



Home -School Links

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The aim of this lesson is to provide children with opportunities to appreciate the importance of interacting with others. Friendly interaction with others is influenced by a child's level of self-esteem. Self-esteem is the value one places on one's self. Children with high self-esteem are more likely to interact well with others and are less likely to be vulnerable to exploitation.

The following are suggested activities which you might like to undertake at home with your child. Some of these may have been covered in school but they will have a more personal focus and may be more relevant to your child when you work together at home.

You and your child might like to compose an Acrostic about your child's friend, indicating how they relate to each other. An Acrostic is a poem which uses the letters of a word to begin each line:

Marian

Marvellous friend
Always helpful
Really kind
Invites me to her house
Asks me to play
Never nasty

James

Just a great friend
Anytime we play
Makes it such fun
Even on wet days
Smiles and is happy

Together with your child cut out words (or letters to make up words) in large print from newspapers and stick them on a large sheet of paper to make a poster on Relating to People:

Tolerant	Respectful	Happy	Kind	Generous
Honest	Chatty	Friendly	Thoughtful	

Talk to your child about the communication skills which are necessary for personal interaction in various everyday situations. Practise together, by acting out, what your child might say and do in the following scenarios.

Answering the telephone at home

Depositing money in a Post Office Account

Collecting pre-booked tickets at the Cinema

Buying a CD or cassette with a Gift Voucher

Returning books to the Library after the due date

Returning Yoghurt to the Supermarket because it was past its 'Sell-by' date when bought.



Home-School Links

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The aim of this lesson is to provide children with opportunities to learn about bullying, why it occurs and ways of dealing with it. Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. To know the reasons why some children bully others can help the victims to see the bully in his/her proper perspective. A child who has been bullying may see that such behaviour is not the solution to his/her problem. Parents and teachers working together can give support and guidance to children about reporting bullying. Serious incidents of persistent bullying can sometimes be underestimated because children can use the word 'bullying' to mean so many things.

The following are suggested activities which you might like to undertake at home with your child.

In the case of each of the situations outlined below, ask your child:

Is this bullying? Why do you say that?

If it is bullying what needs to be done about it? How can that happen?

If it is not bullying what is it? Is this all right/acceptable?

1. Chris got new runners. Sam said they hadn't the right label.
2. Sarah was once June's best friend. When it was close to June's birthday, she went round the class delivering party invitations. When she got to Sarah she said, 'You're not invited'.
3. Good friends, Peter and Robert were playing in the yard. They were pretending they were on their favourite T.V. programme. Peter grabbed Stephen and threw him to the ground. Stephen hurt his shoulder. When the teacher spoke to Peter about it he said, 'We were only playing'.

Talk to your child about bullying using questions such as the following:

What kind of person is a bully?

Why does s/he behave this way?

Were you ever bullied? What happened?

Now that you know what bullying is, do you think you ever bullied other people?

What happened? Why do you think you behaved this way?

Your child might think about bullying from the victim's and the bully's side:

What do you think it feels like to be bullied?

How might bullying in school affect a child's feelings about school?

What do you think it feels like to be a bully?

What might a bully think and feel about school?



Home-School Links

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The aim of this lesson is to provide children with opportunities to recognise that families vary in many ways and to value these differences. Family relationships play a significant role in the lives of children. They help children to develop a greater understanding of their world. Through the feedback they receive from family members, children learn to develop a realistic estimation of their own capabilities and limitations. Providing children with activities designed to help them think about their relationships within their families allows them to develop their understanding of themselves and the social world in which they live.

The following are suggested activities which you might like to undertake at home with your child.

You and your child might conduct some research together on your family name:

Where does our surname come from? What is its meaning?

Does it tell us anything about who our ancestors were or what they did for a living?

What country does our family name come from?

Is it a common name in Ireland, in our county or in our parish?

Are there any people with the same name as us who are well known?

Looking at your own family, you and your child could have a discussion on family roles:

In this house who does the shopping, the cooking, the laundry, the vacuuming, the gardening and the decorating?

Who washes the kitchen floor, the car, the bath and the windows?

Who tidies the hot press, the toys, the wardrobes and the garden shed?

Is the work shared by all the family members?

Is the most of the work done by one or two people? If so:

Who are they? Is this fair? What can be done about it?

