

PROGRAM EMPHASIS ON SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING



...because we all have a yellow spot.®

Rita Cheskiewicz
Executive Director
rita@mikaylasvoice.org
(570) 690-7113

Kimberly Resh
Director of (Fun and Innovative!) Programs
kim@mikaylasvoice.org
(610) 746-2324





WHAT IS SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING?

Social Emotional learning is a broad term referring to how students regulate their emotions, communicate with others, use compassion and empathy to understand the needs of other people, build relationships and make good decisions.

*Jennifer Rhodes,
Navigating SEL from the Inside Out
Wallace Foundation Report, March 2017*

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING IMPACT

When children taught the concepts of social emotional learning are, they learn to apply a set of behavioral and character skills required to succeed in school, in the workplace, in relationships and citizenship.

Evidence suggests that explicitly teaching social and emotional skills and enabling students to take responsibility for their community can and does reduce bullying, violence and aggressive behaviors.

*Chan Zuckerberg
Initiative research*





DISABILITY AWARENESS

Understanding disabilities can motivate students to act compassionately and respectfully at school today and in society tomorrow.

EMPATHY AND PERSPECTIVE TAKING

The emotional skills of empathy and perspective taking involves the ability to understand another person's emotional state and point of view. This includes identifying, acknowledging and acting upon experiences, feelings and viewpoints of others and placing themselves in the situation.

MIKAYLA'S VOICE PROMISE

Mikayla's Voice has always focused on students having an important message to share kindness and including everyone.

We promised Mikayla her voice would continue to be heard. A Voice of Inclusion. Kindness. Friendship.

Louder.
Stronger.
Farther.



INCLUSION ASSEMBLIES

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

WHEELS OF FRIENDSHIP

TRI FOR INCLUSION

MIKAYLA'S VOICE PROGRAMS AND THEIR FOCUS ON SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Mikayla's Voice uses inclusion assemblies and books, the arts, and sports and recreation programs to promote values and expectations of responsibility, communication, friendship, and kindness.

INCLUSION ASSEMBLIES

School wide assemblies addressing school culture around the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) themes of inclusion, kindness and friendship.



Create a supportive environment with honest and respectful conversation. All questions welcome and encouraged.

Discuss what it is like to have a disability and what it is like to have a friend with a disability.

Information about communication switches, feeding tubes, verbal and non-verbal language, sign language.

Video and slide show presentations depicting inclusion stories, triumphs and challenges.

Self-advocates present their personal stories and to highlight how we all share similar interests, and activities, and feelings.



SARA

Sara is a graduate of Southern Lehigh HS headed to Delaware Valley College to study Equine Science.



JARED

A graduate of Parkland HS, Jared serves on Mikayla's Voice Board of Directors.





MIKEY

This graduate from Chartiers-Houston HS loves to take the microphone at assemblies where the photo of his signed Steelers football is always a fan favorite.





JOSHUA

Joshua is a graduate of Daniel Boone HS where he was a member of the Blazers' marching band.





A WONDERFUL PERSPECTIVE ON KINDNESS

“It was wonderful to see so many students ask questions and see **the kindness flow from them.**”

~ Arc Chapter Director

“The far-reaching, long-term potential of ongoing programming like this is **future adults who will have more empathy.** This aims toward positive change in the world.”

~ Mom of a child with disability

“Thank you for such a **wonderful perspective on kindness.**”

~ Head teacher at a primary center

“Your message will resonate for a long time. **Acceptance, kindness, and empathy** are the three major themes that I took away from this life changing presentation.”

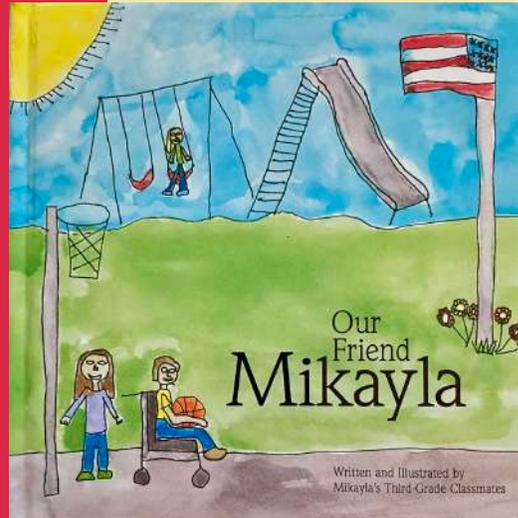
~ High school principal

Mikayla's Voice has published three children's books written and illustrated by kids for other kids about having a friend with a disability.

