

URBAN IMPROV FOR THE CLASSROOM: 4th Grade Teacher Curriculum

© 2006 The Trauma Center at Justice Resource Institute

**Marla Zucker, Ph.D.,
The Trauma Center at JRI
Elizabeth Brogan Villafior,
Boston Renaissance Charter School
Jonathan Holden,
Nathan Hale Elementary School
Ronald Jones,
Urban Improv, A Program of Freelance Players, Inc.
Joseph Spinazzola, Ph.D.,
The Trauma Center at JRI**

Developed by...



In collaboration with...



Development of this manual was partially supported by Federal Grant numbers 2005-JL-FX-0157 and 97-MU-FX-K012, awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, through a subcontract with the Hamilton Fish Institute of George Washington University (subcontract numbers 06-S09 and 05-S40).

BACKGROUND

Urban Improv (UI) was created in 1992 as a violence prevention program for at-risk children and initiated in collaboration with the Boston public schools and Roxbury Community College in 1993. UI is a school-based interactive and educational program that utilizes structured drama improvisation to teach decision making, conflict resolution, problem solving, cooperation, leadership, and values clarification skills and provide students the opportunity to deal creatively with major issues in their lives. The process-oriented program is designed to strengthen self-esteem and promote a proactive approach toward challenges. UI currently serves more than 1,000 elementary, middle, and high school children from inner-city Boston public schools and throughout New England.

The Urban Improv program incorporates many elements of the best practices for youth violence prevention. Recent studies, however, emphasize the importance of involving the total school community in the prevention program and of fostering stronger relationships between students and school staff. Research has indicated that programs involving “classroom organization, management, and instructional strategies promote the protective factors of active participation in learning, development of skills to establish positive social relationships, and bonding to school and prosocial peers” (OJJDP, 1995).

Although UI is a school-based intervention, it is an independent program run by non-school staff. While important relationships are formed between UI staff and the students, these relationships do not extend directly to the school environment. The addition of a classroom-based, teacher-led component is intended to extend the application of UI violence/problem resolution strategies within a broader context and cement learning through increased practice. In fact, many of the teachers whose students participated in UI have expressed a desire for a classroom component to enhance the learning process for their students by reinforcing the concepts in the classroom environment.

The following manual presents a teacher curriculum based on UI that can be incorporated into standard school lesson plans.

GENERAL STRUCTURE

The teacher curriculum extends for nine weeks, one week for each theme introduced in the standard Urban Improv protocol.

Class Meetings between the teacher and students will be integral to the implementation of this curriculum. Meetings should take place at least twice per week on Mondays and Fridays, if possible, and last approximately 30 minutes. Class Meetings provide a valuable time for teachers to share and clarify the theme of the week. It is important that teachers establish a safe and supportive environment for students to share their opinions and views. The structure of the first Class Meeting each week should consist of the following three parts:

1. Introduce the overarching lessons and objectives of the theme of that week. You may wish to post these on chart paper, as well.

2. Provide information about the behaviors targeted for reinforcement (SAW strategy; see Part II).
3. Play the game (see Part I). If there is not enough time to play the game during the first Class Meeting, play it during a second Class Meeting at another time during the week to complete the game.

In Friday's Class Meeting, play the game if it has not already been played. In addition, SAW coupons will be awarded (see Part II for more explanation).

The curriculum consists of three parts:

Part I addresses the nine UI content themes through read-aloud activities and games.

Part II incorporates into the classroom behavior management and positive reinforcement strategies based on UI.

Part III describes the mechanisms that will be used for monitoring the implementation of the curriculum and evaluating its effectiveness.

INITIAL CLASS MEETING

An initial Class Meeting should be held the week before the first week of the standard curriculum. This meeting should consist of three parts. First, teachers should introduce the classroom-based curriculum, letting students know that there will be weekly activities and discussions related to various themes that are important to 4th graders.

Second, teachers should have a discussion with students about expectations for the games and what will make them more difficult vs. more fun. Guidelines should be repeated prior to introduction of the game during the second week and additionally as needed based on class response. Teachers may also wish to reiterate the rules prior to approaching sensitive material. The following guidelines should be presented:

- One voice at a time
- Be ready to try your best
- Passive participation (being present, listening to others, paying attention, and being respectful of others who are participating but not speaking) is okay, but active participation is encouraged because you may have a perspective that could be helpful to someone else
- There are no right or wrong answers to the questions
- Be respectful of others and personal boundaries (i.e., no name calling, criticizing others' responses, answering for other people, violating others' personal space).

Third, the game Class Count should be played as an icebreaker and introduction to the curriculum. This game is outlined below.



Game: Class Count

Objectives: To enhance children's ability to solve problems as a group by relying on their instincts and not on verbal communication. To reinforce the application of humor, patience, and persistence to problem solving.

Prologue:

- *A big part of UI involves working together to reach goals and solve problems, so we're going to play a game that requires teamwork.*
- Present rules.

Structure: The object of the game is for the children, as a group, to count to ten (or higher if they can) without any two people speaking at the same time. Split the class randomly into groups of no more than 10 students. Ask the first group to stand in a random cluster so that children are facing several different directions with no definable order to their placement. Children are not allowed to discuss a plan or communicate verbally. If two people try to say a number at the same time, the group must start again at "one." It is best to try the game a few times to see how far the group gets to create a realistic yet challenging goal for how high they should try to count. As they improve, you can increase the goal. Repeat this procedure for each group of students.

Follow-up Questions:

- What was it like to play this game?
- Was anything surprising?
- What did you learn about solving problems?
- Did anyone get angry or frustrated with the group? How did you deal with that?

Part I: Content Themes

Part I incorporates into the classroom educational activities that address each UI theme. The objectives of Part I of the curriculum are to deliver the messages of UI in fun and creative ways and to support the overarching goals of UI in the classroom.

Each theme will be addressed through both read-aloud activities and a game. In 4th grade, the nine themes presented are:

Week 1: Friendship	Week 6: Violence/Conflict resolution
Week 2: Self-esteem	Week 7: Fairness
Week 3: Imagination	Week 8: Family
Week 4: Fear	Week 9: Adventure
Week 5: Peer Pressure	



Read-alouds consist of texts that address the theme of the week. Texts will be read in one or two sessions of approximately 15-20 minutes each (some are longer), followed by a 15- to 20-minute discussion and teaching period based on themes related to the text. During read-alouds, students should be seated and be asked to think about and/or write down questions to ask the characters. During the discussion period, students should be encouraged to ask these questions, in addition to answering the discussion questions provided in this manual. Markers and large paper/poster board will be helpful materials for read-aloud activities.

Formats that can be very helpful for managing read-alouds are:

- Turn and talk to a partner about discussion questions
- Use the agree/disagree format: "I agree because..." "I disagree because..."
- Students who express an opinion may then call on the next person to speak
- Build up to having small-group (3-4 students) discussion based on the discussion questions supplied by the teacher.



Games will be action-oriented and emphasize participation, cooperation, and collaboration. They will consist of a short prologue to the activity in which the purpose and rules of the game will be presented. Games will last no more than 20 minutes, followed by a 10- to 15-minute period for follow-up and discussion. At least three of the follow-up questions should be discussed after each game.

Discussion following read-alouds and games will not only reinforce the themes of the week, but also the broad goals of UI. The general aims of the UI program are to enhance students’:

- Problem solving & decision making skills
- Analytical and critical thinking skills
- Cooperation
- Ability to approach challenges proactively
- Self-esteem/confidence
- Impulse control
- Leadership ability
- Imagination/creativity

One skill that ties together several of these goals (e.g., cooperation, analytical skills, problem solving) is that of perspective taking, the ability to identify, understand, and consider other people’s perspectives in reaching solutions. Complementing UI, the curriculum will also seek to expand students’ perspective-taking skills.

Theme 1: FRIENDSHIP



Overarching Lessons/Objectives:

- What are the characteristics of healthy friendships?
- What does it mean to be friendly?
- The commonalities and differences that occur in friendships/respecting differences



Read-Aloud:

Text: *The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes (Note: the complete book is provided, but chapters 1-2 and 6 will not be read aloud; only chapters 3, 4, 5, and 7 will be read aloud) (2 lessons)

Objectives:

- Students will be able to identify character traits of positive and negative friends.
- They will be able to use personal experience to relate to Peggy, Maddie, and Wanda.

Teaching/Discussion Points:

Introduce reading to students:

The Hundred Dresses is a story that was written awhile ago, but I have a good feeling that everyone in the class will be able to relate to at least one person in this story. It is a story about a girl, named Wanda Petronski, who is made fun of by some of her classmates. Some of this story will probably make you sad, and some of the story may make you smile.

