THE RESTORATIVE CLASSROOM SYSTEM

A Practical Guide for Elementary Schools

Building strong classrooms through relationship, accountability, and community.

CYFA
CENTER FOR YOUTH & FAMILY ADVOCACY

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About CYFA

The Center for Youth and Family Advocacy (CYFA) is a youth development nonprofit focused on leadership and civic engagement, advancing opportunity, accelerating growth, and amplifying contribution. CYFA developed The Restorative Ripple™, a community and systems change model that builds a culture of prevention so youth and families can thrive.

Through the Restorative Classroom System, restorative practices, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) work together. The result gives schools, families, and community partners a shared, practical language for building trust and repairing it when it is tested.

Designed to Align with Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports (VTSS).

This guide has two parts. Part I is the roadmap: what the system is, the research behind it, and how PBIS, SEL, and restorative practice fit together. Part II is the practice: the daily routines, language, and response tools used in the classroom. Read the guide through once, then keep Part II close as a working reference.

To learn more about CYFA, visit: www.cyfadvocacy.org

Foreword

School days are built on relationships. Before a student can read a paragraph, solve a problem, or work through a disagreement, they need to feel safe enough to try. Teachers know this firsthand. They create those conditions while managing instruction, behavior, and the unexpected moments that fill a classroom.

Schools have strong frameworks for this work. PBIS, SEL, and restorative practice each address part of what students need. Too often they arrive as separate initiatives, leaving teachers to connect them in the middle of a busy day. The Restorative Classroom System brings them together in one coherent framework, grounded in research on trust, stress, and belonging.

The Restorative Classroom System works best when teachers adapt it to their own students and settings, and when school and division leaders use it alongside existing policy.

Before your words can reach a student, your care has to reach their heart.

Students are watching to learn whether the adults around them can be trusted. This guide is an invitation to build that trust on purpose, and to repair it with care when it is strained.

Please share your experiences with us at contact@cyfadvocacy.org.

Gregory Baldwin
Chief Restorative Officer

Where Prevention Starts
A message from the CEO

When people ask about CYFA's story, we often begin in 2018, with one young man's experiences and the systems that built his pathway into the legal system and imprisonment. CYFA, however, was envisioned long before 2018, in the experiences of thousands of youth and families involved in the legal system. Each of those stories pointed to the same truth: these pathways are built years before a courtroom, which means they can be interrupted years before, too.

Stopping them has always been our goal. We do it through Opportunity, Growth, and Contribution, and through a conviction that guides everything we build: when young people are valued as leaders, they will stand and lead.

Today, CYFA serves more than 300 students a year, from first grade through graduation, and from diversion through reentry, and we train educators in restorative classrooms and systems. Across every setting, the lesson repeats: the earlier we build belonging and accountability, the less repair is needed.

We created The Restorative Ripple™ to build a culture of prevention. The Restorative Classroom System brings it to the place where prevention starts: the elementary classroom. Teachers there do restorative work every day, often without a shared language or a structure

to hold it. This guide gives them both, drawn from what CYFA has learned alongside young people, families, and the systems that serve them. We know that leadership has no minimum age. A first grader who helps design a repair, welcomes a new classmate, or names what the class needs is already leading. That leadership ripples outward, into the hallway, the home, and the community.

Every classroom is a place where a pathway can change.

Thank you for the trust you build every day. Together, we can create generations of leaders, one restorative classroom at a time.

Devanshi Patel
Chief Executive Officer

A Note to Teachers

We appreciate you. Teaching is complex work that demands split-second decisions in a fast-paced environment. Teaching, at its heart, is about connection: connecting students to themselves, to others, to new learning, and to a sense of responsibility.

The stakes are high, and so is the impact. Teachers hold a unique position to shape the trajectory of their students' lives. For example, Oprah Winfrey has spoken publicly, many times, about her fourth-grade teacher, Mary Duncan, crediting her with sparking her love of learning and instilling a belief that she could take on the world [1]. Winfrey is one well-documented example among countless others, most never publicly told, of a teacher who recognized potential and helped develop it before it was fully visible.

That influence now runs through expectations you meet every day, including PBIS, SEL, and restorative practice. These frameworks usually arrive as separate initiatives, introduced in training but rarely supported as one consistent approach to daily practice. The Restorative Classroom System provides that structure, translating all three into concrete, in-the-moment actions you can use throughout the day.

The Restorative Classroom System helps you build a strong classroom community and respond to behavior in ways that are consistent, meaningful, and rooted in relationship and accountability.

The goal is to strengthen what you already do, not add to it: clear expectations, consistent responses, and an approach shared across every classroom. Over time, restorative practice becomes part of how your classroom runs every day.

How the Pieces Fit Together

CYFA built the Restorative Classroom System on three established frameworks, then designed the tools that make them work as one.



PBIS, SEL, and restorative practices supply the foundation. CYFA supplies the architecture.

The architecture comes to life in four tools teachers can use every day: opening routines built on the four elements of Sense of Community, the Restorative Response Flow, the Time-Based Response, and the Completion Standard, which measures accountability by evidence of repair.

Part I: The Roadmap

Overview

The Restorative Classroom System is grounded in The Restorative Ripple™, CYFA's community and systems change model for building a culture of prevention by advancing opportunity, accelerating growth, and amplifying contribution. The Restorative Classroom System is the Ripple applied in classrooms.

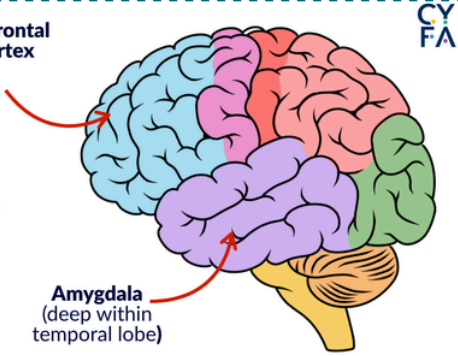
The system aligns three frameworks already used in Virginia classrooms: PBIS, SEL, and restorative practice. In Virginia, PBIS operates as the behavioral component of VTSS, the Commonwealth's data-driven framework for integrating academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports for all students [2]. This guide addresses the behavioral and social-emotional components of VTSS, not its academic component.

Each framework has a distinct job. PBIS defines, teaches, and reinforces what is expected at school. SEL builds the internal skills needed to meet those expectations, including self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy. Restorative practice builds the relationships that make those expectations matter and repairs them when someone falls short.