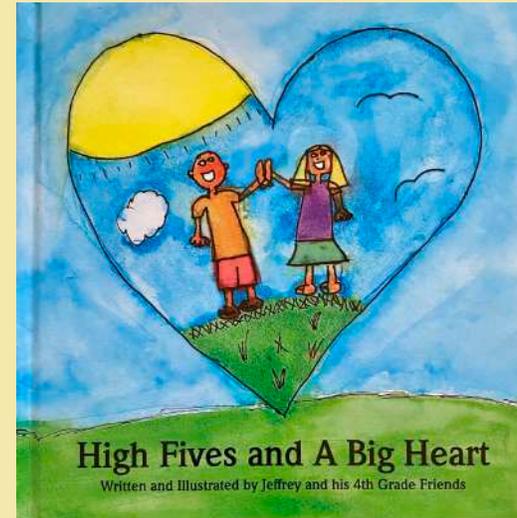
CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Mikayla was born with a brain injury, Jeffrey has Down syndrome, and Brady is challenged by autism, but the books are not about the main characters or their disabilities.

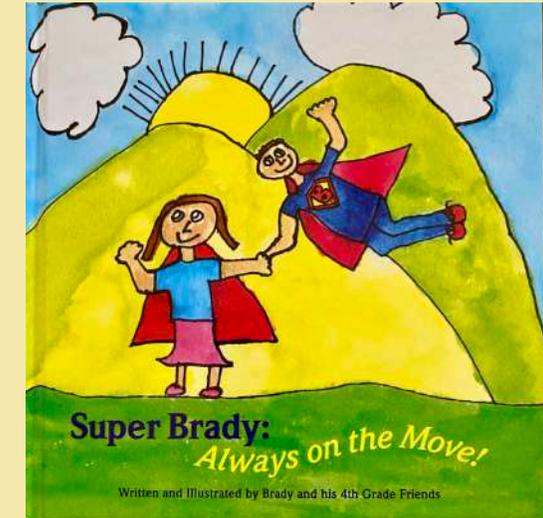
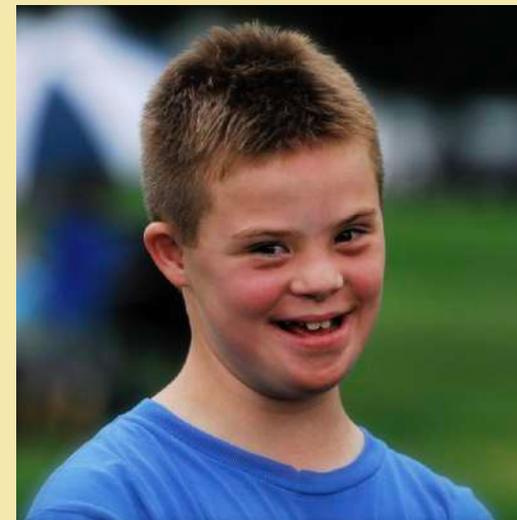
They are about friendship.
And kindness.



Our Friend Mikayla



High Fives
and A Big Heart



Super Brady:
Always on the Move!



All three books demonstrate these young authors' social emotional maturity and their capacity for **honesty**...

“ We were afraid of what she had. One of us even thought it was contagious, but we learned it's not.