As we read this story, I would like you to think about:

- Have you ever been a little different than most of the other students in your class?
- Who are the characters in this story who could be better friends?
- What actions are making those characters not be good friends?
- How would you have been a better friend to Wanda?

Lesson I: Chapters 1-4 (read aloud only chapters 3 and 4)

First, provide students a synopsis of chapters 1 and 2:

In the first two chapters, we meet Wanda Petronski, a very quiet girl with no friends. Wanda is poor, and she wears the same faded blue dress to school every day. We also meet Peggy, a very popular girl, and her inseparable friend Maddie, who often make fun of Wanda on her way to school and mock her for saying that she has a hundred dresses at home in her closet. We're going to start the story after a time when Peggy has picked on Wanda.

Read from the second paragraph on page 16 (in chapter 2) through chapter 4.

Discussion Questions:

- Is Maddie having a difficult time following Peggy's actions?
- Why do you think Maddie follows Peggy in making fun of Wanda?
- Have you ever been made fun of because you were different in some way?
- Why did the girls make fun of Wanda?
- Why do you think Maddie wants to write the note to Peggy? Would the note help solve any problems?

Lesson II: Chapters 5-7 (skip chapter 6)

Read chapter 5.

Then provide a synopsis of chapter 6:

Peggy and Maddie go to Wanda's house and find that she moved away. They feel very sad because they won't get to tell Wanda anything. Maddie decides that she will never stand by and say nothing again if she hears people picking on someone.

Read chapter 7.

Discussion Questions:

- BEFORE YOU READ: Recap what was read and discussed on Day 1.
- How do you think Maddie and Peggy felt when they realized all the drawings were done by Wanda?
- Why did Peggy suggest that she and Maddie go to Wanda's house?
- Did Peggy and Maddie show signs of being good friends? What were those signs?
- If you were Wanda, would you have sent the pictures to the girls? Why/Why not? Is this a sign of friendship?
- How would you have treated Wanda differently?
- Think of one way to be a good friend.

Follow-up Questions:

1. Why do the girls continue to tease Wanda?
2. Does any character show a sign of being a good friend? Who? What is the sign?
3. How would you have treated Wanda differently?



Game: This is My Friend

Objective: To help students learn about each other and develop presentation skills.

Prologue:

- *The theme of this week is FRIENDSHIP.*
- *We're going to play a game in which you get to know your classmates better.*
- Present rules.

Structure: Pair off the class, preferably into pairs of students who do not know each other as well. Give them a few minutes to interview each other. It might be helpful to give them some goal-focused questions like:

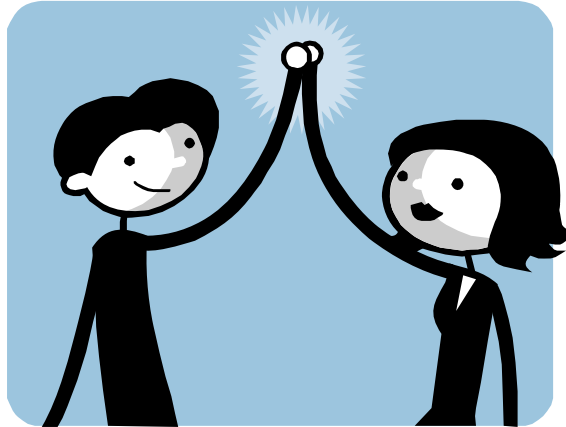
- Where is your family from?
- What is your favorite TV show?
- How many brothers and sisters do you have?
- **Tell me one thing about you that most people in the class don't know.**
- **What are you really good at?**

Once the interview time is over, have each pair stand and present each other to the rest of the group. They should begin, "This is my friend...." and then present the most interesting/important pieces of information that they learned. Students will likely need encouragement to share on a more personal level.

Follow-up Questions:

- What was it like to play this game?
- Was anything surprising?
- What did you learn?
- What was it like to be interviewed about yourself?

Theme 2: SELF-ESTEEM



Overarching Lessons/Objectives:

- What is self-esteem?
- Who or what makes you feel good/bad about yourself?
- Feeling good about yourself and who you are makes you better at everything you do.
- Helping others feel good about themselves can make you feel good about yourself.



Read-Aloud:

Texts: *Thank you, Mr. Falker* by Patricia Polacco (1-2 lessons)
Mr. Lincoln's Way by Patricia Polacco (1-2 lessons)

Please note: *Due to time constraints, teachers may wish to choose one of these books to read rather than covering both.*

Objective: Students will be able to empathize with the characters in the text by sharing personal experience.

Teaching/Discussion Points:

Lesson I: *Thank You, Mr. Falker*

Introduce *Thank You, Mr. Falker*:

Thank you, Mr. Falker is a story about a girl named Trisha who had great difficulty in school. She has gone through school for years not knowing how to read. She really wants to be a good reader, but words are always confusing to her. Trisha gets easily frustrated, especially

when her classmates make fun of her. Wait until you see how Trisha changes when she finds a teacher who helps her become a reader!

Here are some things to think about as I read *Thank You, Mr. Falker* to you:

- Have you ever tried to do something and just were unable to figure out how to do it?
- How do you think Trisha feels when she can't read like her classmates?
- How have you felt when you were finally able to do something that you had a difficult time learning?

Follow-up Questions:

- What was it like when you were trying to learn something new and were having trouble?
- Why do you think that Trisha did not enjoy going to school?
- Were Trisha's classmates being good friends to Trisha?
- Why was Mr. Falker so important to Trisha?
- Who has been a person in your life who has helped you with something that was difficult?
- How did you feel toward that person?
- What did you do when you achieved your goal?

Lesson II: *Mr. Lincoln's Way*

Introduce *Mr. Lincoln's Way*:

Mr. Lincoln's Way is a story about Eugene, a bully in a neighborhood school. He frequently makes fun of his peers because of their skin color and ethnicity. The school principal, Mr. Lincoln, finds out about Eugene's hidden talent. This hidden talent helps Eugene come to an understanding and appreciation for things that look different, including his classmates. What do you think Eugene's hidden talent is?

Here are some things to think about as I read *Mr. Lincoln's Way* to you:

- Have you ever treated someone differently because they looked different than you?
- Have you ever been made fun of because you looked different? How did that make you feel?

Follow-up Questions:

- Why does Eugene make fun of other people that don't look like him? Is it fair?
- Why does Mr. Lincoln help Eugene?
- Do you think that Eugene likes Mr. Lincoln even though he has called him a name? Why/why not?
- Why do the birds help Mr. Lincoln teach Eugene about accepting all of his peers, no matter what they look like?
- Why was Eugene so excited to see his grandpa?
- Why does Eugene feel good and proud of himself at the end of the story?
- Have you ever treated someone differently because they looked different than you?
- Have you ever been made fun of because you looked different? How did that make you feel?



Game: Awards Ceremony

Note: This game may take longer than the other games in this manual, and teachers may wish to divide the game up over the course of the week (e.g., 5 students per day).

Materials Needed: Pre-printed award certificates

Objective: To identify and provide peer recognition for students' strengths.

Prologue:

- *The theme of this week is SELF-ESTEEM. Does anyone know what self-esteem means? (Allow time for responses.) That's right, it's about FEELING GOOD ABOUT OURSELVES AND WHO WE ARE.*
- *We're going to play a game to celebrate each of you for being who you are.*
- Recap rules for behavior, emphasizing respect for others.
- Present rules.

Structure: This game should be done with the whole class, with each child seated at his/her desk. The teacher begins by selecting one student and announcing to the class, "Today we are giving *Student X* an award. What should we give him/her an award for?" The class makes suggestions, and the teacher chooses one child's suggestion and asks that child to present the award to the winner. The winner stands up before the group and receives a pre-printed certificate, with his/her name and award title written in by the teacher. The teacher creates an expectation set for the children to applaud following presentation of each award by initiating the applause after the first award is presented. In addition, the child who provided the suggestion that was used should be given a card for the positive reinforcement system to be placed on the Super Actions Wall (see Part II of this manual). The process is repeated for each child.

Examples of awards: Great Smile, Courageous, Talented Artist, Helpful Friend, Great Shoes, Awesome Dancer, Great Singer, Funny, etc.

Note: Awards designating a student as "Best ____" should be avoided, as these promote competition. In addition, naming awards "Great ____" or "Awesome ____" allow more than one student to receive the same award.

Follow-up Questions:

- What was it like to play this game?
- Was anything surprising?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- How did it feel to hear the group's suggestions?