Together, the three frameworks create something more coherent than any one alone: classrooms where trust, accountability, and community reinforce each other instead of competing for attention. Restorative practices work before, during, and after challenging moments. Implemented faithfully, they are active long before accountability is needed.

Restorative practice does the quiet work of belonging.

Balancing Emotion and Reason



Different parts of the brain work together to balance emotion and reason. The amygdala is the brain's threat detector; the prefrontal cortex handles planning, decision-making, self-control, and social judgment.

When this circuit is working well, the two balance each other, allowing measured, thoughtful responses to stress.

Under high stress, the amygdala's alarm can override the prefrontal cortex, making clear thinking difficult because of heightened anxiety, fear, or impulsivity.

Source: [3]

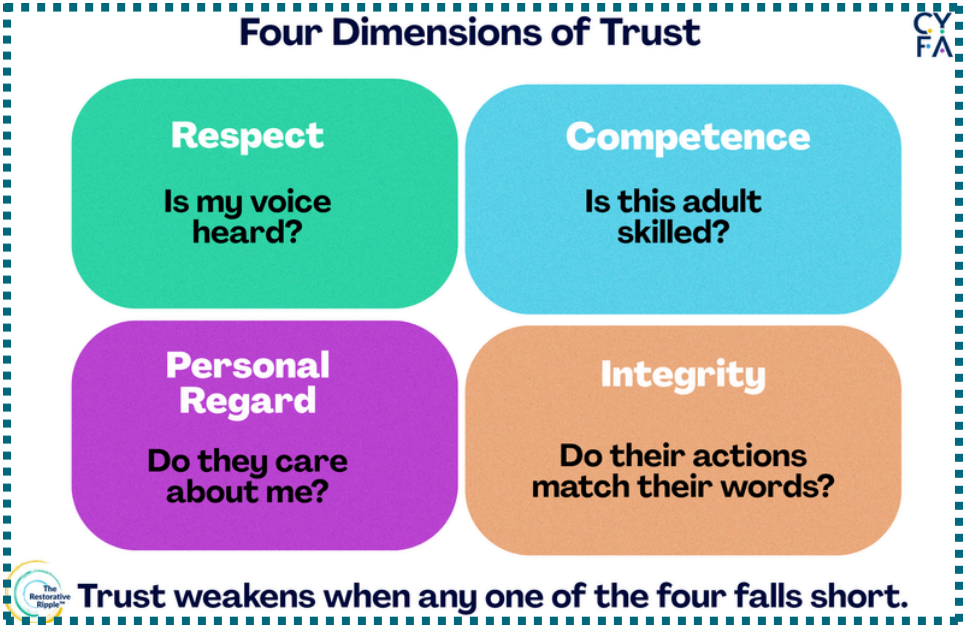
Safety, Stress, and Belonging

Students learn best when they feel physically, emotionally, and socially safe. When a student perceives a threat, the amygdala sets off a stress response that is hard to control in the moment. The response evolved to protect us, triggering fight, flight, or freeze. While it is active, the prefrontal cortex's capacity to plan, reason, and self-regulate drops sharply, and thinking clearly becomes much harder [4], [5].

A student's sense of belonging shapes how safe they feel to engage, take risks, and recover from mistakes. Students who feel known, respected, and part of the classroom community are better able to regulate, participate, and learn. Without that sense of belonging, behavior often reflects stress, not defiance. That makes the role of the classroom teacher critical.

Trust

Students run an unspoken evaluation long before they decide to trust an adult.



Every student is asking these four questions, whether they realize it or not [6]. The answers decide whether a student accepts support, responds to redirection, or checks out. When the answers are yes, a trusted adult's presence helps a student's stress response settle so they can re-engage [5].

Trust tells the brain it is safe to stop scanning for threats and return to learning. It is built in repeated, everyday moments, not grand gestures.

Every school-based interaction either builds trust or costs it.

Restorative practice runs on relationships, and relationships run on trust. When teachers build them on purpose and repair them with care, students stay connected to their learning

community, even after challenging moments.

A Note About Power and Authority

A teacher's title grants authority in the classroom. It does not, on its own, create power.

Schools operate within clear hierarchies, with each level holding defined authority. Authority is the right to set expectations, make decisions, and enforce them. Teachers hold that authority by role; students do not. If authority alone were enough to produce safe, engaging, and healthy learning environments, discipline systems would not carry the weight they do.

Power operates differently. Power is not control. It is the ability to influence how others think, engage, and act.

Power cannot be assigned by title or sustained through hierarchy alone. It is built through relationships, credibility, and consistency. In a restorative classroom, power is shared: teachers hold it with students, not over them.

Authority is visible. Power is felt.

In classrooms where teachers cultivate trust and shared ownership, power takes hold. Students engage because they see themselves as part of the learning community, not subjects within it. The classroom shifts from compliance to participation, and from control to cooperation.

The Restorative Ripple™: Opportunity ↔ Growth ↔ Contribution

The Restorative Ripple™ organizes restorative practice through three interconnected, continuously reinforcing elements: Opportunity, Growth, and Contribution. In schools, it works inside VTSS, which brings PBIS and SEL together under one framework.

The Ripple does not replace or redefine a school's VTSS structure. It describes the work restorative practice does within it, giving that work a clear place in what teachers already do. This guide focuses on that classroom work; intensive, individualized supports remain with school teams.

Opportunity

Opportunity is the daily, proactive work of building a strong classroom community. Expectations are taught, skills are practiced, and relationships are built on purpose. It happens in morning meetings, consistent routines, and interactions where students are seen, heard, and known.

Students use SEL skills to engage in this environment, learning to recognize their emotions, regulate their responses, and understand others. PBIS expectations make clear what participation looks like. Together, they create the conditions for students to belong and contribute.

Opportunity is a universal condition of the classroom, paired with the responsibility to engage with and uphold shared expectations.

Growth

Growth is the responsive work that occurs when a student's behavior falls short of shared expectations. It is not driven by punishment, blame, or removal; rather, it is a structured process that helps students take responsibility by understanding what happened, why it happened, and how to address the impact of their actions on others and the community.

SEL skills develop in these moments as students build self-awareness, strengthen regulation, and practice empathy. PBIS expectations remain the anchor, making clear what needs to be restored.

Growth resolves the moment but, more importantly, helps the student make different decisions in the future. It is possible only because Opportunity built the relationship first.

Meaningful growth requires a relationship worth repairing.