There is nothing to be afraid of... **”**

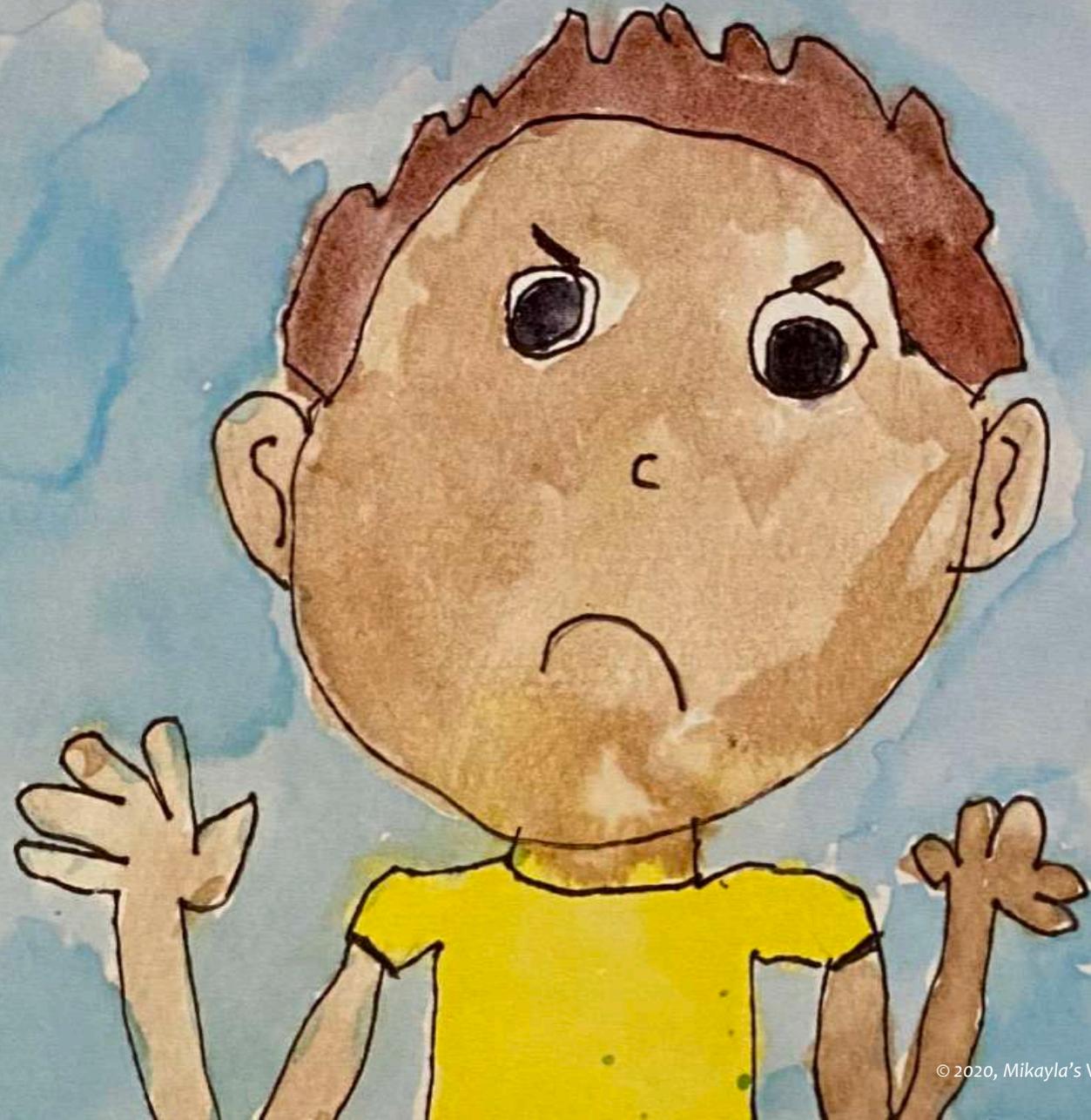


...*understanding* and *empathy*

“ He had tantrums because he was frustrated or misunderstood.

What if you wanted to tell someone something but you couldn't say it?

”



...and acceptance

“ He puts ketchup on all his food, mostly, except eggs.

We think that's odd but in a good way. Everybody is different.

”



...compassion and appreciation

“ When Brady is angry or upset, he makes noise and bangs his water bottle on his desk.