Theme 3: IMAGINATION



Overarching Lessons/Objectives:

- What is imagination?
- How does imagination help you?
- Imagination makes things fun, helps you solve problems, gives you new ideas.



Read-Alouds:

Texts: *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak (1 lesson)
“Dreams” from *The BFG* by Roald Dahl (1-2 lessons)

Objectives:

Where The Wild Things Are:

- Students will make a “text-to-self” (or character-to-self) connection with Max. They will think of a time that they used their imagination to make a tough situation more enjoyable.
- Students will understand that good readers often try to make connections with a character to better understand why they do certain things. (Why might Max have such a wild imagination?)

Dreams:

- Students will use contextual clues to infer the meanings of strange words.
- Students will connect with the text by imagining that they are they characters in the dreams from the story and what would happen to them in the dream. The hope is that this will remind them how some of their own dreams can be creative and fun like the ones in the story.

Teaching/Discussion Points:**Lesson I: *Where the Wild Things Are***

Introduce *Where The Wild Things Are*:

I would like you to think about something before we begin today's story. See if you can think of a time when you had to use your imagination to make something more exciting. Maybe it was just when you would play a game by imagining a playground was really a space ship or something. Or maybe you got in trouble, but you used your imagination to make your situation more fun. As we read the story I want to see if what happens to Max reminds you of anything in your own life.

Read aloud the story.

Stop on the page when Max gets in trouble.

- Why did Max get in trouble?

Finish reading the story.

Discussion Questions:

- This story is a fantasy because things happened in the story that couldn't happen in real life. What, of course, were some of the things which happened that make this story a fantasy?
- When Max was using his imagination, what do you think he was doing in real life?
- Did anyone make a connection between your own life and what happened to Max? (This is called a text-to-self connection.)
- Max used his imagination to make a bad situation more fun. Can you think of some situations when you just have to sit around with nothing to do, and you find yourself getting bored? Choose one or two suggestions to discuss. Let's think about (insert situation). Use your imagination and brainstorm with your assigned partner some ways to make this situation more fun. Turn and talk. Following two minutes of pair discussion, groups should then be encouraged to share their thoughts with the larger group.

Lesson II: *Dreams*

Before you read, put the first three paragraphs of page 99 onto chart paper or a transparency for all the class to see. From "Human beans" up until "Right or left?"

Introduce *Dreams*:

This is a chapter from a very funny book. In the story so far a little girl woke up at midnight and saw a giant blowing something into houses. The giant kidnapped the little girl because he didn't want anyone to find out about him. Now the two have become friends, and she has learned that he was actually blowing dreams into the houses.

As you listen to the story you are going to hear some very strange words. See if you can use the contextual clues in the sentences to help figure out what these words mean.

Begin reading. Stop after “Right or Left?” on page 99.

Let’s look closely for just a moment at these three paragraphs. The Big Friendly Giant certainly has trouble with some of his words. What are some things that at first don’t seem to make sense?

Discussion Questions:

What do you think the BFG means when he says:

- “Human beans?”
- “shivers down their spindles?”
- “Right or left?”

As I read the rest of the story you will have to use context clues like you just did to figure out the meanings of any strange words you hear.

As you read the dream on page 104 -105, see if you can catch any of your students staring at you trying to put you to sleep. If you do say,

Were you just trying to put me to sleep? What a great connection to the character you just made! Sometimes a good book will make you wish that you were part of the story! I know when I read this I tried to put my mom to sleep, but it didn’t work.

Skip page 107; start reading again on bottom of page 108.

On page 109 see if students make a connection with the character by pushing their own bellybuttons.

Read the rest of the story. Stop at the bottom of page 110 (skip last sentence on the page). Start reading in the middle of page 112 (“That’s enough for now...”). End on page 115.

These dreams are fun to think about. I want you to imagine that you are the character in this dream. (Read dream about floating to ground.) Take 20 seconds and think about what would you do if you were in this dream.

Now turn and talk to your partner about what you would do.



Game: Living Mural

Materials Needed: Camera, Slips of paper with themes written on them (provided on next page)

Objective: To teach students cooperative working as they use their imaginations and creativity to make abstract ideas concrete.

Prologue:

- *The theme of this week is IMAGINATION and opening our minds to new ideas.*
- *We're going to play a game in which we'll use our imaginations and creativity to create a picture.*
- Present rules.

Structure: Designate one wall in the room to be the tableaux/mural wall. Based on the size of the group, limit the number of people who can play at one time, or break the class into smaller groups of no more than seven.

First, show students one of the photographs as a model for what they will be doing. Ask them what the mural looks like, and see if they can guess the theme correctly. Then explain that one group at a time, students will form themselves into a tableaux/mural on the wall based on an idea or theme presented to them.

Second, give one group a card with the theme they are to illustrate. Allow them **ONLY 60 seconds maximum** to plan their mural. Many times students' natural instincts will be to rush up to the wall, even if they are not sure what they are going to do. It is important to discourage this behavior and let them know that the picture should build on itself. One student should start and freeze into position **immediately**, as if he/she were a statute. Then the second student should go and freeze, and so on, with each person adding to what the other students have done. It should take students no more than 60 seconds to create the mural.

Third, to enhance students' motivation to stand still while the whole group completes the mural, students should be told at the beginning that the teacher will take a picture of the completed mural that will later be hung on the Super Actions Wall (see Part II). When each group completes its mural, the teacher should take a picture.

This game should go very quickly, with each group taking no more than a total of 2 minutes to complete the exercise. It is not necessary that every student in a group become a part of the mural; they may feel the mural is complete without them.

Each tableau should take only a few seconds to build. Theme possibilities are endless as long as one can visualize a picture coming out of the theme. Some ideas for themes are:

- The birthday party
- Baby's first steps
- The swimming pool
- The first day of school
- The pizza shop
- The library
- And the winner is...
- A day at the...park/beach/zoo
- The big game
- The cafeteria
- The last day of school
- The roller coaster
- Doing the laundry

Follow-up Questions:

- What was it like to play this game?
- Was anything surprising?
- What did you learn?
- What strategies worked the best to make the pictures?
- Why is imagination so important?

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please note that the game for the next unit (Fear) requires some class preparation time THIS week.

Model Pictures for Tableaux Game

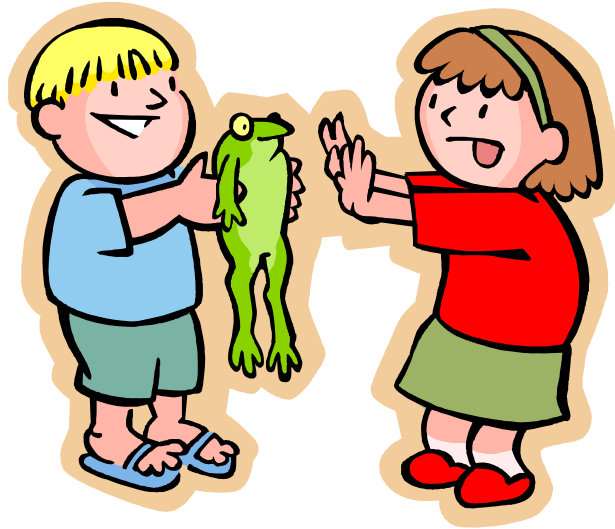
The following pictures present a baseball game. Each person who enters the scene adds a new character who might be found at a baseball game.



THEMES FOR TABLEAUX GAME

The Birthday Party	The Big Game
The Cafeteria	The Last Day of School
The First Day of School	A Day at the Zoo
A Day at the Beach	The Roller Coaster
The Library	The Swimming Pool
And the Winner is...	Doing the Laundry
The Movies	Your Choice!

Theme 4: FEAR



Overarching Lessons/Objectives:

- It's okay to be afraid.
- People have many different, and similar, fears.
- If you face your fears, they won't take over your life.



Read-Aloud:

Text: Three poems: "Listening to Grown-ups Quarreling," "The Plan," and "The Bravest Deed" (3 lessons)

Objectives:

- Students will use the clues in the text to develop an image of the action in the poem.
- Students will make inferences about who is telling the poem and what they are afraid of.
- Students will discuss the poem in small groups and as a whole class.

Teaching/Discussion Points:

Lesson I: "Listening to Grown-ups Quarreling"

Introduce "Listening to Grown-ups Quarreling," but take the end of the title off so that it reads "Listening to....."

Poems almost always try to give the reader a strong image or feeling. This poem gives a very strong image of fear. I'm going to read this poem twice. As I read, write yourself notes on the

side of the poem about what you think this poem is about. If there are parts you are not sure about, underline them and put a question mark next to them to talk about later.