Are there certain jobs in this house which are always done by either

the men, the women or the children? If so:

Who does which jobs? Is this acceptable? If not, what can we do about it?

Your child may be designing a Family Crest in school and you may wish to help with this.



Home-School Links

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The aim of this lesson is to provide children with opportunities to see that rules exist for a reason and to understand the consequences of breaking them. Many rules are made at home and in school in the interests of the children's safety. It is important that these rules are explained to children and they have an opportunity to ask questions about them. Children are more likely to obey rules which have meaning and relevance for them. Involving children in discussion about rules, and in the drawing-up of rules and codes of behaviour at home and in school, is a powerful way of maximising their observance.

The following are suggested activities which you might like to undertake at home with your child.

Talk to your child about the rules in your house:

What are the most important rules in our house?

Who made these rules and what are the reasons for them?

Is there any rule you would like to change? Why?

Is there any new rule you would like to make? What is it?

Ask your child to interview you about the rules you had to obey when you were growing up. Together you might decide on areas to be discussed:

Home rules - housework, bedtime, playtime, visitors;

School rules - punctuality, uniform, homework, playtime;

State rules - road safety, care of people, care of property.

Draw comparisons between school rules and home rules. Why must you:

Wear your uniform to school/change your clothes after school?

Be on time for school/come home at an arranged time?

Keep your classroom tidy/keep your bedroom tidy?

Do your school work/do certain jobs at home?

Not eat chewing gum at school/not wear muddy shoes indoors at home?

Treat others with respect/treat your family with respect?

Talk to your child about his/her favourite sport:

What are the main rules of?

What is the reason for each of those rules?



Home-School Links

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The aim of this lesson is to provide the children with opportunities to learn how to respond appropriately to their feelings. Feelings and emotions are a very important and complex part of children's experiences. Emotional awareness involves recognising one's own feelings as well as the feelings of others. Managing emotions means the ability to control and cope with personal feelings and being able to express them in socially acceptable and appropriate ways. Learning about emotions and feelings is beneficial to the healthy development of the child.

The following are suggested activities which you might like to undertake at home with your child:

Ask your child to think about a variety of possible situations and to anticipate how s/he might feel. The leading question might be 'how would you feel and what would you do if...'

you got an unexpected present of a new bicycle?

your friends didn't call for you when they were going out to play?

Granny/Grandad died?

your pet dog was knocked down by a car?

the teacher said that your homework was excellent?

we were going away on a family holiday?

you lost your temper and shouted at?

you thought your new runners weren't 'cool'?

the lights went out during a thunder storm?

you forgot to do your homework and the teacher asked for it?

You could ask your child:

What makes you nervous? What calms you down?

What frightens you? What helps you to be brave again?

What make you angry? What calms you down again?

Are you ever disappointed? What cheers you up?

Are you ever down-hearted? What raises your spirits?

When you are lonely, what helps you feel better?

Did you ever feel jealous? What helped you feel better again?

When you are sad, what helps you feel happier?



Home-School Links

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The aim of this lesson is to provide children with opportunities to recognise and learn to sequence the stages of development of the human baby from conception to birth. By teaching children to understand how new life develops, parents and teachers are encouraging them not to take the miracle of life for granted and to respect, value and cherish new life.

This home-school links page suggests that children are told the story of the growth of the baby in the womb before being born. You may wish to personalise it, telling your child the story of his/her own development, whether you are Daddy, Mummy or Guardian. It is advisable to read it for yourself first and to present it in your own words, as naturally as possible. Your child will probably have many questions to ask you about himself/herself after hearing this story.

Have you ever seen a bird's nest up close? What is it made of? (Grasses, twigs etc.) How does the mother bird make it comfortable for her little ones when they hatch? (She lines it with grass, leaves and moss).

Before you were born you spent about nine months cradled in your mother's (my) womb. The womb prepared a soft lining to keep you comfortable. It did this by becoming softer and thicker. This lining kept you safe and snug.

You needed nine months to grow completely and to be strong enough to live outside the womb. Nine months is the usual length of time a baby spends in the womb.

During that time the womb was your home. Everything you needed for life and comfort was provided in the womb. You were joined to your mother by a tube called the umbilical cord. Through the cord you got the food you needed to grow. What you didn't need returned to your mother (me).