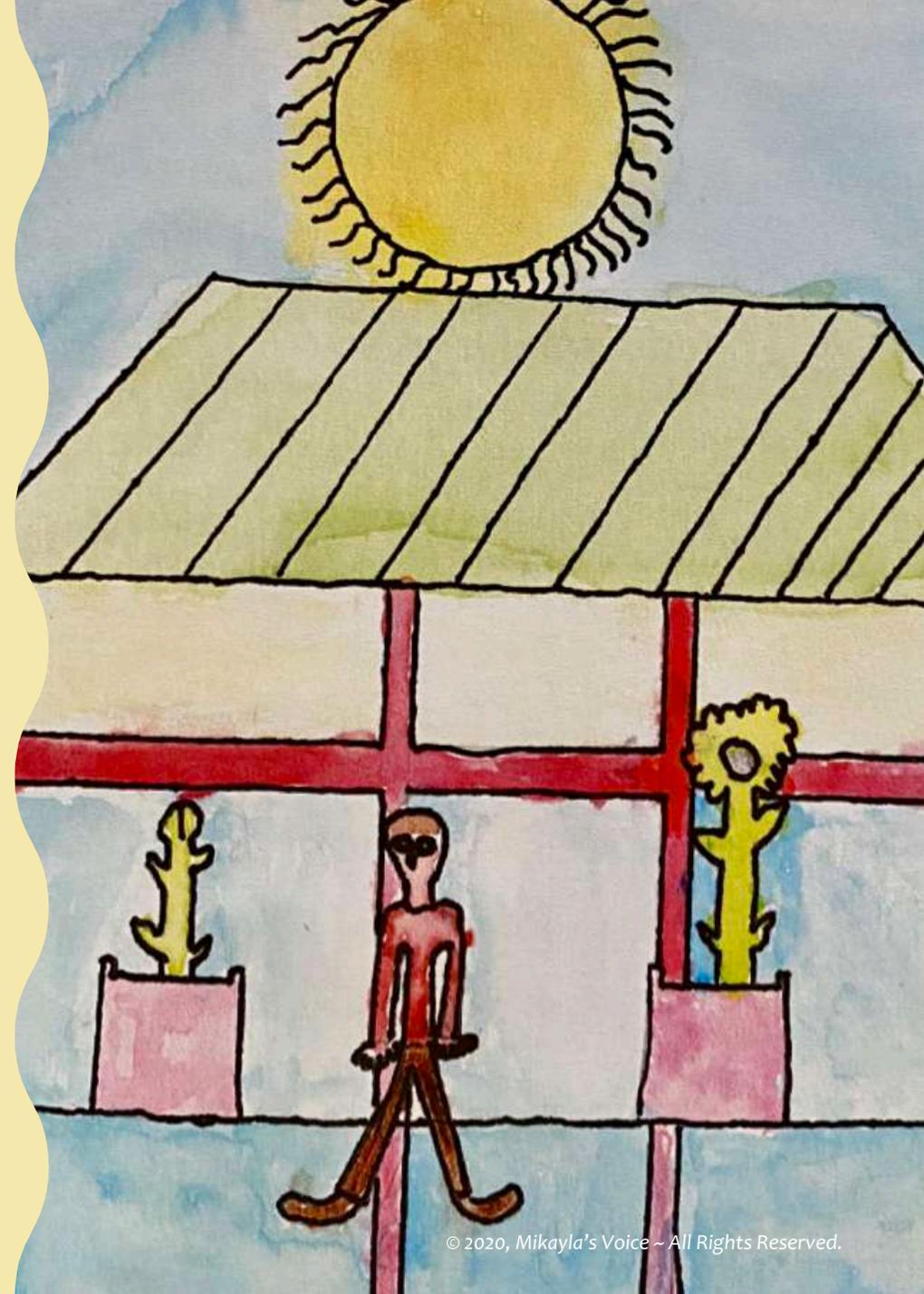
This doesn't bother us. It has helped us learn to be focused.

”



...and their ability to **provide the best explanation** for other children.

