

# Welcoming Parents and Families

Many parents will have questions about what their children are doing in your class, and why they are engaged in Social Emotional Learning through *Acting with Purpose*.™

**“Why Acting?”** they may wonder. **“What’s the Purpose?”** We encourage those questions, and have tried to provide answers in this section.

An enormous body of research demonstrates that partnerships between home and school have positive impacts on outcomes throughout students’ lives. This learning series can help you partner with your students’ families, and help all the adults in your students’ lives learn to interact positively, build healthy relationships, and serve as uplifting role models.

This chapter includes a wealth of reproducible handouts, including:

- ▶ Sample introductory letter to families
- ▶ Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for families
- ▶ Description of Key Concepts and language for families
- ▶ Detailed progress updates with activities and conversational prompts for at-home use
- ▶ Overview of “Skill Stickers” conversational and PBIS strategy for at-home use

We are committed to engaging families in the empowering work of *Acting with Purpose*.™ and hope these materials will help you form the kind of partnership that sustains success for you and your students. Please feel free to copy these handouts, adapt them in whatever way will serve the needs of the children in your classroom, send them home with your students, and share them freely with families in your school and community.

Date:

Dear Parents and Families,

We are pleased to tell you that our classroom will be participating in a new social emotional curriculum this year called *Acting with Purpose*.™

This program was developed over many years in a wide array of classroom settings to help strengthen social skills, build character and nurture positive learning communities ***within the classroom setting***. In the course of this year, we will be using cooperative classroom activities such as role-playing, theatre games, mindfulness practice and structured reflection to help students develop tools for navigating the social world and challenges they face in their daily lives.

Participating in these activities will help students increase self-awareness and impulse control, improve their ability to recognize and regulate emotions, and begin lifelong learning about respecting others' perspectives, appreciating differences, and managing conflicts.

***What can YOU do as parents to maximize your child's Acting with Purpose™ learning?***

- Read through the FAQ for Families and the Key Concepts and Language for Families to familiarize yourself with the curriculum's ideas and terminology. The more comfortable you are with the philosophy and vocabulary, the more you can support and strengthen your child's social learning.
- Engage children with questions and positive conversation when they come home wearing a Skill Sticker!
- Encourage children to reflect on and write or draw about his social learning experiences at home and in the community through the *Acting with Purpose*™ "Reflect and Write" journaling assignments.

We are excited to use this unique program, and look forward to seeing the positive changes it will contribute to our classroom. Please let us know if you have any questions!

Sincerely,

## FAQ FOR FAMILIES

### HOW DID *Acting with Purpose*<sup>™</sup> COME ABOUT?

This curriculum is the product of a long-term collaboration between educators, speech pathologists, actors, and designers. This group—Positive Learning Communities—developed innovative and effective social skills programs that serve all students, including students with varying degrees of need and an array of diagnoses. This social and emotional program has been tested and successfully implemented in a wide variety of regular education and special education classrooms in urban, suburban, and semi-rural communities.

### HOW WILL *Acting with Purpose*<sup>™</sup> TEACH MY CHILD SOCIAL SKILLS?

Using acting as a learning platform helps students recognize the impact their own presentation may have on how others perceive them. Thinking like an actor helps students understand the presentation of others and make reliable inferences about what other people may be thinking and feeling. Enabling young people to recognize and reflect on social context and how context creates expectations gives them tools they can apply to functional interactions across all the settings they encounter in a complex social world.

### WHAT'S THE GOAL OF *Acting with Purpose*<sup>™</sup>?

Quite simply, the goal is to help all students find happiness and success in their lives. For students to engage successfully in classroom learning and meet academic standards, they must possess strong social skills and know how to make responsible choices. This curriculum gives young people tools to get perspective on difficult situations, analyze conversational exchanges, rehearse interactions, and adjust their choices in each social moment. These tools will be vital to students' success in school, in their work and relationships, and in life. Moreover, the program works at a broader level to build Positive Learning Communities within schools by establishing a culture of consideration, compassion, and acceptance of self and others.

### HOW DOES THE *Acting with Purpose*<sup>™</sup> CURRICULUM WORK?

Your child's teacher will have access to teaching materials that are designed to be flexible and modified to meet the needs of all students in each classroom. The curriculum include dynamic games and activities and discussion prompts to encourage communication and give students opportunities to process what they are doing and learning.