Contribution

Contribution is what Opportunity and Growth build toward. It shows up when students see themselves as having a meaningful role in the classroom community and move from meeting expectations to leading: influencing and adding value to the world around them.

When students experience consistent Opportunity, and Growth when they need it, they draw on SEL skills to collaborate, communicate, and lead. Within clear PBIS expectations, they take ownership, support their peers, and strengthen the relationships that hold the classroom and school community together.

Contribution is where a student's investment in the classroom becomes visible to everyone in it.

The three elements feed each other. Growth after a challenging moment often deepens a student's sense of contribution. Contribution, in turn, increases engagement and opens new opportunities for connection. Opportunity creates the conditions for both, all year, for every student.

Opportunity
Building the Restorative Classroom

Goal: Every student experiences belonging, predictability, and access to participation.

Restorative practices operate on a continuum, with most of the work happening before problems arise [7]. In the classroom, that work centers on one outcome: a genuine ***Sense of Community***.

A Sense of Community is a defined construct with four elements that shape whether a student experiences real belonging [8].

Membership: Does the student feel part of the group, recognized and safe within it, not sitting on its edge?

Influence: Does the student believe their voice shapes the classroom, or are they simply participating without impact?

Fulfillment of needs: Does the student trust that being part of this community meets their academic, social, and emotional needs?

Shared emotional connection: Has enough shared experience built a sense of connection among students over time?

A student can attend every class and still lack membership. A student can have friends and still have no influence. When any one element is weak, a student can be present without belonging. Naming the four shows where a classroom community is breaking down and what needs strengthening.

Opportunity runs on PBIS, SEL, and restorative practices together. Each plays a distinct role, and all three are required.

Opportunity builds the trust every repair conversation needs.

The daily routines and the Proactive Practice Ladder are in Part II.

Growth ↔ Contribution
Repairing Relationships

Goal: Restore relationships, rebuild trust, and return students to active participation in the learning community.

Conflict, dysregulation, or a missed expectation can test the trust Opportunity built. Growth is how the classroom responds.

In that moment, all three frameworks go to work. PBIS names the expectation that was missed. Restorative practice guides students to understand the impact and repair the harm. SEL gives them the regulation, awareness, and empathy to stay in the conversation.

Each one matters. Without regulation, students cannot stay present in reflection. Without relationship, accountability becomes compliance. Without structure, repair becomes inconsistent. Together, they turn a challenging moment into responsibility and reconnection.

Part II walks through the Restorative Response Flow and the language that supports it.

Part II: The Practice

Part II provides the routines, language, and tools teachers can use every day.

Daily Routines Opportunity in Practice

Community (**Belonging**)

Sense of Community starts with how the day begins. A morning meeting or consistent opening routine can do far more than take attendance. Designed well, it builds membership, influence, fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection every day.

The routine on the following page adapts the four components of Responsive Classroom's Morning Meeting [9] and gives each one a job: building one of the four elements.



Expectations (**Predictability**)

Expectations have to travel. A student can follow a classroom norm perfectly at their desk and lose it in the hallway or cafeteria because no one has shown them it applies there too. When every adult in the building teaches, models, and reinforces the same expectations, students carry them into every space they enter.

Reinforcement (**Consistency**)

Effective reinforcement names both the behavior and the identity behind it.

"*You waited your turn*" reinforces the action.

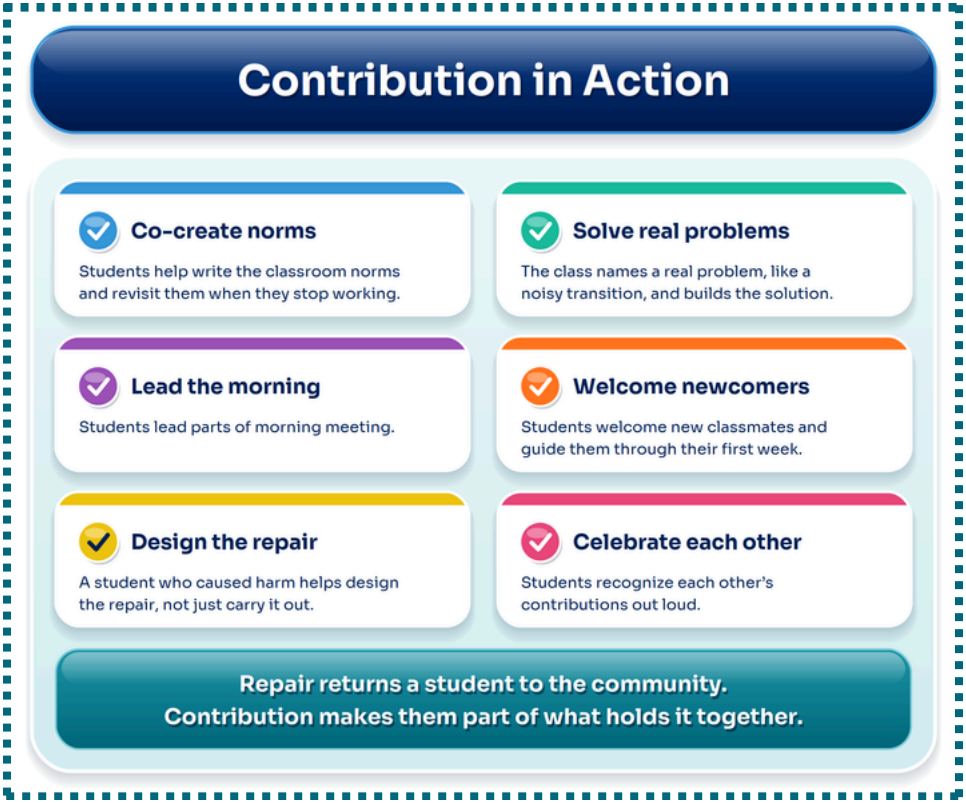
"*You chose to wait. That's what a patient classmate does*" reinforces who the student is becoming.

The second kind of praise carries real weight. Young students assist more when they are invited to be "helpers" than when simply asked to help [10]. Its power depends on what the praise names. Praise that labels a fixed trait can backfire after a later mistake [11], while praise anchored in a choice gives students an identity they can keep building.

Leadership (**Agency**)

Students can tell when an opportunity is performative. A classroom job with no real responsibility, an invitation that never leads anywhere, or a task an adult quietly finishes for them all send the same message: their contribution carries no value.

