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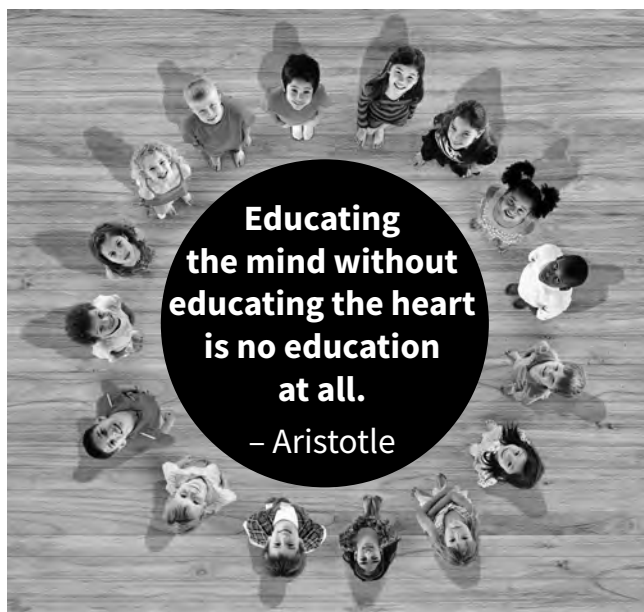
**See page 210 for information about
Downloadable Resources and Templates.**

Introduction

After writing *Behavior Interventions: Strategies for Educators, Counselors, and Parents*, the feedback from teachers and administrators made it clear that educators are hungry for and highly interested in strategies and techniques to prevent student behavior challenges. They also shared that they feel very overwhelmed by the time it takes to find, create, or organize the tools to do it. *Behavior Interventions Workbook: Your Roadmap for Creating a Positive Classroom Community* was designed to simplify the process by finding, creating, and organizing the tools for you. Ask and you shall receive!

In twenty-first-century classrooms, teachers are expected to learn curriculum, teach the standards, learn and master the ever-changing technology, manage schedules, behavior, student work, and grades, and make connections, get to know students personally, and build positive relationships. And this is the short list, my friends.

To be able to accomplish so many goals with excellence takes an enormous amount of organization and planning. I designed this workbook to help with just that—organizing and planning your first weeks of the year to establish a positive classroom community while also providing tools to support and nurture your community all year long. This workbook is full of activities and solutions that will aid you in supporting your students in their development of life skills, peer relations, conflict resolution, and self-regulation skills. You will also find many behavior problem-solving ideas and tools to help you prevent and address challenges as they arise throughout the year.



Purpose of this Book

Our main purpose as the adults who work in a school is to educate and care for the students who are entrusted to us. Many teachers have come to understand that we have to *connect* with students before we can *correct* students. As the familiar saying goes, for students to care how much we know, they have to know how much we care. This workbook will serve as your guide for how to set up and support a positive classroom community so you can get to the business of teaching content right away.

Before you dive into the how, I ask that you pause and consider your why. What drives you to spend most of your days with children or teenagers? What motivates you to do one of the most intense jobs on earth? I have identified certain principles that have guided my work with students who needed connection and caring more than anything else. I referred to it in Chapter 6 of *Behavior Interventions*, “Teaching with Heart—Five Principles for a Positive Classroom.” I hope you will revisit these principles as you move through your year with the students who land in your room; each student is in *your* room for a reason. After reading these, please consider your why in your own words. On the difficult days and in the difficult moments, your why can be the fuel that keeps you going.

In a positive classroom community, educators believe:

1. Every child is born with unique gifts to offer the world.
2. There are no bad kids—just young people trying to cope and communicate the best they know how.
3. All behavior is an attempt to communicate a need.
4. Connection before content. Building community and connections will prevent many common concerns.
5. Our students’ behavior is not our fault, but our response to it is our responsibility.

You may wonder why there is such a focus on building community and making connections in a workbook about behavior interventions? The answer is simple. *Building a sense of community and belonging in a classroom is the greatest prevention “strategy” a teacher can employ to avoid the most common behavior challenges.*

Of course, you will be teaching content and standards from the first week of school, but you can also include activities to help students feel *Connected, Capable, and Calm* in your setting. When we establish connections and a sense of belonging with and among our students, we create a sense of safety. When students feel safe or calm, they can take risks and are more open to learning new things.