At eight weeks you were the size of a grown up's thumb nail, the size of a 20p piece. Your hands and feet had already started to grow and you began to move about. You kicked gently. But because you were so small your mother (I) didn't feel you moving around. Now you were beginning to look like a baby. Though your eyes were closed, you moved your arms and legs around, stretching and kicking, curling your toes, making fists, frowning and making faces. You were doing your exercises and this helped your muscles to grow strong.

As the day of your birth drew near you had grown so much you had less room to move around. Now you practised breathing. There was no air in the womb, only liquid. Sometimes you swallowed the liquid and this gave you hiccups. Mummy may have felt you burping and wondered what was going on!

After nine months you were ready to be born. As you were welcomed into the world you were ready to begin another wonderful adventure.



Home-School Links

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The aim of this lesson is to provide children with opportunities to learn about the importance of good personal hygiene. This may also provide an opportunity for the teacher and parents to use correct terminology for body parts. It is important that children learn the appropriate vocabulary for discussing aspects of life related to sexuality, growing up and their bodies' physical changes so that they can communicate confidently about themselves.

The following are suggested activities which you might like to undertake at home with your child:

Talk to your child about ways s/he can stay healthy in relation to:

- the food s/he eats - more fruit and vegetables, less sugar and fat;
- the exercise s/he takes - more walking, more cycling and a reasonable amount of television;
- good hygiene practice - care of skin, nails, teeth, hair, etc:

You might like to revise information which may have been given in class about Bacteria and Viruses:

Bacteria and Viruses are spread in the following ways:

Through the air - Bacteria can travel through the air. A sneeze can send millions of tiny microbes travelling through the air.

By Body Contact - Verrucae are passed on to people in this way.

In Food - Often bacteria are found in cooked and uncooked food. Cooking food well kills most harmful bacteria.

By Animals and Insects - Pets, rats and houseflies all carry bacteria.

Through Water - This is more of a problem in Third World countries where many people may have to use water straight from a well or river. The water isn't filtered like it is here.

Your might talk to your child about vaccinations and other measures to prevent the spread of diseases:

A vaccination is a special kind of injection. When you are vaccinated a tiny amount of the virus that causes the disease is injected into your body. Your body then makes the antibodies to fight the disease. You have been vaccinated against ...

Pets can spread diseases. Do not let them lick your face. Give them a separate bowl to eat from. Wash your hands after playing with them and after emptying litter trays.

Germ can enter the body through cuts and scratches. Keep them covered. 'Coughs and sneezes spread diseases'. Cover your mouth when you cough and use a handkerchief when you sneeze.

It is important to wash your hands, using soap and water, after you go to the toilet. Houseflies spread disease. Keep food covered.



Home-School Links

It is recommended that this Home-School Links page be sent home in advance of doing the lesson in class

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The aim of this lesson is to provide children with opportunities to understand the changes that take place in both males and females during growth to adulthood. Children experience a range of life changes as they grow. As changes occur physically, socially and psychologically, they learn to adapt to societal and cultural changes around them. A focus on some of these changes advances the development of self-knowledge and self-esteem in children. The following information is given here so that you will be familiar with the content of the class lesson and you may wish to prepare or revise information with your child.

In the materials that follow there is a very simple explanation of menstruation. Before this is taught, the children need to recognise and understand that just as the womb prepares to receive a fertilised egg, there are other kinds of readiness required for pregnancy such as emotional and psychological maturity.

The subject of menstruation ideally should be presented when children have been given the opportunity to learn about the wonder of how the human body operates. You might begin with a series of experiments on the five senses. Your child could, for example, examine the eye's response to changes in lighting and identify foods by taste alone. Other topics might include the skeleton, the nervous system and the digestive system. The latter, tracing the passage of food through the body, is an ideal preliminary to other lessons as, with the right approach, the embarrassment factor can be dispensed with. So by the time the topic of menstruation is introduced the children are comfortable with talking about the human body.

Introduction

You are part of the world of nature. You have seen how things grow and change in the natural world. You have seen how a seed goes through many changes to become a flower. Do you remember the changes that butterfly eggs go through as they grow into butterflies? Do you remember the changes that happen in the nine months it takes a fertilised egg to grow into a baby that is ready to be born.

Once born, compared to most of the world of nature, we grow very slowly. Most other mammals can stand and run within minutes of being born. It took you at least a year. Because of this, you had time to learn and develop safely and healthily. From photos you can see how you have grown since you were born. This didn't happen overnight and we didn't see it happen. We grow fastest as a baby. In the first year a baby triples in size. If this were to happen every year, by the time baby was three s/he would weigh the same as a fully grown adult.