Real agency sends the opposite message. Students shape outcomes, help make decisions, and hold responsibilities that matter to the group. As they begin to see themselves as contributors, their classmates and the adults around them begin to see them that way too. Here is what contribution can look like in an elementary classroom.



The Proactive Practice Ladder

The ladder adapts the restorative practices continuum [7] and arranges it by reach. It is designed so that no student's connection to the classroom is left to chance.

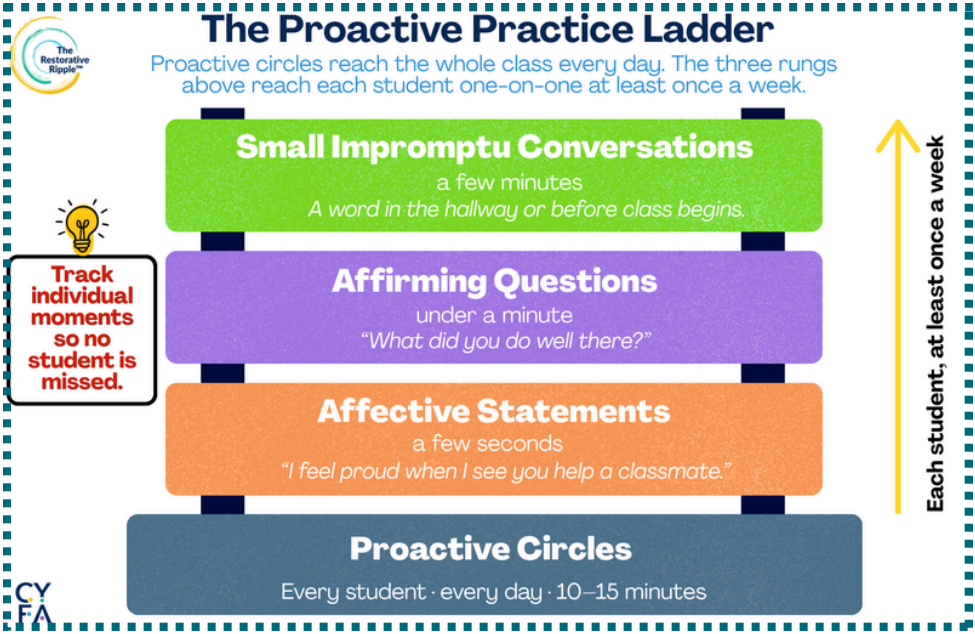
Proactive circles: morning meetings, community-building activities, and the shared norms a class creates together. This is where every student is seen and heard as part of the group.

Affective statements: brief, personal statements that name the impact of what a student did. *"Thank you for including Maya at*

recess. That made our class stronger."

Affirming questions: open-ended questions that invite students to notice their own growth. *"How did you figure that out?"*

Small impromptu conversations: brief, unplanned exchanges, one-on-one or in small groups, that build trust in passing. *"How did your soccer game go this weekend?"*



Relationships are built incrementally, through repeated and intentional moments of connection.

Practice Tip: A class list can help you see who has and has not had an individual connection. Be sure to check with your administration team about student records requirements.

Individual attention builds connection and safety only when it is genuine. Students read it in a teacher's tone, body language, and consistency, and even the youngest notice the difference. That matters most in moments of tension, when the way a teacher speaks can strengthen or strain the relationship. The impact rarely stays with one student; it ripples out and shapes the whole learning environment.

Building Safety and Trust: What to Say

The chart offers restorative language for moments that come up every day. Each phrase can be adapted to fit a teacher's own voice.

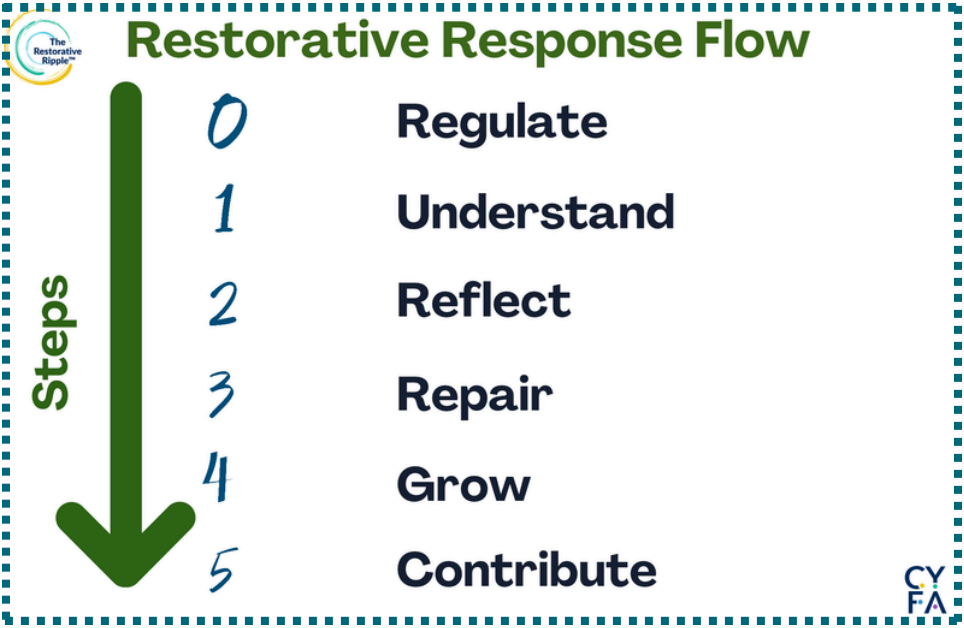
When	What it does	Restorative language
Naming and noticing	Shows students they are seen	• "I noticed you..." • "Thank you for trying, even though it was hard."
Inviting voice	Shows students they matter	• "What do you think we should do?" • "You have a say in how this classroom runs."
Signaling predictability	Lowers anxiety before it starts	• "Here is what happens next." • "If you need a minute, here is how to ask."
Repairing in the moment	Small ruptures, not full incidents	• "I got that wrong. Let me try again." • "That came out harsher than I meant."
Making space for hard things	Safety is not the same as comfort	• "This might feel uncomfortable, and that is okay." • "Disagreement is fine here, as long as it stays respectful."

Two rows deserve a closer look. In the fourth, the teacher repairs first. When students hear their teacher own a small mistake out loud, repair becomes a normal part of classroom life. The fifth row is a reminder that comfort and safety are different. A classroom can feel comfortable while students still hold back what they really think.