Focusing on the 3 Cs in your first month will allow instructional minutes to be the focus of your daily practice for the remaining eight months.

After spending time building community by ensuring all students feel the 3 Cs, you may need ideas and tools for other aspects of a successful classroom. You will find tools for establishing rituals and routines to help your class run smoothly, applying management ideas for typical classroom disruptions, teaching mindset and goal setting, and implementing behavior support strategies for individuals or groups. The next section explains how these tools are organized so you can easily locate what best fits your needs.

How to Use this Book

The first step to a successful year is creating a classroom where students want to be.

In the *Journal of Educational Issues*, research about preparing students for adulthood notes, “Education, though constantly evolving, has one primary goal: to prepare students to be independent, responsible members of society. Though standards and curriculum change over time, one thing that remains constant is the necessity for life skills to aid students in their navigation through adulthood.”¹

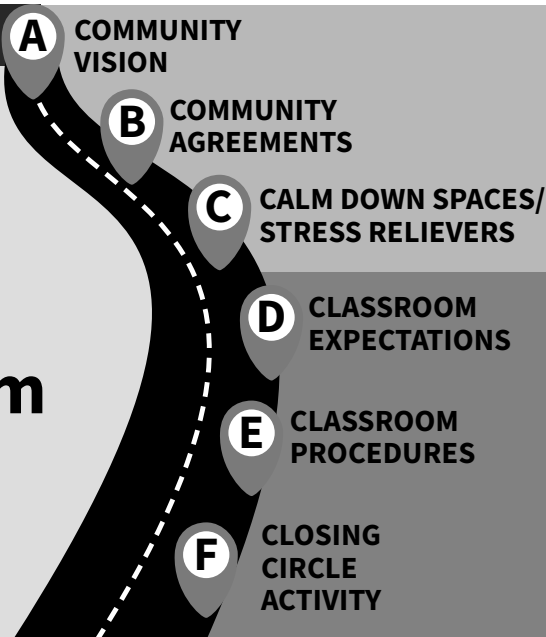
Chapters 1 through 4 are full of activities for the first four to six weeks of school and are designed to create an environment where students feel the 3 Cs: Connected, Capable, and Calm right from the start. Many of the activities are also aligned with life skills that students will need to be successful in countless situations throughout their lives, not just as students in K–12 classrooms. The remaining Chapters, 5 through 8, are divided into specific collections of tools to meet specific classroom and student needs to sustain your positive community and address behavior challenges if needed. At the end of each chapter, you will find a planning guide, or chapter roadmap, to help you select the strategies or ideas that you want to implement. Many choices are offered, but I suggest only choosing the few that fit your needs as your year progresses.

Each year and each group of students is different. Your students will dictate what your community needs are; your final destinations and this roadmap will help you respond to those needs in a structured, deliberate way. My hope is that my thirty-year quest to find and develop activities that allowed me to successfully teach academics while also compassionately teaching humans helps you do the same.

NOTE: If you are in search of a comprehensive SEL program for school-wide implementation, an amazing resource is <https://pg.casel.org/review-programs/>, which has an extensive review of more than eighty options.



First Steps in Co-Creating a Positive Classroom Community



If children feel safe, they can take risks, ask questions, make mistakes, learn to trust, share their feelings, and grow. – Alfie Kohn

Begin With the End in Mind

I have a few questions that I love to ask educators at the beginning of each new year. I bet you’ve heard similar prompts in your pre-planning faculty meetings or at a district-wide back-to-school event. I typically ask them to write their responses on sticky notes or respond to a poll so everyone can share their ideas.

**What is the impact you hope to make on the students you teach this year?
What is the impact you hope to have on their lives?**

If you had to condense your goals for your students this year into three sentences, what would they be? Would you say: *I want my students to grow and learn. I want my students to become responsible and independent thinkers or gain self-confidence in math. I want my students to feel loved.* Every teacher has hopes and dreams for the year—goals that get you going in the morning and push you to keep working hard for students even when you are past the point of exhaustion.