This might be a good lesson to discuss or reinforce inferences that the class makes about the poem. *When we make an inference we are figuring something out that is not directly written in the poem. We are using clues to figure out what is happening.*

Read the poem twice.

Discussion Questions:

- What image do you get in your mind from the first stanza?
- Who can we infer is telling the poem?
- In line 3 and 4 it says “blown like leaves against the wall by their voices.” What does “their voices” mean?
- What is the author afraid of?
- Explain that in Stanza 2, line 1 wrath means “anger.” How can someone be cold with someone else’s anger?
- The title “Listening to...” has been cut short. What could you add to this to make a strong title?

Lesson II: “The Plan”

Explain that this poem is from a book of poems about a little boy and a friend he makes whose name is Blue. Ask students to write questions and thoughts on the side of the poem to discuss in pairs after you have read the poem twice.

Read the poem twice.

Discussion Questions:

- What does the boy’s message to fear mean?
- What does Blue mean when he says:

It’s hate.
And fear. One
Holds the gun
While the other
Pulls the trigger.

- Everyone has fears, large and small. Some people find different ways to face them. Sometimes it takes a little imagination and courage to find a way to face your fears. Every day you face at least a small fear of yours. Can you think of one you may have overcome today? (Give an example of a small fear you faced today.)

Lesson III: “The Bravest Deed”

Ask students to write questions and thoughts on the side of the poem to discuss in pairs after you have read the poem twice.

Read the poem twice.

Write down a few student questions on chart paper for the class to discuss. Some discussion questions to include on the list:

- Why is this poem titled “The Bravest Deed?”
- What is bravery? *Emphasize the idea that bravery means facing something that is scary or that you fear. Without fear it is impossible to be brave.* (Macy, Macy, Gross, & Brighton, 1999-2003)
- Who is telling the poem?
- Why was the speaker scared?
- Do you think the mom was afraid? What did she do that was so brave?
- How did she help solve the problem?

OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENT:

If journaling is used in your class, you may wish to have students complete a journal entry about a time they were fearful and how they coped with/overcame the fear.



Game: Modified Wind Blows

******Important Note: This game requires class and preparation time the week before it is to be implemented in the classroom.***

Materials Needed: Index cards, chairs (enough for each class member minus one)

Objective: To help students identify their fears and to normalize these fears by promoting a sense of commonality within the group.

Prologue:

- *The theme of this week is FEAR and how to face your fears so they don't take control of your life.*
- *Kids often feel alone in their fears. Today we're going to play a game about some of the fears that we have because it's easier to be brave and fight our fears when we know we're not alone.*
- Present rules.

Structure:

During the week before the game is to be implemented in the classroom, provide students with index cards. Ask them to write 3-5 responses to the statement: "Some students my age are afraid of..." Tell students that they can write out their own fears or fears they've known other students their age to have. Let them know that the cards will be used in a game but that their names will not be on the cards, so others won't know who wrote them. Once these are collected, go through and pick out 20 fears, ranging in their level of frequency and seriousness, to use in the game. You may also wish to add some of your own based on fears relevant to your students.

For the game, place the 20 index cards into a hat. Make a circle of chairs large enough that your group can move within it, making sure that there is one less chair than there are people. Once everyone is seated, the person without a chair stands in the middle of the circle. He/she will reach into the hat, select a card, and read it aloud to the group. The statement should always be prefaced with "the wind blows," so it would sound like: "**The wind blows for everyone who is afraid of...**" Any student to whom the statement applies must get up from his/her chair and find a new one. He/she can sit in any chair except for the one he/she was in and the two chairs on either side of the chair in which he/she was previously sitting. After the scramble there will most likely be a new person in the middle who will then read another fear from the hat.

Follow-up Questions:

- What was it like to play this game?
- How did it feel to stand up when a fear was read? Did it help to see other kids standing up, too?
- Was anything surprising?
- What did you learn?
- How can knowing you're not alone help you fight your fears?

Theme 5: PEER PRESSURE



Overarching Lessons/Objectives:

- What is peer pressure and why does it happen?
- Identifying positive/negative peer pressure



Read-Aloud:

Text: *Blubber* by Judy Blume (chapters 1, 16, and 17, beginning of 18) (3 lessons)

Objective: Students will discuss the causes and effects of changes in character relationships.

Teaching/Discussion Points:

Introduce reading:

This book is called "Blubber." We will be reading only parts of this book, but you might like to read it on your own later.

Lesson I: Chapter 1

Discussion Questions:

- On page 5 it says, "I smiled, not because I thought the note was funny, but because Wendy was watching me." Why does Jill smile if she doesn't think the note is funny?
- Why do you think Wendy decided to pick on Linda?
- Why won't anyone be Linda's friend?
- Do you think it is fair for all the kids to gang up on Linda? Do you ever see that happen on the bus or at school? (please don't say any names)

Lesson II: Skip to Chapter 16

Introduce reading:

Today we are going to jump ahead in the story up to chapter 16. In the story Linda continues to be made fun of by the kids at school. Now Wendy, Caroline (Wendy's best friend), Jill (the main character), and Tracy think that Linda told on them after they pulled a mean trick on someone else.

Discussion Question:

- *Stop on page 126.* Why does Tracy say, "I think you're scared of Wendy." What does this mean?

Continue reading the chapter.

*Note to teacher: There is a racial slur (a character refers to another character as a "chink") on page 131. Use your own discretion in deciding whether or not to include it. If it is included, the following discussion should be held:

- *Stop on page 131 following the line, "I'll call her whatever I damn please...and that's what she is."*
- What happened in this scene? (students should refer to name calling incident)
- How might that be a form of violence?
- *Discuss racial slurs/insults as a form of racism and verbal violence designed to make the person who is targeted feel inferior/less than. In the story, Wendy refers to Tracy as a "chink" in order to make her seem like a less worthy member of the class, as if her thoughts and feelings were less important than her own.*
- Is this fair?

Finish reading the chapter.

Discussion Question:

- Someone does something brave in this chapter. Who do you think it is?
- What do you think is going to happen now that Jill crossed Wendy?

Lesson III: Chapter 17 (Stop at the break on the bottom of page 137.)

Discussion Questions:

- Why does Wendy say that Linda is her friend?
- Why is everyone being mean to Jill?

Finish the chapter.

Discussion Questions:

- Have you ever felt like people were deliberately leaving you out? (Please don't say any names.) How did you deal with it?
- Why does everyone do what Wendy says?

Chapter 18: Read up to the page break on page 145.

Discussion Questions:

- Linda used to hate getting picked on by Wendy and her gang. Now it seems that Linda is a part of that group that is bullying Jill. Why is Linda willing to be so mean?
- This is a really hard situation for Jill to be in. If you were Jill, what could you do to solve the problem? Would it work?*

*In discussing this question, you may wish to have the class use the agree/disagree format (“I agree because... I disagree because...”).

- Can you predict what might happen with Jill and Rochelle? Jill and Wendy? Caroline and Wendy? Linda?



Game: Bad Influences

Materials Needed: Colored cards (in your packet)

Objective: To have students identify for each other the language and phrases of peer pressure.

Prologue:

- *The theme of this week is PEER PRESSURE. Does anyone know what peer pressure is? (Allow time for responses.)*
- *We’re going to play a game about peer pressure because it’s something that we’ve all experienced.*
- Present rules.

Structure: Three sets of cards have been provided. On the red cards are objects. On the blue cards are actions. The yellow cards are labeled high, medium, and low. The cards read:

Object List	Action List	Level List
Shoe	Jumping on/off	High
Tire	Eating	Low
Underwear	Singing to	Middle/Medium
Houseplant	Smoking	
Dictionary	Shaving	

To begin the game, the teacher should first model a real-life example of peer pressure in order to make the concept concrete before asking students to play the game, which requires a more abstract understanding of peer pressure. For example, a teacher may model pressuring someone to smoke a cigarette or steal something. It will be ideal to model this with another adult, but if an adult is not available, model with a student. Tell the person that no matter what the teacher says, he/she should say no, and not give in to the pressure. As part of this role play, model using the three levels of pressure.

The game is then played out in scenes. Students should come up to the front of the room in pairs. One player picks one card at random from each of the three colors of cards to create an activity that he/she must try to convince another player to do. Player One (the one who picks the cards) should try to use the different levels of pressure and the type of language used at that level to convince Player Two to do what he/she wishes. Player One may have others help him/her to add the “we” element of peer pressure. The focus should be put strongly on Player Two’s ability to come up with creative and varied ways to avoid doing the silly activity. Player Two can ask for help from the audience in finding ways to say no to the pressure. There should be both a pre- and post- game discussion. The pre-game discussion should deal with identifying the levels of pressure, which should be something like:

Low level: Simple request with little or no follow up.