In a restorative classroom, students feel safe taking real risks: raising a hand with a wrong answer, disagreeing with a peer, or admitting a mistake, because they trust how the community will respond.

Restorative Response Flow Growth in Practice

Repair follows a consistent sequence of six steps. The full Flow guides a 3–5 minute restorative conversation, and briefer responses draw on its first steps. Each step prepares the next; skipping steps reduces the depth of reflection and ownership.

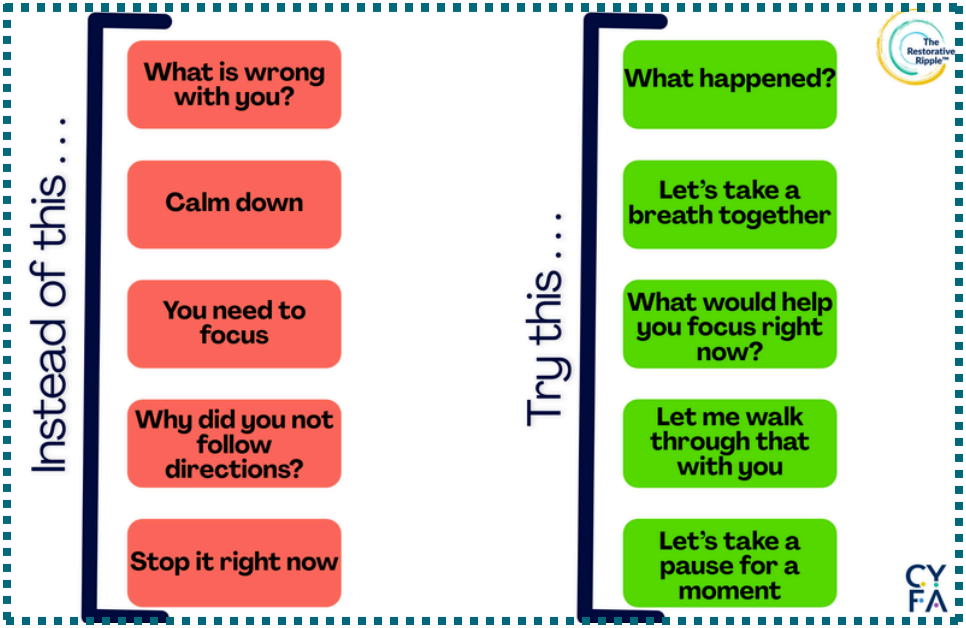


The Flow starts at Step 0 because regulation comes before conversation. A student whose stress response is active cannot yet reflect. The sequence works best in order, mirroring how understanding develops. Beginning with solutions or expectations before understanding the event often produces compliance instead of genuine reflection.

The later steps ask more. *Reflect* asks a student to take another person's point of view, an ability that emerges in the preschool years [12] and keeps deepening through the early grades. *Grow* asks them to picture their own future behavior, and *Contribute* asks them to think about the group.

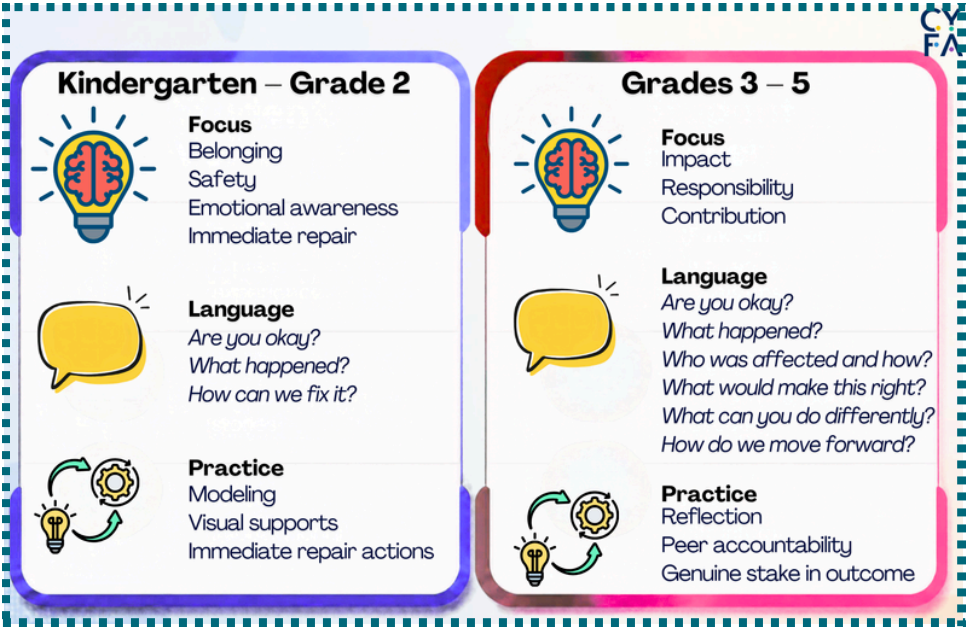
The words chosen in the moment shape every step. Under stress, it is easy to reach for words that label or judge. Instinctive phrasing locates

the problem in the student: their character, attention, or compliance. Restorative phrasing locates it in the moment, something that happened and can still be adjusted. That distinction is largely what separates a restorative tone from a punitive one.



Grade Level Differentiation

The practices in this guide work from kindergarten through fifth grade. What changes is how they sound: a kindergartner and a fifth grader need different words, even when the goal is the same.



Kindergarten through Grade 2

Younger students rely on co-regulation: they borrow steadiness from the adults around them while their own tools for settling are still developing. A name used warmly, a predictable routine, and a calm voice do much of the work. Children this age often feel something big before they have words for it, so teachers name feelings out loud first and invite students to name their own over time.

Repair works best close to the moment, since the link between an event and a conversation about it fades quickly for young children. It is often an action, such as helping put the materials back, more than a discussion. K–2 conversations lean most on Step 0 (*Regulate*), Step 1 (*Understand*), and Step 3 (*Repair*). *Reflect*, *Grow*, and *Contribute* stay brief and concrete,

carried through showing and doing: pointing to who was upset, practicing what to try next time, or helping the group get back to work. The steps are never skipped; they are shortened to what a young student can hold.

Grades 3 through 5

Students this age can generally hold another person's point of view, so the questions move from what happened toward who was affected, what would make it right, and what could change next time. All six steps are in play, with *Reflect* and *Contribute* carrying more weight than in the earlier grades. The teacher's role is to make sure the repair fits the impact, since a quick "sorry" can end the conversation without making anything right.