“It’s just like when you go to the store and buy two plants. The one has a beautiful flower and the other has just buds. The one with the buds on it will grow a pretty flower too. It will just take a little bit longer.”





STUDENTS' AFFECTION FOR THEIR FRIEND FEELS VERY HONEST

*“The students' affection for their friend feels very honest. The watercolor-and-ink paintings, including one by Mikayla, display an authenticity that an adult illustrator may not have been able to replicate. This title is of **great value for classrooms and home use alike** as more and more schools, students, and parents work toward mainstreaming children with disabilities.”*

~ Rachel G Payne
Brooklyn Public Library
School Library Journal Review

An inclusive group of students begin by selecting a social emotional theme related to diversity and inclusion. The artists use wheelchairs and other adapted techniques to create a beautiful, colorful mural to improve school culture, limit bullying, and promote kindness and friendship.

WHEELS OF FRIENDSHIP



*“Students creating murals for their schools are actively changing the space. They are engaged in an opportunity to communicate with their peers about issues, topics and imagery important to them...**Murals speak to school bodies.**”*

*Michael Dorn, School Safety Expert,
Executive Director of Safe Havens International.*

*“As you ramp up your security, adding cops in schools, metal detectors, buzzer access. Any one of those things that we would call ‘hard and physical measures’ - the more you do that, **you need murals, artwork and color schemes to maintain the school climate.**”*

*Matt Christenson,
“It’s Time to Lead a Mural Project,”
The Art of Education University.*

A woman with brown hair, wearing a light blue and white striped short-sleeved top and a wide brown belt, is speaking into a microphone. She is facing a group of children. In the foreground, a young girl with dark hair in a bun, wearing a dark blue polo shirt, is smiling and clapping her hands. Behind her, another girl in a light blue jacket is looking towards the speaker. In the background, a woman with dark hair is also visible. To the left, a large, vibrant mural is partially visible, featuring a sun with rays in shades of red, orange, and yellow, and green leaves. The scene is set in what appears to be a school or community center.

Artists are empowered as they understand they are in a position to use their art to help make their schools kinder and more friendly places.



They know they
are making a
difference.

"It is a **beautiful mural that shows unity and friendship**. I would love to do it all over again."

~ Desiree, 5th grade

"What makes me the happiest is that I **helped others to understand** that we are all the same on the inside."

~ Ella, 4th grade

"I want people to **feel full-hearted** when they see our painting."

~ Ben, 3rd grade

"Everyone can be someone that can **make a huge difference** in the world one day."

~ Briella, 4th grade

"If we all help each other **the world will be a much better place**."

~ Eliana, 3rd grade

Our triathletes probably don't realize the social emotional lessons they are learning and teaching, but their families and friends, and the event spectators and volunteers do!

*"The Tri for Inclusion was one of the most beautiful family days ever! Jacob was so excited to be a part of this event, he was looking forward to competing, and completing the course. Oh, but what he got was so much more! From the minute we arrived till the moment said our goodbyes **the day was filled with sweet, caring, positive people.** The love that filled the air was amazing."*

~ Mom of a triathlete

*"My favorite part of the day was **seeing the strength in the participants** and the love of their friends and family!"*

~ Tri for Inclusion volunteer

TRI FOR INCLUSION





A PLATFORM FOR HOW WE TALK ABOUT OUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

*“Mikayla’s Voice and the Wheels of Friendship program was so much more to our school than a single project or assembly. It has become **a platform for how we talk about our thoughts and feelings**. It is a commitment to one another of how we conduct ourselves when people may be different than we are. It is an understanding of how to be purposeful about how we interact with those who have disabilities.”*

*~ Tracey Hirner
Principal
Thomas Jefferson Elementary*

4



an overall reduction in
HANDS ON INCIDENTS
at our school

0

26



a drastic decrease in
CODE OF CONDUCT REFERRALS
written by our teachers

4

“For each of those four referrals, our team had met and discussed strategically the benefits to handling the incident through consequences in addition to interventions for the students involved.”