Middle/medium level: Requests that offer rewards or that challenge a person’s ideas of self, for example: “Do this and you will be cool with us.” “All the cool people do this.” “It’s no big thing.” “What are you—a baby/chicken/punk/scared?”

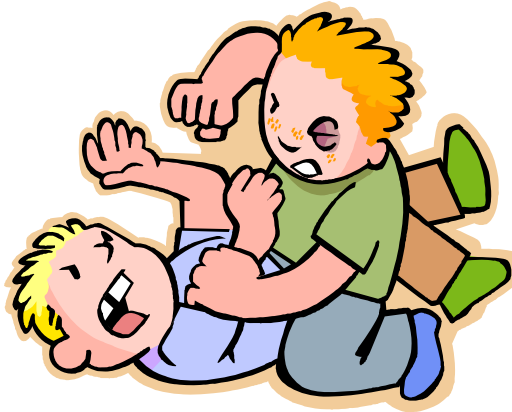
High level: Requests that hold out the threat of loss or harm.

*****Important Note:** Teachers will need to first model this activity for students, giving good examples of each level of pressure. *If during play it appears that the levels of peer pressure is too complex a concept for the students, simply eliminate this element of the game.*

Follow-up Questions:

- Ask the people who were being pressured: What did it feel like to be pressured to do that silly activity?
- What kinds of statements were most effective at getting the person to do the activity?
- How did you resist giving into the pressure?
- What did you learn?
- When can peer pressure be good?
- When does peer pressure cause problems?
- Have any of you ever felt pressured to do something you weren't sure you wanted to do?
- Why does peer pressure happen?

Theme 6: VIOLENCE/ CONFLICT RESOLUTION



Overarching Lessons/Objectives:

- Violence doesn't solve problems effectively, and often makes them worse.
- What are good ways of resolving conflict fairly?



Read-Aloud:

Text: *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* by Christopher Paul Curtis (1-2 lessons)

***Note: reading for this lesson consists of chapter 1; chapter 4, pages 47 to top of 48 (end after first full paragraph) and top of page 55 to 63

Objectives:

- Students will recognize that a character's actions in a story may end up changing their feelings about that character.
- Students will think up ways to solve a very difficult problem that do not involve violence or feeling like Kenny does at the end of the story.

Teaching/Discussion Points:

Introduce reading:

Have you ever had a friend do something that makes you upset at them and makes you think differently about who they are? But if it's not a big deal then really soon you become friends again.

*When we talk about a person's **character** we mean what type of person they are. Sometimes people will do things in life that change everyone's mind about their character or what type of person they are.*

Sometimes when you are reading you end up changing your mind about a character because of their actions. In this part of this story you start out feeling one way about a character, but then you might change your mind because of what the character does.

As I read today I want you to think about whether your opinion of any of the characters changes from one part of the story to the end.

Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think Larry Dunn is so mean?
- Were you glad when Kenny told Byron about Larry stealing the gloves?
- On page 58 why would Kenny call it “a mistake” that he told Byron about the gloves?
- Do you think it was fair for Byron to beat up Larry?
- Do you think you can use your imagination to think of a fair way Kenny could have solved this problem without getting anyone beat up? Would it work?
- Why does Kenny leave the fight at the end feeling sad?
- Have you ever seen a fight where everyone gathers around screaming? Why do people do that?
- Did your opinion of Byron change at all? When in the story does it change and why?



Game: Instigator

Materials Needed: CUT OUT the conflict resolution scripts and role assignment cards (provided on next several pages)

Objectives: To enhance children's ability to solve problems without violence by providing the opportunity to develop and practice positive resolutions to conflict situations. To reinforce the application of humor, patience, and persistence to problem solving and conflict resolution.

Prologue:

- *The theme of this week is VIOLENCE AND SOLVING PROBLEMS WITHOUT FIGHTING.*
- *We're going to play a game in which you'll come up with and act out creative solutions to problems.*
- Present rules.

Structure: Start by having three students come to the front of the class. Give two of them a card with a two-line script (provided on the next several pages) to act out, and give the third a card with a role assignment (e.g., teacher, student, parent). Each of the scripts sets up a conflict situation. Give the students a few seconds to learn the lines. Two of the students will then act out the script, after which the third student will act out a response that will solve/avert the conflict using a character in the role he/she was assigned. Students should be told to be creative when coming up with solutions. It is best if the responder can jump into the scene as soon as possible to offer a resolution, but in some cases the teacher may need to freeze the action to give the responder time to come up with a solution. Then the group switches roles, with the responder becoming one of the two actors. Those two then act out the script a second time, and the third student acts out a different solution using a different role. This process is repeated a third time so that each student in the group of three gets a chance to act as the responder. It should be emphasized that each person should try to come up with a different solution to the problem. After the scene has been presented three times, those students sit down, and another group of three students comes to the front of the class and goes through the process with a different script. The game continues until all students have gone at least one time. Teachers may wish to model this activity first, serving as the responder for the first conflict. When teachers model the activity, use the role assignment cards so that you are not playing a teacher.

Follow-up Questions:

- What was it like to play this game?
- Was anything surprising?
- What did you learn about solving problems?
- How do you deal with problems in your real lives?

Suggested conflict resolution game scripts are provided on the next several pages in a format that can be printed out and given to students:

- 1. Hey, that's my pencil!**
- 2. No, it's mine!**

- 1. It's my turn at the computer.**
- 2. I'm not finished!**

- 1. Henry/Sarah is a loser.**
- 2. Yeah, let's go beat him/her up!**

- 1. Hey, someone left their cell phone.**
- 2. We should take it; no one's around!**

- 1. I heard those kids are gonna jump Jimmy/Tina after school today!**
- 2. That's my boy/girl! What should we do?**

- 1. I heard that your family lives in a box behind the school.**
- 2. You keep talking that talk, and I'm gonna mess you up!**

- 1. Is that a knife?**
- 2. Yeah, I found it on the playground.
What should we do with it?**

- 1. You pushed me!**
- 2. So, what are you gonna do about it?**

(for two girls)

- 1. Why were you talking to him? You know I like him.**
- 2. I can talk to whoever I want to!**

(for two girls)

- 1. I think we should invite Suzie/John.**
- 2. I won't be your friend if you're gonna talk to her/him.**

- 1. What're you lookin' at?**
- 2. Your ugly face!**

- 1. Mrs. Jones left her bag open.**
- 2. *(Point at person in response line)*
I dare YOU to take her wallet!**

- 1. Look what I got from my brother.**
- 2. Should we smoke it?**

ROLE ASSIGNMENTS FOR INSTIGATOR GAME

TEACHER	PARENT
FRIEND	COACH
PRINCIPAL	YOURSELF
POLICE OFFICER	YOUR CHOICE!

Theme 7: FAIRNESS



Overarching Lessons/Objectives:

- LIFE ISN'T ALWAYS FAIR, but don't let it throw you off track.
- What can you do when life isn't fair?
- How can you treat people fairly, and why is this important?



Read-Aloud:

Text: "Eleven" from *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories* by Sandra Cisneros (1 lesson)

Objectives:

- Students will recognize that voice in this story is when the author or characters are talking to the reader.
- Students will use their own "voice" to ask questions of the character to deepen their understanding of the character traits and actions.

Teaching/Discussion Points:

Introduce reading:

Now we're going to read a story about fairness.

We know that good readers often try to imagine that they are in the story to help them understand what the character is thinking or feeling. Has anyone ever read a story in which the main character does something really great like hit a home run, and you feel almost like you hit the home run? Or if something sad happens to the character you feel a little sad, too?

Sometimes you will find a spot in the story you are reading when the main character or author talks directly at you, the reader! This is called voice. Voice lets you know that you should try to connect with story and put yourself in it.

This story is called “Eleven,” and it has a lot of voice. It’s a beautiful, but sad, story about a girl named Rachel on her birthday.

Sometimes as you put yourself in the story you will find yourself wanting to ask the character questions like, “Well, why don’t you just do this...?” or “Why do you let him boss you around?”

Today I’d like you to pretend that you are with the main character, Rachel, while I read. When I’m finished you are going to pair up to share and discuss these questions. (Write the following discussion questions on chart paper.)