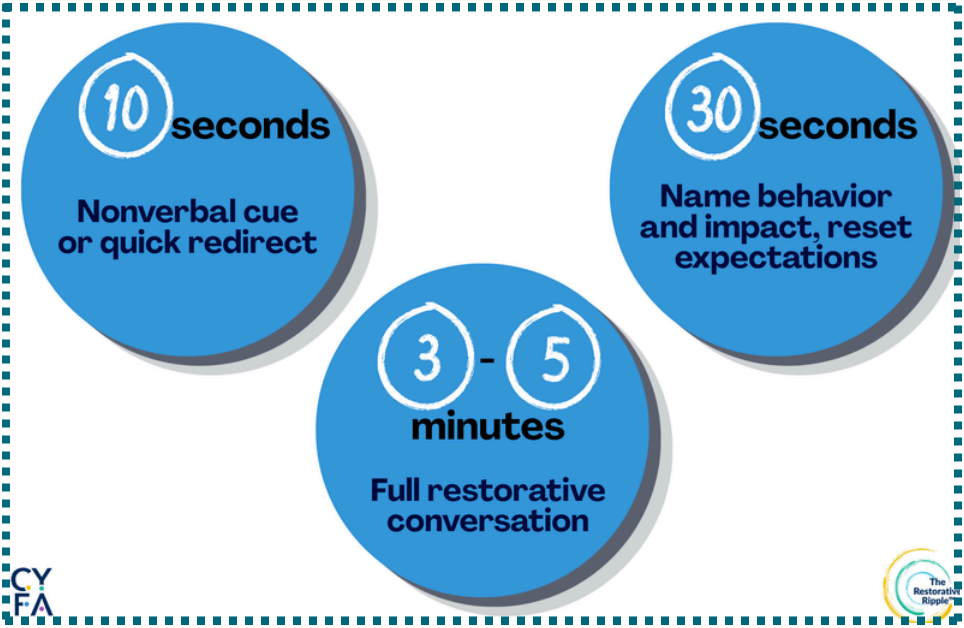
Peer accountability grows here too: classmates share how a moment affected them, usually in a circle the teacher facilitates, and never as a public call-out.

The questions after "Are you okay?" work best once the student is regulated and feels that the teacher is genuinely interested in what they have to say. Asked in a rush, they can sound like a test with a right answer, and students give the answer they think the teacher wants.

Time-Based Response

A teacher's response works best when it fits the size of the moment. Most of what happens in a classroom calls for something brief, and

only a few situations require a full conversation. Keeping responses in proportion protects instruction time and saves deeper conversations for when students truly need them.



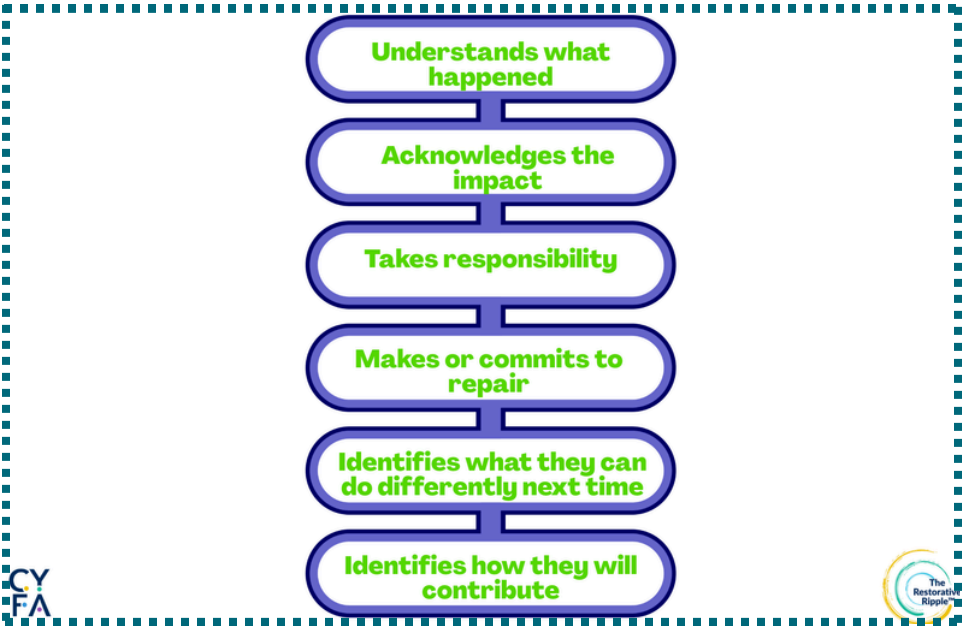
One behavior can call for different levels of response as it unfolds.

Practice Tip: Consider a student tapping a pencil during independent work. A teacher might start with a 10-second response: moving closer or making brief eye contact, which is often enough. If the tapping continues and classmates begin to notice, a 30-second response might sound like this: "I've noticed the tapping a few times now. It's pulling focus from the people around you. Let's find another way to use that energy." If the student seems upset, or the tapping is part of something bigger, a full 3–5 minute conversation may be helpful.

These times are guides, not rules. Any level can be a starting point, and the response can shift as the situation unfolds. A conversation that needs more than a few minutes often goes better at a calmer time, such as a transition or after class. Equity matters too: similar moments call for similar responses, whichever student is involved.

Completion Standard Accountability

In the Restorative Classroom System, accountability is defined by observable evidence of repair, not by time, compliance, or whether a behavior has ended. A restorative interaction is complete when six conditions are present, each following the Restorative Response Flow.



Step 0, *Regulate*, has no condition of its own. It is what makes the other six possible.

These conditions follow the way understanding and repair naturally unfold in conversation, so they are a guide rather than a checklist. They also look different by age: for a kindergartner, understanding what happened may mean saying it in a few words or showing it, and repair may be a simple action.

When all six are present, the student has moved through reflection into responsibility and back into active participation. When any are missing, the conversation stays open, even if the moment has calmed. Open conversations can go on the same class list used for individual connections, with a plan to return when the student is ready: the same or next school day for K–2, and within one to two school days for grades 3–5. A conversation still open at the end of the week is a good one to bring to a counselor or the school support team.

Repair Is Never Forced

An apology can feel like the natural way to close a hard moment, and it often comes in time. In this model, it is offered rather than required, since repair requires a student's choice and buy-in. Repair can take many forms, from fixing or replacing something to changing a behavior or rebuilding trust over time.