Take a moment to think about three big goals or desired outcomes. If you utilize this book as your roadmap, these three goals can serve as your **3 Final Destinations**. Where do you hope to take your students this year and what do you want them to have when you get to the end?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Knowing where you want your students to be in the end provides you with a mission. The 3 Final Destinations will help guide you in selecting activities from this book that will align with your students' needs, your teaching style, and the goals you hope to achieve.

At the end of this chapter, you will find a planning page: a checklist of the ideas from this chapter to help you choose and organize which activities will fit into your daily/weekly plans. The following pages are full of *options*—nobody can or should do all of them! Because schools are full of amazing people with different teaching styles, teacher personalities, and student needs, you will find a variety of activities from which to choose.

10 Student Skills for Success

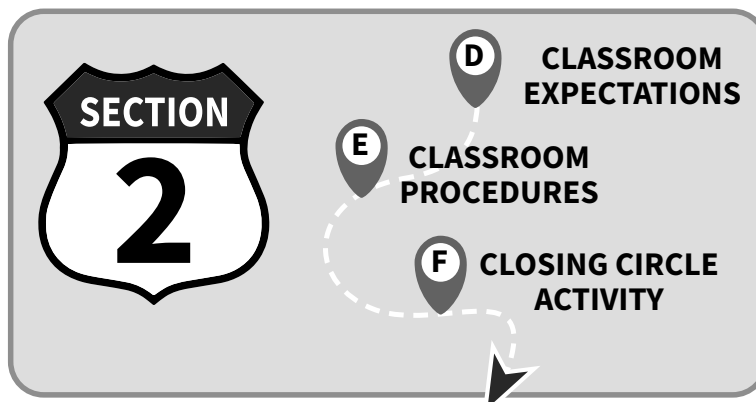
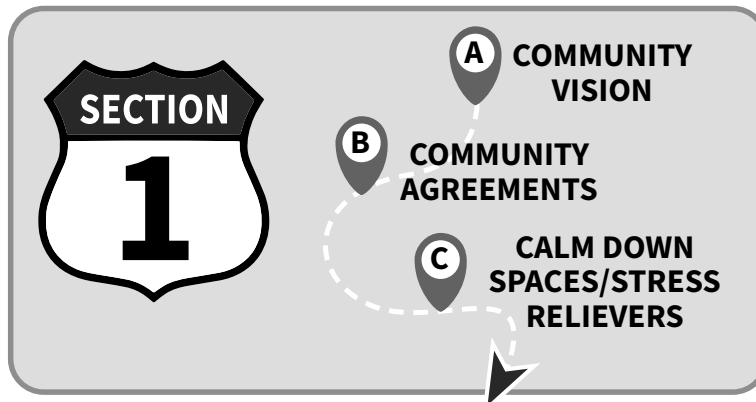
The following skills are not meant to be taught in place of standards; they are necessary skills students must possess to learn and engage successfully with your content and standards. We all know that students need specific personal and interpersonal skills to help them navigate not only the classroom but also to find success in the workplace and in their personal relationships. Teaching the following skills identified in the five core competencies of CASEL—Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning—during the first month of school and throughout the year will help you create a learning environment where you are able to focus on teaching and learning instead of attending to behavior.

1. Respect for self and others
2. Recognizing strengths
3. Self-confidence
4. Identifying emotions
5. Stress management
6. Goal setting
7. Communication
8. Relationship building
9. Teamwork
10. Identifying and solving problems

Although there are more skills included in the CASEL 5, these ten are teaching priorities in the first weeks of school to establish the positive classroom community that we all strive to create. There will be many opportunities throughout the school year to teach these critical skills, not only during the first four weeks. They are embedded in multiple activities throughout this book to help promote and sustain your classroom community. Your students will benefit from your consistent coaching, including reminders and prompts, all year so new skills learned can become their daily practice.

NOTE: Unless you dedicate the time it takes to teach these skills early to prevent behavior issues, students will take your time later by presenting behavior issues.

First 2 Weeks: Establishing Expectations—the How To's



COMMUNITY VISION

Our Classroom Vision

Before establishing your Community Agreement, consider developing a Classroom Vision. A classroom vision includes the hopes and dreams of all students and teachers for the school year—the final destination. It allows all voices to be heard and for the teacher to get a sense of each student's personal goals.