Discussion Questions:

- Why didn’t Rachel know what to say when Ms. Price put the red sweater on her desk?
- Why is the teacher, Ms. Price, getting upset at Rachel? Why does she make Rachel put the sweater on?
- What type of person do you think Rachel is?
- If you were Rachel, what would you do to try to make the situation more fair?
- Why does Rachel cry about it? Why does she let it ruin her birthday?

Optional Extension:

Have a student(s) volunteer to pretend to be Rachel's friend and classmate. Have the class come up with questions to ask the friend and then discuss as a class the friend's responses. The same discussion questions above can be used, asking the friend the questions about Rachel.

(Management tip: It helps if students are allowed to pick the next person to speak after them.)



Game: Decking Order

Materials Needed: Deck of cards, Scotch tape

Objective: To illustrate the role of status in fairness.

Prologue:

- *The theme of this week is FAIRNESS.*
- *We're going to play a game about fairness because life isn't always fair, and we aren't always treated fairly by others.*
- Present rules.

Structure: Start with a standard deck of cards and take out an entire suit. Up to 13 players may play at once, and this game works best when some students are observing while the rest of the class participates. Randomly tape a playing card (facing out, so the front of the card can be seen) on the back of each player, but do not let them see their card. Tell them that they must move around the room, mingling with as many other players as they can. As they move they should respond to the other players based on the weight of the playing card they have. There should be **no talking or physical contact**; all responses should be nonverbal (e.g., facial expressions, body language). It may help to provide examples and modeling of possible nonverbal cues. The Ace is at the top of the pecking order, and the Two is at the bottom. Players should be told that their nonverbal cues should convey respect/submissiveness toward players with higher number cards and disdain/disinterest toward those with the lower numbers. Let them mill about for approximately three minutes, and then ask them to order themselves from highest to lowest. See how close they can come to the correct order. **This game should be repeated several times, giving some students low number cards each round, some students high number cards each time, and other students a mix.**

Follow-up Questions:

- What was it like to play this game?
- Was anything surprising?
- What did you learn?
- How did it feel to be the number you were assigned? Did anyone get a low number over and over? Is that fair?
- How could we change the game to make it more fair?
- How do popularity and fairness affect your relationships with classmates?

Theme 8: FAMILY



Overarching Lessons/Objectives:

- What makes a family a family?
- Who/what makes up your family?
- There are many different types of families.
- Family structures and dynamics change.



Read-Aloud:

Text: *Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key* by Jack Gantos (Chapters 2 and 13) (1-2 lessons)

Objective: Students will be able to state character traits of Joey, his grandmother, and his mother and how those traits make them a family.

Teaching/Discussion Points:

Introduce reading:

*We are going to read a few chapters in a book called *Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key*. It is a book about a boy about your age, Joey. Joey has many struggles in both home and school. Joey talks a lot about his mom, his grandmother, and even his dad. This is a funny book that will teach us about the difficulties Joey has in his life and how his family deals with these difficulties.*

Here are some things to think about as I read the story to you:

- Why does Joey have such a difficult time in school?
- Who is in Joey's family?
- How are you similar to or different from Joey and his family?

Lesson I: Chapter 2—“Family Tree”

Discussion Questions:

- How does Joey feel toward his grandmother? Why does he feel this way?
- How does Joey feel about his mother returning? Why does he feel this way?
- What do Joey’s actions say about his character?
- At the end of chapter 2, Joey says, “Mom is big on rules for me.” Why do you think Joey feels this way?

Lesson II: Chapter 13—“Moon Man”

Discussion Questions:

- BEFORE READING: Recap Chapter 2 if doing this chapter on another day.
- After page 129: Why might Joey be at the hospital?
- What do Joey’s mom’s actions say about her character?
- If you were Joey, who would you say was in your family?
- Who is in your family?



Game: Family Statues

Materials Needed: Family Scripts (provided on next several pages)

Objective: To illustrate the concept of family and demonstrate the wide variations in the meaning and structure of families.

Prologue:

- *The theme of this week is FAMILIES.*
- *Family can mean many things, and today we're going to play a game about different kinds of families.*
- Present rules.

Structure: Break students into groups of no more than five. Without revealing the information to the other groups, give each group a type of thing that can be grouped by family. The categories should reflect families and ecosystems rather than simple classification systems, such as:

- Humans (e.g., mother, father, sister, uncle, grandmother, cousin)
- Forest (e.g., tree, sun, rain, soil, bear)
- School (e.g., principal, nurse, teacher, student, counselor)
- Solar System (see below)
- Church (e.g., pastor, church member, choir singer, organ player, Sunday school teacher)
- Ocean (e.g., saltwater, sand, fish, whale, lobster)
- Basketball team (e.g., coach, point guard, referee, power forward, cheerleader)

Have groups build a two- or three-sentence script (including words, sounds, and/or movements) to help describe who they are (a bit longer if necessary). Scripts should include some details about each member of the family. When they are all ready, have the first group freeze into statues depicting their assigned “family.” Have the rest of the class try to guess what kind of family they are. After some guessing, whether or not the class is correct, have the group come to life and act out their lines. Lines for non-human groups could focus on a description of their function or how they interrelate as a family.

It will be helpful to provide groups with one of the family scripts provided on the next four pages, as this will give them some ideas for what to do. Encourage groups to be as creative as possible and to go beyond the scripts that they are given.

Follow-up Questions:

- What was it like to play this game?
- Was anything surprising?
- What did you learn about families?
- What makes a family a family?

Suggested families and family scripts are provided on the next four pages in a format that can be printed out and given to groups:

Family:

The planets of the solar system

- Examples of Members: Pluto, Mars, Venus, Earth, Saturn, Uranus, Jupiter, Mercury, Neptune, Pluto
- Pick which one you want to represent
- Statements might be:
 - "I am the smallest member of this family" (Pluto)
 - "I am the closest to the sun" (Mercury)
 - "I am the only family member with rings" (Saturn)
 - "I am the only family member where humans live" (Earth)
 - "I'm the largest member of this family" (Jupiter)

REMEMBER: BE CREATIVE!

Family: Humans

- Examples of Members: Mother, Father, Foster Parent, Step-parent, Sister, Brother, Aunt, Uncle, Cousin, Grandparent
- Pick which one you want to represent
- Act out a scene about a human family. You may want to use examples from your own family or other families that you know.

REMEMBER: BE CREATIVE!

Family: Forest

- Examples of Members: Tree, sun, rain, soil, bear
- Pick which one you want to represent
- Statements might be:
 - "I reach really high up in the sky and provide shade and oxygen for my family" (Tree)
 - "I give off light for my family to help things grow" (Sun)
 - "I provide water for my family" (Rain)
 - "Some family members plant their roots deep into me so they can grow" (Soil)
 - "I eat fruit that my family grows so that I can grow big and strong" (Bear)

REMEMBER: BE CREATIVE!

Family: School

- Examples of Members: Principal, nurse, teacher, student, guidance counselor, cafeteria worker
- Pick which one you want to represent
- Statements might be:
 - "I am the head of this family" (Principal)
 - "I help sick family members" (Nurse)
 - "I love to help my family learn new things" (Teacher)
 - "I help my family when they're having a tough time or need help to solve a problem" (Guidance Counselor)
 - "I make and serve food to feed all of my family" (Cafeteria Worker)

REMEMBER: BE CREATIVE!

Family: Ocean

- Examples of Members: Saltwater, sand, fish, whale, lobster
- Pick which one you want to represent
- Statements might be:
 - "All my family members live in me" (Saltwater)
 - "I spend my days swimming with other family members" (Fish)
 - "I am the largest living member of my family, and I have to have air to breathe" (Whale)
 - "I am the member of the family with big claws that I use to catch my food" (Lobster)
 - "I provide the floor for my family and many family members make their homes in me" (Sand)

REMEMBER: BE CREATIVE!

Family: Basketball Team

- Examples of Members: Coach, point guard, referee, power forward, cheerleader
- Pick which one you want to represent
- Statements might be:
 - "I teach my family how to play their best!" (Coach)
 - "My job is to take the ball up the court and set up the plays for other family members" (Point Guard)
 - "I carry a whistle and make sure my family plays by the rules" (Referee)
 - "I drive to the basket and score lots of points for my family" (Power Forward)
 - "I cheer on my family with dances and songs" (Cheerleader)

REMEMBER: BE CREATIVE!

Family: Church

- **Examples of Members: Pastor, church member, choir singer, organ player, Sunday school teacher**
- **Pick which one you want to represent**
- **Statements might be:**
 - **"I lead my family and teach them about the Bible" (Pastor)**
 - **"I pray with my family on Sundays and support the other members of my family" (Church Member)**
 - **"I sing for my family" (Choir Singer)**
 - **"I play music for my family" (Organ Player)**
 - **"I teach the children in my family about the Bible" (Sunday School Teacher)**

REMEMBER: BE CREATIVE!