Care for the student who was impacted must guide every step. Their safety and wishes shape

the process, and they are always free to decide whether to participate, meet, or reconcile. Repair can be meaningful even when a friendship is not restored.

Students sometimes see the same moment differently. When that happens, returning to Step 1 (*Understand*) helps: hearing what others saw and keeping the focus on impact rather than on whose account is right. If a student needs more time before acknowledging their role, the conversation can pause. In the meantime, the school's procedures continue to apply, and the door to repair can remain open.

Pausing and Returning

Some conversations cannot happen right away. A student may be escalated, withdrawn, or simply not ready to reflect yet. Stepping back in those moments is part of the process, not a sign that it has failed. Time and space, used with intention, can often make the conversation that follows stronger.

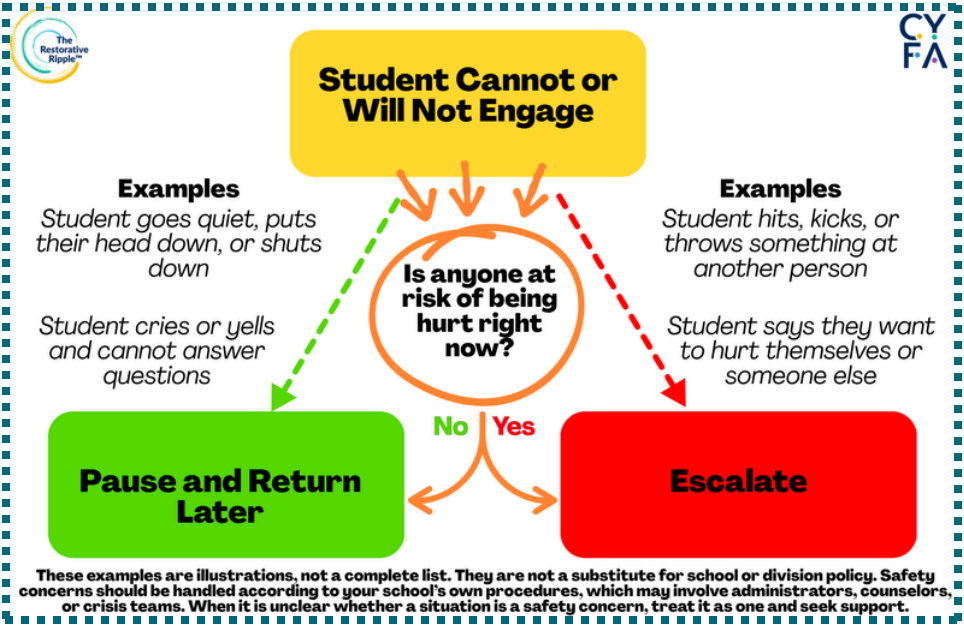
Escalation Guideline

Challenging moments in a classroom are often relational rather than dangerous: frustration, miscommunication, or a student testing a boundary. Restorative conversation and a calm, measured response serve these circumstances well and typically reduce further escalation.

Safety concerns are different. When anyone is at risk of being hurt, protective action in

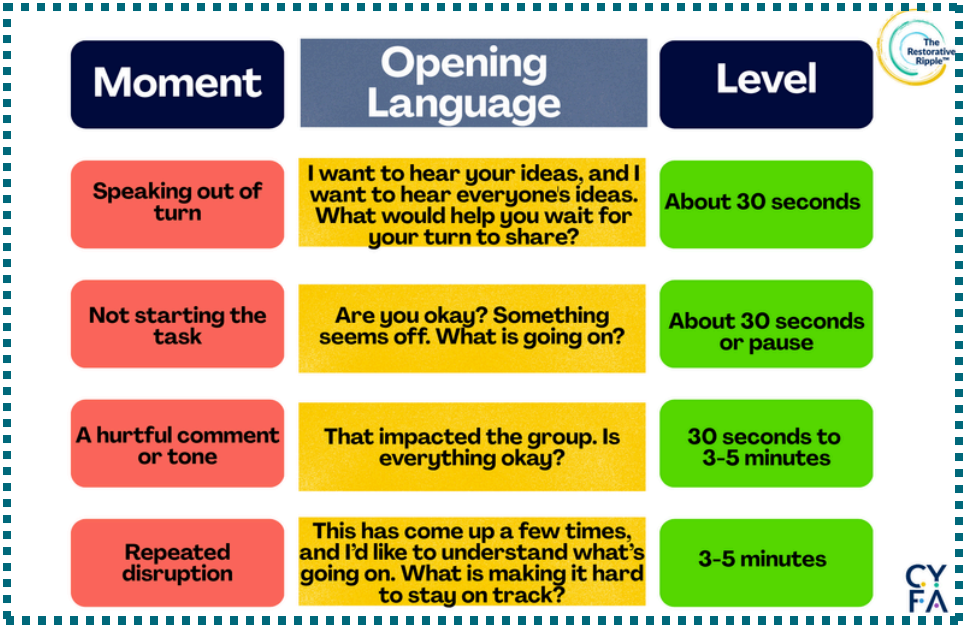
accordance with the school's safety procedures is the priority. Knowing the difference keeps every student safe while protecting the chance to learn and grow.

One situation always calls for immediate action: any sign of abuse or neglect, which falls under mandated reporting obligations and the school's procedures.



Scenarios

The chart that follows pairs four common classroom moments with language to open the conversation. These are openers, not full scripts, and the level shown is a general starting point. After the opening, the Restorative Response Flow guides the rest.