You can solicit responses from students in one of several ways to allow them to share their vision for your class this year. After all students have submitted their hopes and dreams on any of the following templates, record the most common on chart paper, a bulletin board, or post in your online course as “Our Classroom Dreams Big,” “From Vision to Victory!” or “#Hopes&Dreams for _____ (year).”

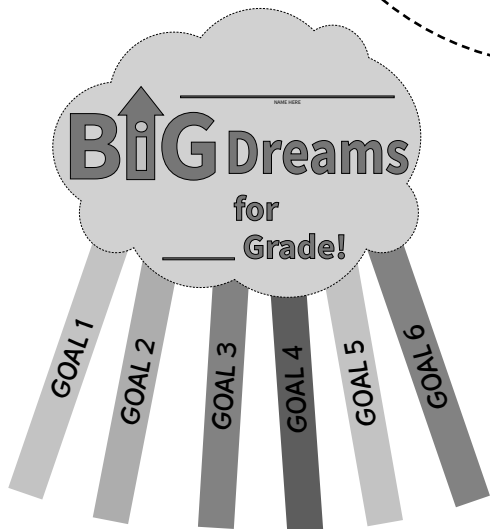
Options 1–3 for Elementary

Options 4–5 for Secondary

OPTION 1

Big Dreams

Please write your name on the cloud.
Use the strips to share your big dreams for our classroom this year!



Teacher Directions:

Give students a blank cloud template. Ask students to write 3 to 5 hopes and dreams for your class this year on colorful strips, and then they will glue them to their cloud.

On the cloud, students may write “I will” statements to establish personal commitments they will make to help their dreams come true.