Theme 9: ADVENTURE



Overarching Lessons/Objectives:

- Working together toward a common goal solves problems and can be more fun than working alone.



Read-Aloud:

Text: *Magic Tree House Series: Good Morning, Gorillas** by Mary Pope Osborne (Chapters 1, 2, and 4) (1-2 lessons)

*Because Mary Pope Osborne follows same structure for all of her *Magic Tree House* books, any *Magic Tree House* book can be used in this lesson.

Objective: Students will be able to state characteristics of Jack and Annie and how those characteristics helped them on their adventure.

Teaching/Discussion Points:

Introduce reading:

The Magic Tree House books are a series of books in which a magic librarian, Morgan le Fay, sends a brother and a sister on missions around the world. Jack and Annie have traveled to all different countries in all different times of history, going on adventures and helping Morgan le Fay solve many mysteries. Jack and Annie always work together to enjoy their adventure and to help Morgan.

In Good Morning, Gorillas, Morgan le Fay is going to send Jack and Annie on yet another adventure.

As I read this story, I would like you to think about:

(Note: these questions also serve as useful follow-up questions)

- Why do Jack and Annie make a good team?
- Is it always better to go on an adventure with another person?
- Is it easy to work with another person all the time?
- Why is it important to have a leader when you are on a trip or adventure?

Discussion Questions:

- Why does Morgan le Fay send both Jack and Annie on this mission together?
- What does Jack do to make him a leader in this adventure?
- How does Annie act when she was afraid? Do you think this helped them during the adventure?
- Would you have enjoyed being on this adventure?
- Share with your neighbor an adventure you have gone on. Why was it fun or not fun? Was someone with you? Did you enjoy having someone with you?



Game: Under the Sea

Materials Needed: The script (provided on next page)

Objective: To go on an adventure using only students' imaginations.

Prologue:

- *The theme of this week is ADVENTURE.*
- *We're going to play a game in which we use our imaginations to have an adventure.*
- Present rules.

Structure: Tell the students to spread out around the entire room, finding their own space in the room because this game will be about their own world. Present safety boundaries for the game (e.g., no climbing on desks or chairs, no physical contact with other students, no running, etc.). *Tell students that they will be acting out the part of something that they choose that lives under the sea. As they play the game, they should SHOW what they are through the noises they make, the way they move, and what they do vs. through SAYING what they are.*

The teacher will then read the script on the next page. It is important that teachers:

- **Read the script slowly and in a dramatic fashion.**
- **Give students time with each part of the script.**
- **Provide assistance where necessary.**
- **Move through the room, acting the part of the element of danger introduced in the story (the fishing boat).**
- **Make observations about what students are doing and reinforce positive, creative behavior.**
- **Feel free to improvise and add your own ideas to the script!**

TEACHER'S SCRIPT FOR UNDER THE SEA GAME

Imagine you are at the bottom of the ocean. It's quiet, sort of dark. What's it like? What's there?

What are you? You can be anything that lives in the ocean—a fish, a crab, a clam, seaweed, a shark—be as creative as you can. Imagine yourself as that animal or plant. Remember, don't say it, **be** it and **do** it.

It's just before dawn. You can't see the sun yet at the top of the water. What would you be doing? If you're a fish, you're just floating there, sleeping. If you're a crab, you're asleep in your shell. Stay where you are and be your chosen sea life. Remember, show me, don't tell me.

Okay, your day is beginning. You can see the first glimmer of the sun at the top of the water. What do you usually do now? What's your morning ritual? Do you clean yourself off? Do you wake up your children? As you begin to wake up and move around, do as good a job as you can of showing what you are through the noises you make, the way you move, and what you do.

(Make observations: "I see fish starting to move around." Reinforce the positive.)

Now you need your first meal. You can't eat any person in the room, so you need to make it up, pretend, and be creative. You go off to find your food.

Now you've found your meal, and you start to eat. How do you sound as you eat? Do you help to feed anyone else?

As you're eating, you hear something. You don't like the sound. You know it's something dangerous, and it sounds like it's coming toward you. Wait! You recognize the sound—it's a fishing boat coming overhead, and it's trawling for fish to put in aquariums. You don't want to be caught in its nets. You can't attack the thing attacking you, so how do you protect yourself? Do you swim away? Do you hide? Do you disguise yourself?

(Remember as you do this to act like the boat and start to move around the room, letting students figure out how to avoid getting caught in your nets.)

Aah, the danger has moved away, and you're safe again. How do you feel? Show me.

Finally, the sun is moving across the sky. It's starting to get dark again. The danger and the food are making you tired. It's time for you to get home. Where's home for you? Start to head home.

(As you read this last part, speak quietly and slowly and model calming down the body by moving slowly, closing your eyes.)

Now that you're home, how do you settle in? How do you end your day? It's time to start getting ready for sleep. It's time to relax, lay yourself down, and go to sleep.

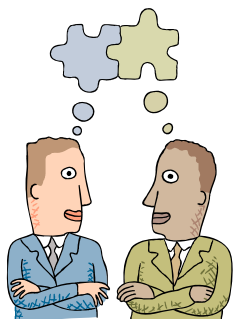
Bibliography

- Blume, Judy (1976). *Blubber*. NY, NY: Dell Books.
- Cisneros, Sandra (1991). "Eleven" from *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*. NY, NY: Random House.
- Curtis, Christopher Paul (1995). *The Watsons Go To Birmingham, 1963*. NY, NY: Delacorte.
- Dahl, Roald (1982). *The BFG*. NY, NY: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
- Estes, Eleanor (1972). *The Hundred Dresses*. NY, NY: Harcourt, Inc.
- Fletcher, Ralph (1999). "The Bravest Deed" from *Relatively Speaking*. NY, NY: Orchard Books.
- Gantos, Jack (1998). *Joey Pigza Swallowed the Key*. NY, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.
- Grimes, Nikki (1999). "The Plan" from *My Man Blue*. NY, NY: Puffin Books.
- Macy, Robert D., Macy, Dicki Johnson, Gross, Steven, & Brighton, Pam (1999-2003). *Basic and advanced training manual for the 12-session Classroom Based Psychosocial Intervention Program (CBI): Stress inoculation targeting threat & terror for K-8th grade youth*. Boston, MA: The Center for Trauma Psychology.
- Osborne, Mary Pope (2002). *Magic Tree House: Good Morning, Gorillas*. NY, NY: Scholastic Inc.
- Polacco, Patricia (1998). *Thank You, Mr. Falker*. NY, NY: Philomel Books.
- Polacco, Patricia (2001). *Mr. Lincoln's Way*. NY, NY: Philomel Books.
- Sendak, Maurice (1963). *Where the Wild Things Are*. NY, NY: HarperCollins.
- Whitman, Ruth (Year Unknown). *Listening to Grown-Ups Quarreling*.

Part II: Classroom Management

Part II incorporates into the classroom behavior management and positive reinforcement strategies that are consistent with UI. The objectives of Part II are twofold. First, Part II is designed to provide opportunities for students to practice the approach to problem solving modeled in UI to address real-life problems that arise in the classroom. Second, Part II will provide reinforcement for students' prosocial behaviors, and particularly those that are addressed in the UI content areas and overall objectives.

Conflict Resolution/Problem Solving



The "Freeze" Strategy

Objective: To provide students with real-life opportunities to practice the problem-solving process used in UI.

Structure: In response to conflict between students or between a student and the teacher, the teacher will tell the students involved to freeze, in the same manner that UI freezes action at a point of conflict. Then the teacher will ask for suggestions from the class about how to solve the problem. Once several viable suggestions have been offered, the students involved in the conflict will be asked to pick one of the solutions and implement it. If the students pick a negative/aggressive solution, the teacher should administer the typical consequences for that behavior (e.g., being sent to the principal's office for hitting a classmate). If a positive/prosocial solution is chosen and implemented, positive reinforcement should be given. If within two minutes the students are unable to agree on a solution, they will be instructed to take a time out, at their desks or another designated time out area within the classroom. Class will then continue, and when the teacher thinks the students are ready, they are given another chance to solve the problem. If they remain unable to reach a mutual decision, the teacher will manage the problem as usual and apply consequences.