Partnering with Families

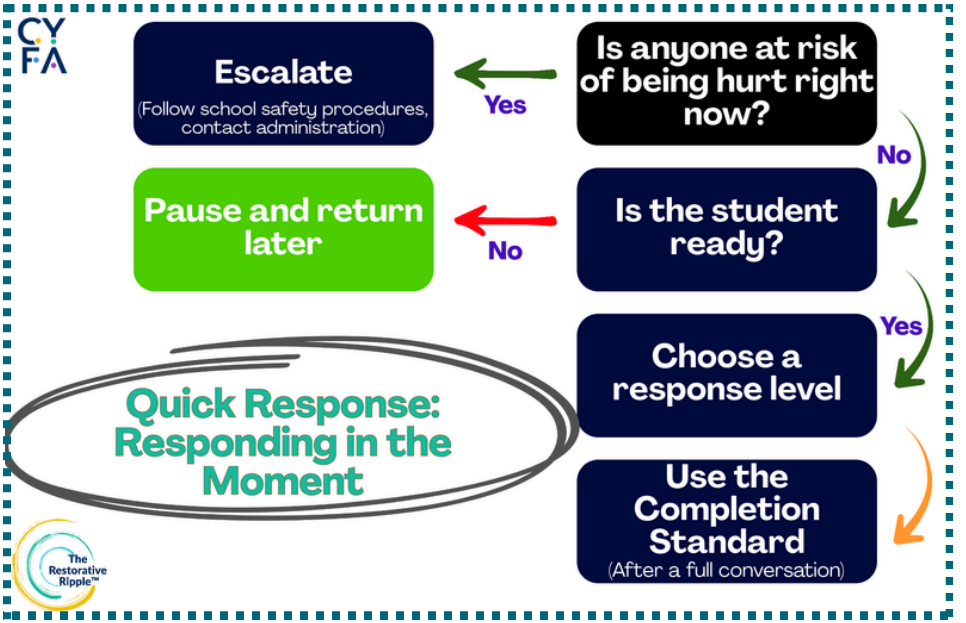
Families are part of the community a restorative classroom builds. When families know the language in this guide, children hear the same words at home and at school. After a challenging moment, reaching out to share how the student made things right, and what comes next, helps families see their child's growth along with the hard moment. Asking what works at home turns that connection into a true partnership.

Quick Reference

The Decision Tree and the Restorative Response Flow at a Glance bring the essentials together in one place, ready to keep at a desk, in a planning binder, or near the classroom's calm-down space.

Decision Tree

Four questions guide any response, from a quick redirect to a full restorative conversation: Is everyone safe? Is the student ready? What level fits the moment? Is repair in place?



Restorative Response Flow at a Glance

Step	What it does	K–2	Grades 3–5
0 Regulate	Settles the body before talking	"Let's take a breath together."	"Let's take a breath. Tell me when you are ready to talk."
1 Understand	Establishes what happened	"Show me what happened."	"What happened? What were you thinking at the time?"
2 Reflect	Names the impact	"Who was upset? How can you tell?"	"Who was affected, and how?"
3 Repair	Makes it right	"How can we fix it?"	"What would make this right?"
4 Grow	Plans for next time	"Let's practice what to try next time."	"What can you do differently next time?"
5 Contribute	Returns the student to the community	"How can you help the class get back to work?"	"How do we move forward? What will you bring to the class?"

When It Stalls

The student cannot answer
Offer two choices, or pause and return later.

The student disputes what happened
Return to Understand. Focus on impact, not whose account is right.

The affected student does not want to take part
Respect that. Repair can still happen through action.

Anyone is at risk of being hurt
Stop and follow your school's safety procedures.

Final Note

Restorative practice redefines accountability through responsibility, repair, and contribution, rather than through punishment alone.

The Restorative Classroom System works within VTSS and alongside school and division policy, and its tools are meant to be adapted to each classroom. For students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), 504 plan, or behavior intervention plan, these tools work alongside that plan, never in place of it.

Research on restorative practice in schools is still growing. In one of the first randomized studies, restorative practices reduced suspensions, especially in elementary schools, and teachers reported a stronger school climate. Academic outcomes, however, did not improve [13].

Trust is never finished. It grows in ordinary moments, through teachers who choose to nurture it with intention. This guide is here to support that work.

Research Foundations

CYFA designed the response tools in Part II, including the Restorative Response Flow, the Time-Based Response, and the Completion Standard, drawing on the sources below. The Proactive Practice Ladder and the morning routine adapt established practices, credited here.

[1] Oprah Winfrey's account of her fourth-grade teacher, Mary Duncan, appears in "The Teachers Who Changed Oprah's Life," The Oprah Winfrey Show (1989), oprah.com/oprahshow/the-teachers-who-changed-oprahs-life.

[2] Training and Technical Assistance Center at Radford University. (n.d.). Tiered systems of supports. radford.edu/education-human-development/training-technical-assistance-center/focus-areas/tiered-systems-of-supports.html

[3] Banks, S. J., Eddy, K. T., Angstadt, M., Nathan, P. J., & Phan, K. L. (2007). Amygdala–frontal connectivity during emotion regulation. Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience, 2(4), 303–312.

[4] Arnsten, A. F. T. (2009). Stress signalling pathways that impair prefrontal cortex structure and function. Nature Reviews Neuroscience, 10(6), 410–422.

[5] National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. (2005/2014). Excessive stress disrupts the architecture of the developing brain (Working Paper No. 3, updated ed.). Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/working-paper/wp3. The paper focuses on young children.

[6] Bryk, A. S., & Schneider, B. (2002). Trust in schools: A core resource for improvement. Russell Sage Foundation. The authors studied relational trust among the adults in Chicago elementary schools. This guide applies the four dimensions of trust to the relationship between students and teachers.

[7] Wachtel, T. (2016). Defining restorative. International Institute for Restorative Practices, iirp.edu. Source of the restorative practices continuum, affective statements, and the restorative questions on which the Restorative Response Flow's Grades 3–5 language draws.

[8] McMillan, D. W., & Chavis, D. M. (1986). Sense of community: A definition and theory. Journal of Community Psychology, 14(1), 6–23. The original names the third element "integration and fulfillment of needs," which this guide shortens to "fulfillment of needs." The theory addresses communities in general, and this guide applies it to classrooms.

[9] Kriete, R., & Davis, C. (2014). The morning meeting book (3rd ed.). Center for Responsive Schools. Source of the four Morning Meeting components; the mapping to Sense of Community is CYFA's model.

[10] Bryan, C. J., Master, A., & Walton, G. M. (2014). "Helping" versus "being a helper": Invoking the self to increase helping in young children. Child Development, 85(5), 1836–1842.

[11] Cimpian, A., Arce, H.-M. C., Markman, E. M., & Dweck, C. S. (2007). Subtle linguistic cues affect children's motivation. Psychological Science, 18(4), 314–316.

[12] Wellman, H. M., Cross, D., & Watson, J. (2001). Meta-analysis of theory-of-mind development: The truth about false belief. Child Development, 72(3), 655–684.

[13] Augustine, C. H., Engberg, J., Grimm, G. E., Lee, E., Wang, E. L., Christianson, K., & Joseph, A. A. (2018). Can restorative practices improve school climate and curb suspensions? An evaluation of the impact of restorative practices in a mid-sized urban school district (RR-2840). RAND Corporation, rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2840.html.

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