How tall you grow depends mostly on chemicals which move around your body. These are called hormones. Hormones are like messages from the brain. The growth hormone reaches every cell in your body. This is what makes cells grow, so that your body can grow. You grow in other ways too. You will grow up to be a man or woman. Hormones cause these changes in your body too. When you reach a certain age a special hormone travels around your body. This special hormone starts the changes that turn boys into men and turn girls into women.

Girls usually start to change at an earlier age than boys. Most of the important changes take place in girls between the ages of nine and eighteen. Most of the important changes in boys start when they are eleven and by the time they are fourteen boys start to be taller and to weigh more than girls. Have you noticed this? A group of boys and girls may be the same age

but they are different heights. We all grow differently. At ten many girls will be taller than boys of the same age. But the boys grow faster as teenagers. They often catch up and then overtake the girls in height.

Changes in Shape

As well as growing taller other changes happen too. The body's shape changes for instance. If it didn't it would grow bigger but keep its baby shape. Can you imagine what that would look like? A girl's hips get wider. Can you guess why this might be? A girl's hips get wider because she may be a mother when she is grown up and nature is preparing her for this. The hips have to be wider to hold the womb and carry the growing baby inside the woman. A girl's breasts develop. Once again nature is preparing for motherhood. A mother can feed her baby with milk from the breasts. A boy changes shape. His body becomes more muscular and stronger. His shoulders broaden. A boy's penis grows too. He is changing into a man.

Menstruation

A girl menstruates or 'gets periods'. This is another way nature prepares for a baby. Every month an egg travels down a tube into the womb. Do you remember we heard about the way the womb prepares a special lining, in case there is a baby? The womb does this every month. When there is no baby, the lining dissolves and leaves the body through the vagina. The lining is mixed with a little blood and the egg.

Voice Changes

A girl's voice begins to sound more like a woman's. A boy's voice becomes lower. He begins to sound more like a man.

Changes in friendship patterns

Boys become interested in girls and girls get interested in boys. They begin to share more of the same interests.

Mood Changes

As boys and girls grow and change they may find that their moods change quickly. One moment they may feel very happy and the next they may feel lonely and sad. The special hormone that is travelling around the body is part of the reason this happens. Your feelings and emotions may change too. This is because you are growing up. It wouldn't do for your body to grow up and your mind and feelings to stay the same as a child's. These changes are exciting but sometimes they can leave you feeling confused.

Body Hair

Boys of course start to get hair on their face. Eventually they will need to shave unless they want to grow a beard. Boys also grow hair on their chests and legs. In both boys and girls hair grows under the arms. Hair also grows around a boy's penis and a girl's vagina. This is called pubic hair.

Skin Changes

In boys and girls, skin becomes more oily. They also perspire more. Because your skin will be more oily and you will perspire more, it is also a time to remember to wash well all over daily.



Home-School Links

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The aim of this lesson is to provide children with opportunities to discuss how problems can be solved. Living life to the full involves solving problems and making decisions and choices. Such processes may be encountered as an individual or as a group. Trying to solve children's problems or to resolve their difficulties for them instills in them the attitude that someone else can always "fix it" and that they themselves are not capable of solving even simple problems without adult help.

The following are suggested activities which you might like to undertake at home with your child.

In the case of each of the following pretend situations, discuss with your child possible ways of finding a solution:

His/her only friend has a cousin coming to stay and says s/he won't be available to play for a couple of weeks;

Homework is not done because it wasn't written down;

S/he kicked a school football into a building site next to the school yard;

S/he is sometimes late for school because s/he stays watching television;

S/he is asked for his/her lunch every day by a child in school?

In the case of each you could ask:

What is the problem here? What do you think about it?

Who is causing the problem? Who is being hurt? Who is losing out?

How do you think this problem could be solved?

Would this be the right thing to do? Why?

What might happen then? Would that be the end of the problem?

Would everyone be happy? Would the problem be solved?

Some strategies for solving problems could be worked out:

Think about the problem;

Think of lots of solutions;

Think what would be the right thing to do;

Think ahead to the consequences and implications of each alternative;

Make a decision on the basis of what you have thought about;

Go ahead and try the best plan.