We attribute the change in overall culture to our students and teachers gaining a better **understanding of our individual responsibility** to understand the differences of one another. There is not a day that goes by that I do not refer back to our message of inclusion and the commitment we made by signing the **“DECLARATION OF FRIENDSHIP”** scroll.



MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF MIKAYLA'S VOICE PROGRAMS *and* THEIR IMPACT ON SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING



Contracted with Lehigh University researchers to design and implement performance measures, interpret data and results, and develop plans for improvement and replication.

Created our own tool to collect input from the students themselves ~ including our youngest students and those with disabilities ~ before and after delivery of our inclusive programming.

Statewide and nationally, there are many efforts to address the implications and outcomes of social emotional learning.

Publications by CCSSO and The Education Counsel

Measuring School Climate and Social and Emotional Development: A Navigation Guide for States and Districts

*“Education practitioners, researchers, and policymakers are increasingly focusing on social and emotional learning and development and positive school climates as **essential factors to establish equitable learning environments in which all young people can thrive.**”*

~ Cathy Holahan and Brooklyn Batey, March 2019

Social and Emotional Learning and Development, Conditions for Learning, and Whole Child Supports in ESSA State Plans

*“States are beginning to include language, measures, and supports around **social and emotional learning and development in their Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) state plans**, many for the first time. This is important because it signals a move away from focusing mainly on academic performance for accountability and supports for schools and district, **recognizing that SEL also improves outcomes for students and is also worth measuring.**”*

~ Kathryn Young and Emily Webb, April 2019

EducationCounsel
Policy | Strategy | Law | Advocacy

A mission-based education consulting firm that combines significant experience in policy, strategy, law and advocacy to drive improvements in the U.S. education system for all students.



A nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head state departments of elementary and secondary education providing leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues.



RAND policy experts bring a diverse range of professional and educational experiences ~ and cultural backgrounds ~ to their research, representing a vast array of disciplines.

RAND Research Reports:

Educators believed that SEL programs can improve student outcomes and school climate.

Large majorities of principals described SEL as a top priority.

Teachers tended to assign greater importance to SEL skills than principals.

RAND Recommends:

SEL to build students' social and emotional strengths and not simply address behavioral challenges.

Consider ways to help teachers and school leaders integrate SEL into other activities, such as academic instruction.



The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is a trusted source for knowledge about high-quality, evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL).

CASEL Reports Support for SEL as follows

From educators:

80% of educators believe emotional well-being is crucial for developing foundational literacies and communication skills.

From principals:

SEL is essential but want more training guidance and support for teachers and greater access to research-based strategies.

From young people:

Most current and recent HS grads think their schools could have done better with Social Emotional Learning.

From employers:

Six of the top 10 skills identified by the World Economic Forum involve social and emotional competence.

92% of surveyed executives say skills such as problem-solving and communicating clearly are equal to or more important than technical skills.



Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Competencies

Mikayla's Voice programming addresses all those in **red**.