Implementation: This strategy will be used a minimum of two to three times per week. It is best to start out using this strategy to handle low- to medium-level conflict, such as students arguing over a small object (e.g., marker or pencil) or place in line. As students demonstrate ability to utilize this strategy to solve conflicts, the teacher may use his/her judgment to determine whether to use this strategy to manage larger, more difficult problems.

Positive Reinforcement Strategy



SAW: Super Actions Wall

Materials Needed: Space on wall (you might want to decorate it), Super Action Award coupons (sample provided at the end of this section), Small rewards

Objective: To provide reinforcement to students for demonstrating the behaviors and principles espoused by Urban Improv.

Structure: Teachers will develop a Super Actions Wall in their classroom. Students will be told that their actions in the classroom are really important and can help make their school/classroom a more pleasant place to be. In the Class Meeting held at the beginning of each week, teachers will put up a poster listing the behaviors that they want to see from the students that week. The behaviors will be based on the theme of UI for the week.

In a class meeting held on Fridays, teachers will ask students to nominate other students for a SAW coupon based on the behaviors selected to be reinforced. Teachers should encourage students to nominate people besides their close friends. A good way to do this might be to ask students, “Who really surprised you this week and did something from the list of behaviors that you did not expect them to do?” Teachers will then accept nominations and put SAW coupons on the Super Actions Wall accordingly. Teachers should also nominate students for SAW coupons. SAW coupons should be awarded only at Friday meetings to avoid interrupting class time on other days, but **teachers may wish to keep a log of behaviors to recognize at the end of the week.** A log is provided at the end of this section. Students who receive a SAW coupon should be allowed to choose a small reward, such as stickers, pens/pencils, or a call or note to parents/caregivers letting them know about the positive behaviors their child demonstrated over the week. Each week new behaviors for reinforcement will be identified, but students will also continue to get reinforced for behaviors from the previous weeks, so that reinforcement will build in a cumulative fashion. It should be noted that there will be no new behaviors introduced during the weeks of family and peer pressure. Instead, teachers should continue to reinforce behaviors from the preceding weeks. SAW coupons should remain on the wall throughout the nine weeks. To avoid confusion, teachers may wish to write the coupons in a different colored ink each week so that they can keep track of who wins a reward each week. Teachers may also

wish to create a nomination box in which students can put suggestions for acts by other students that should be placed on the wall. The teacher should pre-screen these suggestions and then read valid suggestions to the class during the Friday class meeting.

The behaviors to be reinforced include:

- **Friendship**
 1. Sharing/giving
 2. Including classmates in activities/social time
 3. Being polite and helpful with others

- **Self-Esteem**
 1. Complimenting others
 2. Sharing your talents

- **Imagination**
 1. Being creative
 2. Finding new solutions to problems
 3. Looking at things in different/new ways

- **Fear**
 1. Acts of courage, like taking a stand to help somebody or yourself
 2. Being brave enough to admit your fear (and ask for help)

- **Conflict Resolution**
 1. Walking away from a fight
 2. Keeping a fight from happening
 3. Calming yourself down when you get angry (taking a deep breath, walking away, counting to 10)
 4. Helping someone else calm down when they're angry

- **Fairness**
 1. If something is unfair, use a smart way to try to make it fair
 2. Being patient and fair with each other

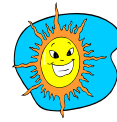
- **Adventure**
 1. Working together cooperatively

Super Action Award!!!

_____ *has been awarded
this certificate for the following super action:*



Signed: _____

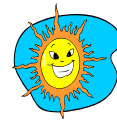


Super Action Award!!!

_____ *has been awarded
this certificate for the following super action:*



Signed: _____



Part III: Monitoring & Evaluation

Objectives:

- To evaluate the effectiveness of the UI teacher curriculum.
- To improve the program.

Teachers who are implementing the Urban Improv teacher curriculum will be responsible for completing weekly Utilization Logs for each aspect of the UI curriculum. This will consist of one log for each read-aloud activity, one for the game, one (or more) for use of the conflict resolution/problem solving strategy, and one for the positive reinforcement strategy. These forms are summarized below and presented on the following pages.



UTILIZATION LOG: Read-Aloud Activities

Complete one for each text; some weeks will require more than one.



UTILIZATION LOG: Games

To be completed once per week, following implementation of the game.



UTILIZATION LOG: Conflict Resolution/Problem Solving Strategy

Teachers should complete this form the **first** time the Freeze strategy is used each week. If the teacher has time, it is highly recommended that he/she complete a form for each implementation of this strategy. Do **not** summarize use of the strategy over multiple implementations that week on a single form.



UTILIZATION LOG: Positive Reinforcement Strategy

Complete one at the end of each week.

UTILIZATION LOG: Read-Aloud Activities

Teacher Name: _____ Date: _____

Content Theme: _____

1. a) Was the read-aloud implemented? Yes No

b) Specify which one(s) if >1 reading in the unit:

c) Record date(s), time(s), & lengths of session(s):

d) If not implemented, please explain why:

2. Overall, how smoothly did the read-aloud go?

(0 = Didn't work/Couldn't complete – 10 = Very smoothly)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. a) Were adjustments to/deviations from the curriculum required? Yes No

b) If yes, what were the changes?

c) What was the outcome of the changes?

4. How well did students seem to enjoy the material?

(0 = Hated it and/or didn't listen – 10 = Loved it and/or highly engaged)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment:

5. How well did the material reinforce the theme of the week and the goals of the curriculum?

(0 = Not at all/Students didn't get the message – 10 = Completely/Students demonstrated understanding and integration of the message)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment:

6. What problems/obstacles/challenges were encountered?

7. Any other comments/suggestions/ideas (e.g., ideas for other useful texts)?

UTILIZATION LOG: Games

Teacher Name: _____ Date: _____

Content Theme: _____ Game Name: _____

1. a) Was the game implemented? Yes No

b) Record date and time:

c) How long did it take?

d) If not implemented, please explain why:

2. Overall, how smoothly did the implementation go?

(0 = Didn't work/Couldn't complete – 10 = Very smoothly)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. a) Were adjustments to/deviations from the manualized instructions required? Yes No

b) If yes, what were the changes?

c) What was the outcome of the changes?

4. How well did students seem to enjoy the game?

(0 = Hated it and/or didn't participate – 10 = Loved it and/or highly engaged)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment:

5. How well did the game reinforce the theme of the week and the goals of the curriculum?

(0 = Not at all/Students didn't get the message – 10 = Completely/Students demonstrated understanding and integration of the message)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment:

6. What problems/obstacles/challenges were encountered?

7. Any other comments/suggestions/ideas?

UTILIZATION LOG: Conflict Resolution/Problem Solving Strategy (Freeze)

Teacher Name: _____ Date: _____

1. a) Was the strategy implemented? Yes No
 b) How many times during the week?
 c) Record date, time, and length of activity:
 d) What was the conflict situation?
 e) If not implemented, please explain why:

2. Overall, how smoothly did the implementation go?
 (0 = Didn't work/Couldn't complete – 10 = Very smoothly)
 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. a) Were adjustments to/deviations from the manualized instructions required? Yes No
 b) If yes, what were the changes?

 c) What was the outcome of the changes?

4. How well were students able to generate effective solutions?
 (0 = Didn't participate/No solutions or only antisocial solutions offered – 10 = Highly engaged/Offered many prosocial solutions)
 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 Describe solutions offered:

5. How well were the conflict-involved students able to utilize suggestions to solve the problem?
 (0 = Not at all/Teacher solved the conflict, with consequences – 10 = Very well/Students able to solve the problem in a prosocial and mutually-agreed upon manner)
 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 Identify solution(s) selected and describe effectiveness of implementation:

6. What problems/obstacles/challenges were encountered?

7. Any other comments/suggestions/ideas?

UTILIZATION LOG: Positive Reinforcement Strategy (SAW)

Teacher Name: _____ Date: _____

1. a) Was the strategy implemented? Yes No

b) If not implemented, please explain why:

c) About how many SAW coupons were awarded?

2. Overall, how smoothly did the implementation go?

(0 = Didn't work/Couldn't complete – 10 = Very smoothly)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. a) Were adjustments to/deviations from the manualized instructions required? Yes No

b) If yes, what were the changes?

c) What was the outcome of the changes?

4. How engaged were the students?

(0 = Not at all/Demonstrated neutral or negative attitude toward the cards – 10 = Highly engaged/Very excited about the cards)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment:

5. How much did this strategy seem to affect the classroom environment/climate?

(0 = Not at all/No behavior change – 10 = Very much/Classroom atmosphere more positive due to general behavior change)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment:

6. What problems/obstacles/challenges were encountered?

7. Any other comments/suggestions/ideas?