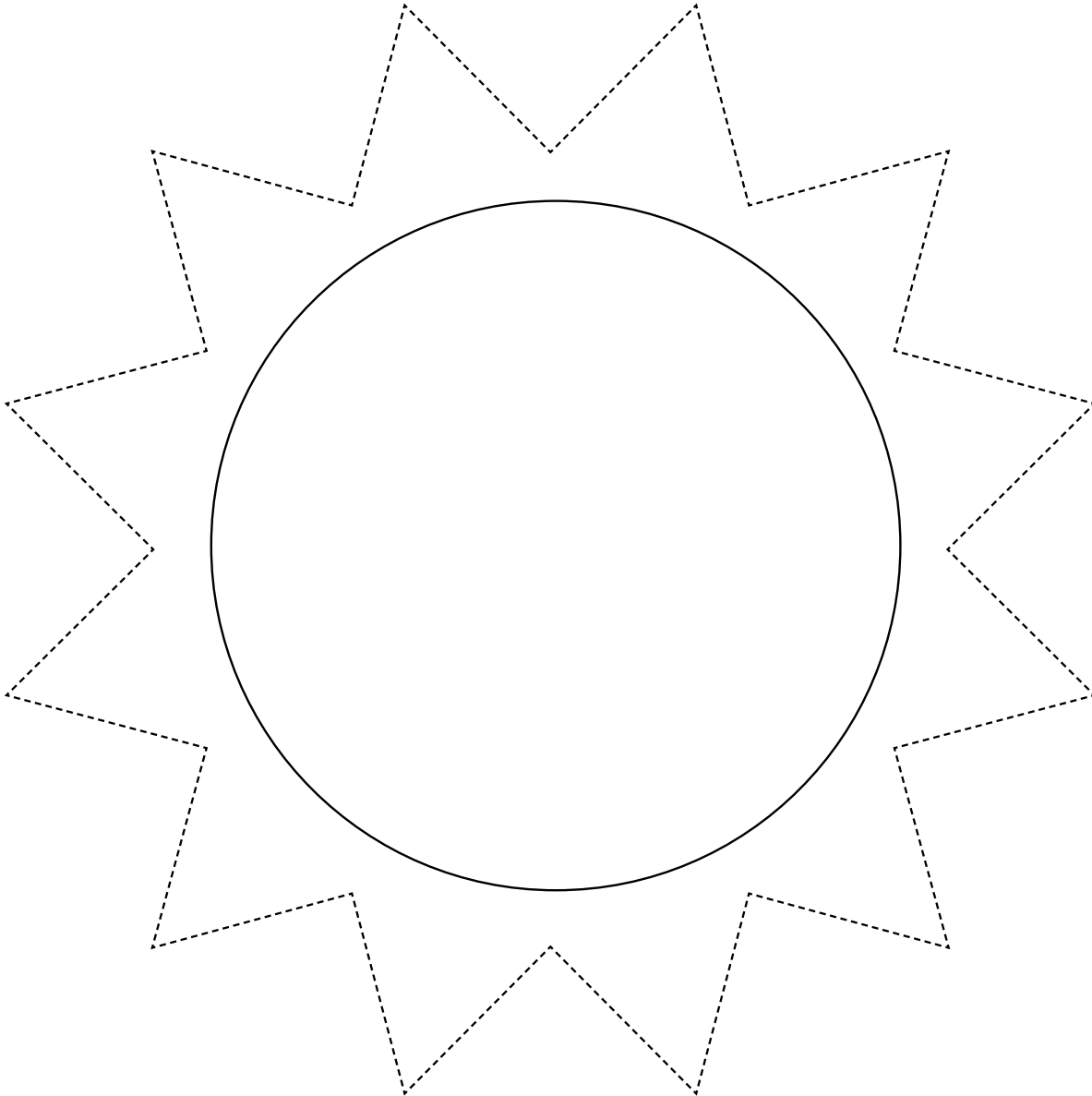
OPTION 1: Big Dreams

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OPTION 2

This Year Is So Bright

Please write your name on the sun.
Use the sunbeams to share your hopes and dreams for our classroom this year.