SELF-AWARENESS

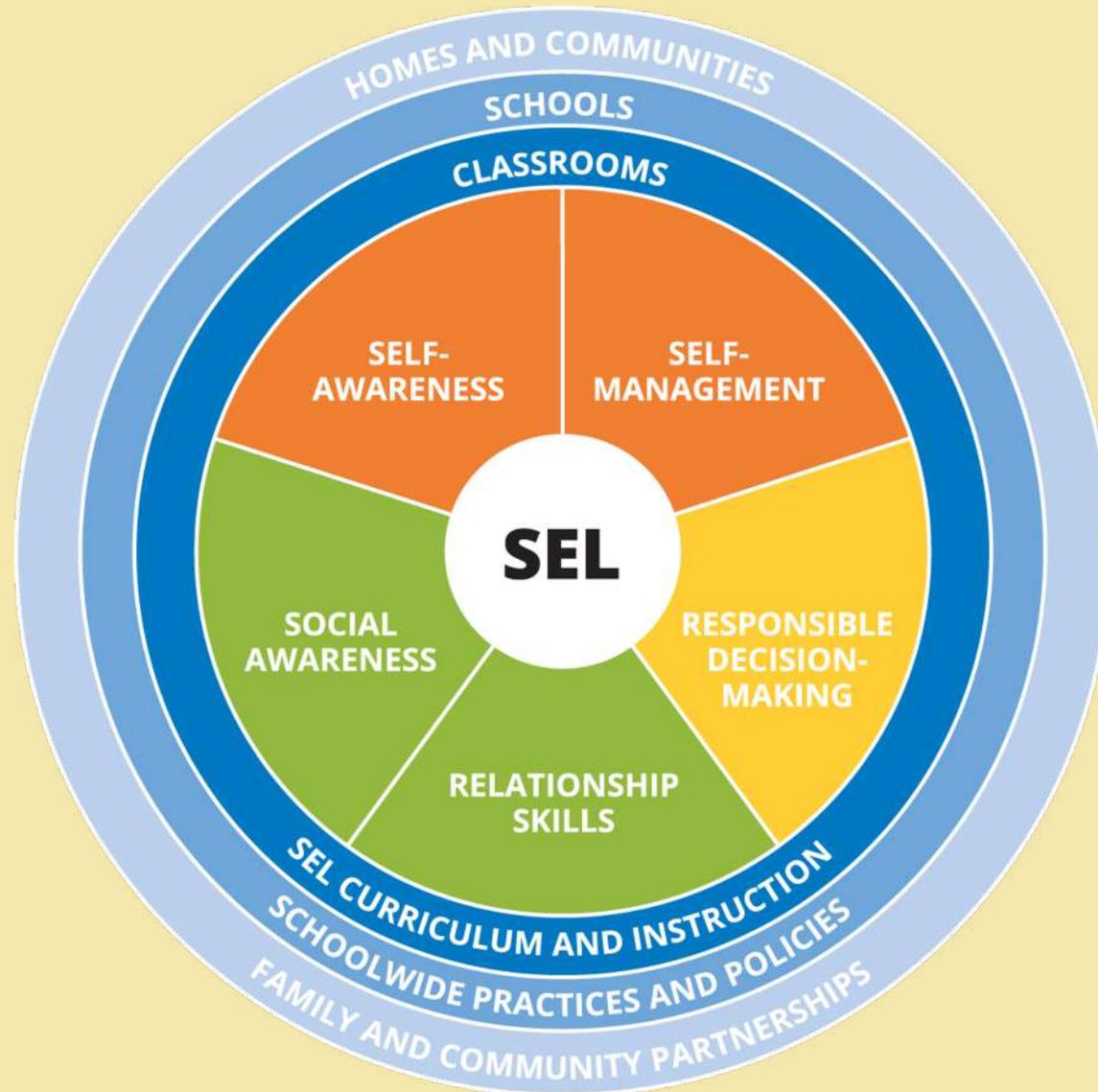
- Identifying emotions
- Self-perception/Identity
- Recognizing strengths
- Sense of self-confidence
- Self-efficacy

SOCIAL AWARENESS

- Perspective-taking
- Empathy
- Appreciating diversity
- Respect for others

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

- Communication
- Social engagement
- Building relationships
- Working cooperatively
- Resolving conflicts
- Helping/Seeking help



SELF-MANAGEMENT

- Impulse control
- Stress management
- Self-discipline
- Self-motivation
- Perseverance
- Goal-setting
- Organizational skills

RESPONSIBLE DECISION MAKING

- Identifying problems
- Analyzing situations
- Solving problems
- Evaluating
- Reflecting
- Ethical responsibility

