students, deciding how to do things fairly, and responding to misbehavior, as well as complimenting behavior.

### **Using Guiding Principles for correcting and praising children**

Whenever you correct or praise students, remember to refer to your guiding principles or touchstones, e.g., "John, when you told Leanne that you liked her artwork, that was showing respect, and that's how we do things at ABC Elementary." An example of how you would use this to correct children is, "Kim, when you threw the book, that was not showing respect, and we at ABC Elementary school practice respect". Many schools post these guiding principles around the school; if not, post your own in your classroom.

### **And vs. But**

The use of the word "and" instead of the word, "but" allows one to communicate without negating what was previously said. For example, saying, "Henry, I like you, but your screaming has got to stop" feels very differently from, "Henry, I like you, and I can't hear you when you scream."

Remember relationship is everything in the classroom.