SELF-AWARENESS

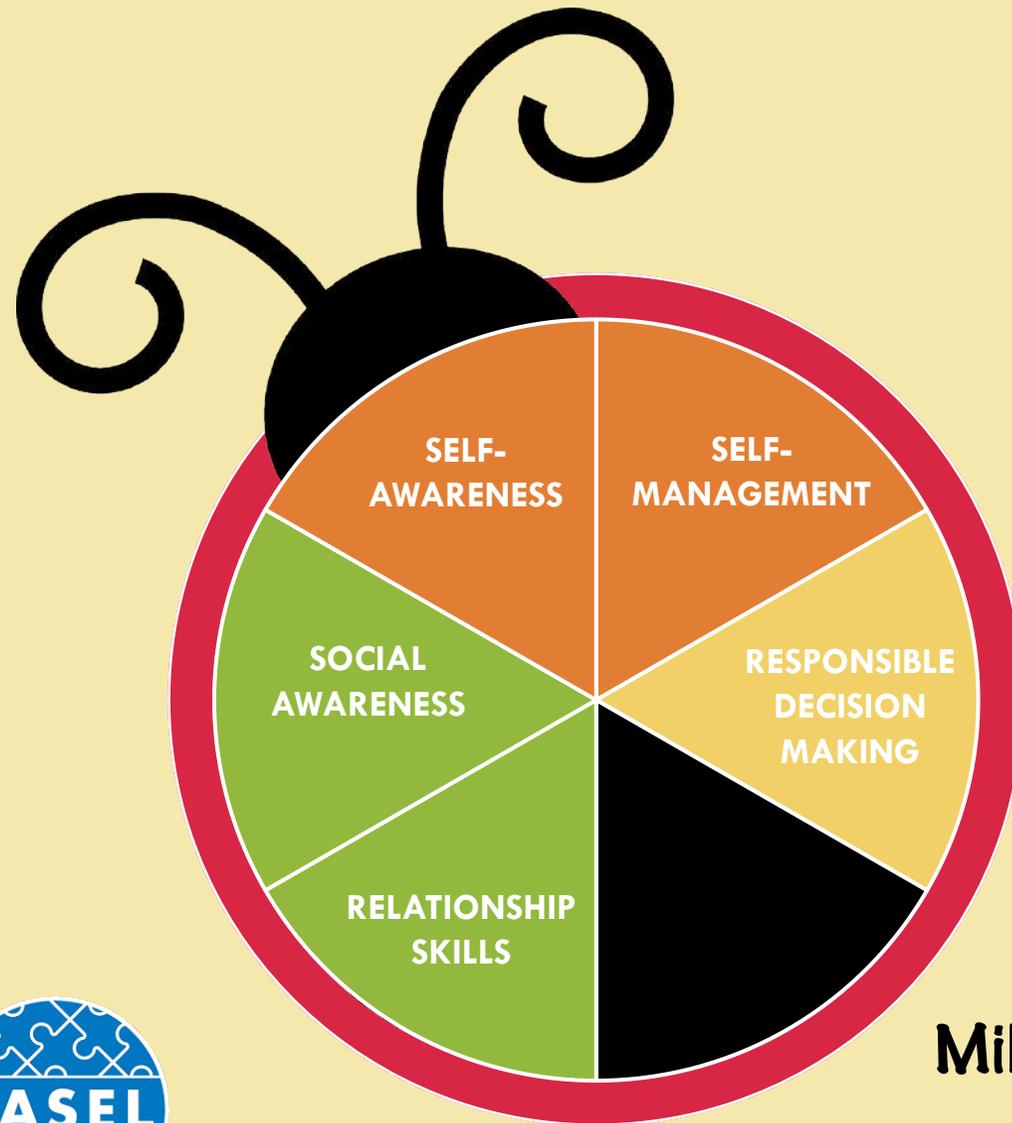
You are valued.
And can make a difference.
Be kind to yourself.
Your feelings are your feelings.

SOCIAL AWARENESS

We all have strengths and challenges.
We are all different and the same.
We all want to be included.
Be kind and respect others.

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

Ask honest, respectful questions.
To understand others.
Get to know someone different from yourself.
Make a new friend.



SELF-MANAGEMENT

Be Mikayla's Voice.
Louder. Stronger. Farther.
Teach inclusion, kindness, and friendship
Everyday. For everyone.

RESPONSIBLE DECISION MAKING

All children have a voice,
And a responsibility.
To make their school a kinder
friendlier place.





...because we all have a yellow spot.®

**Every child should feel valued and welcome in their school and community,
and understand that it's their responsibility to help others to feel the same.**