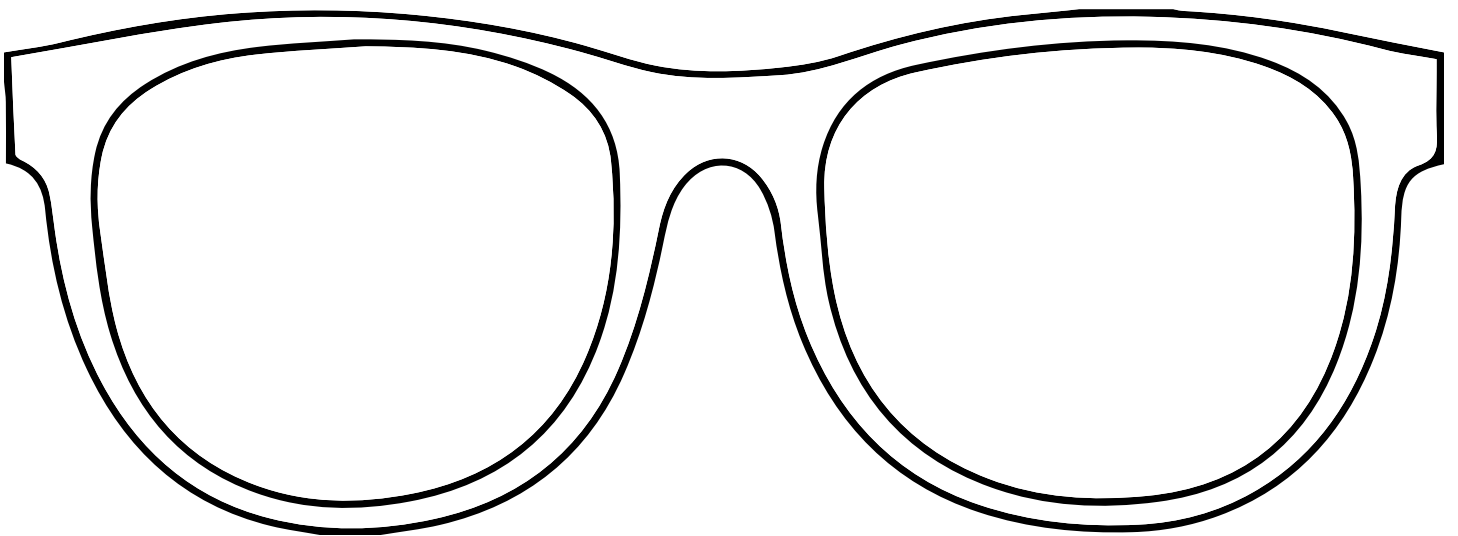
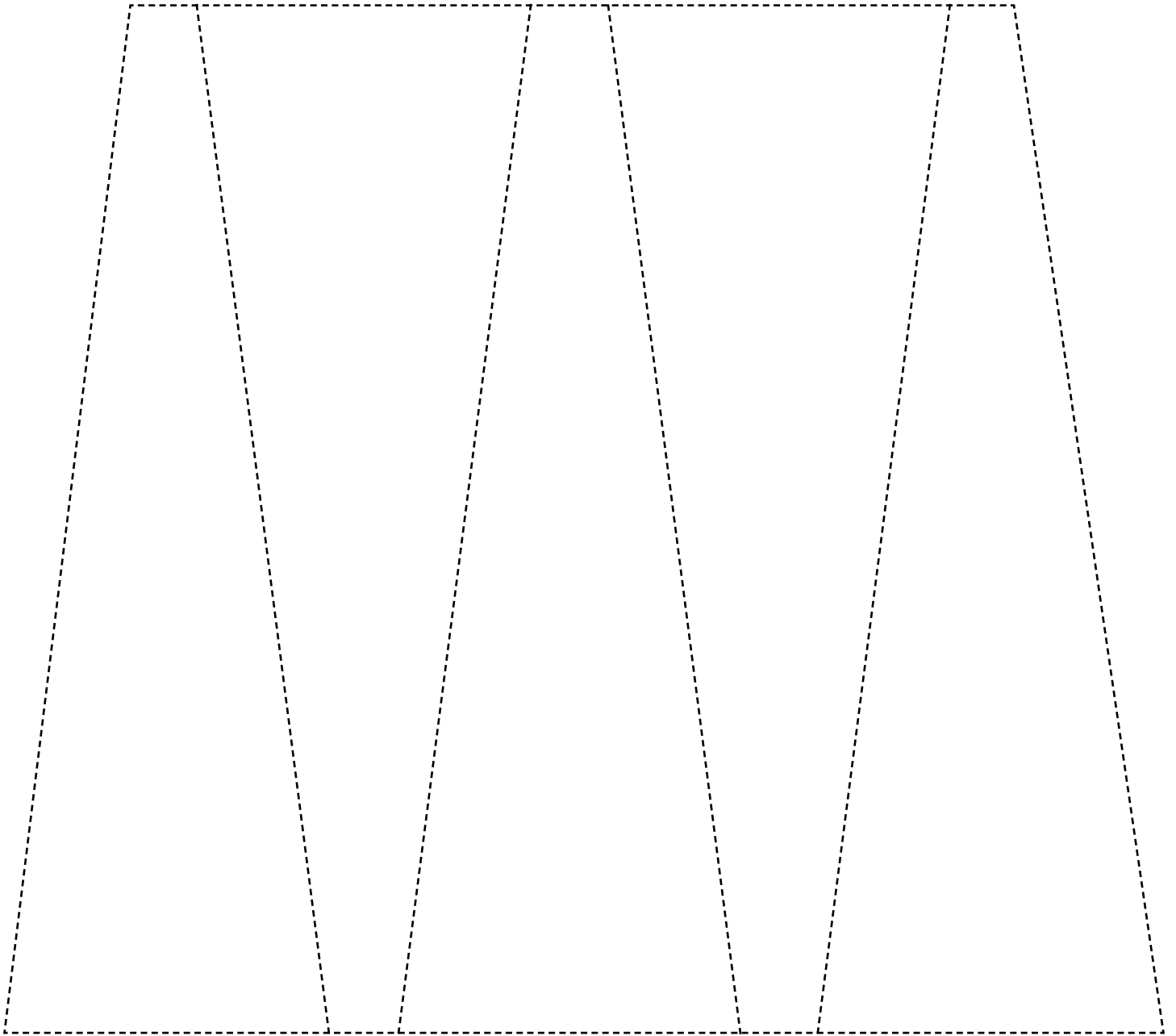


Teacher Directions:

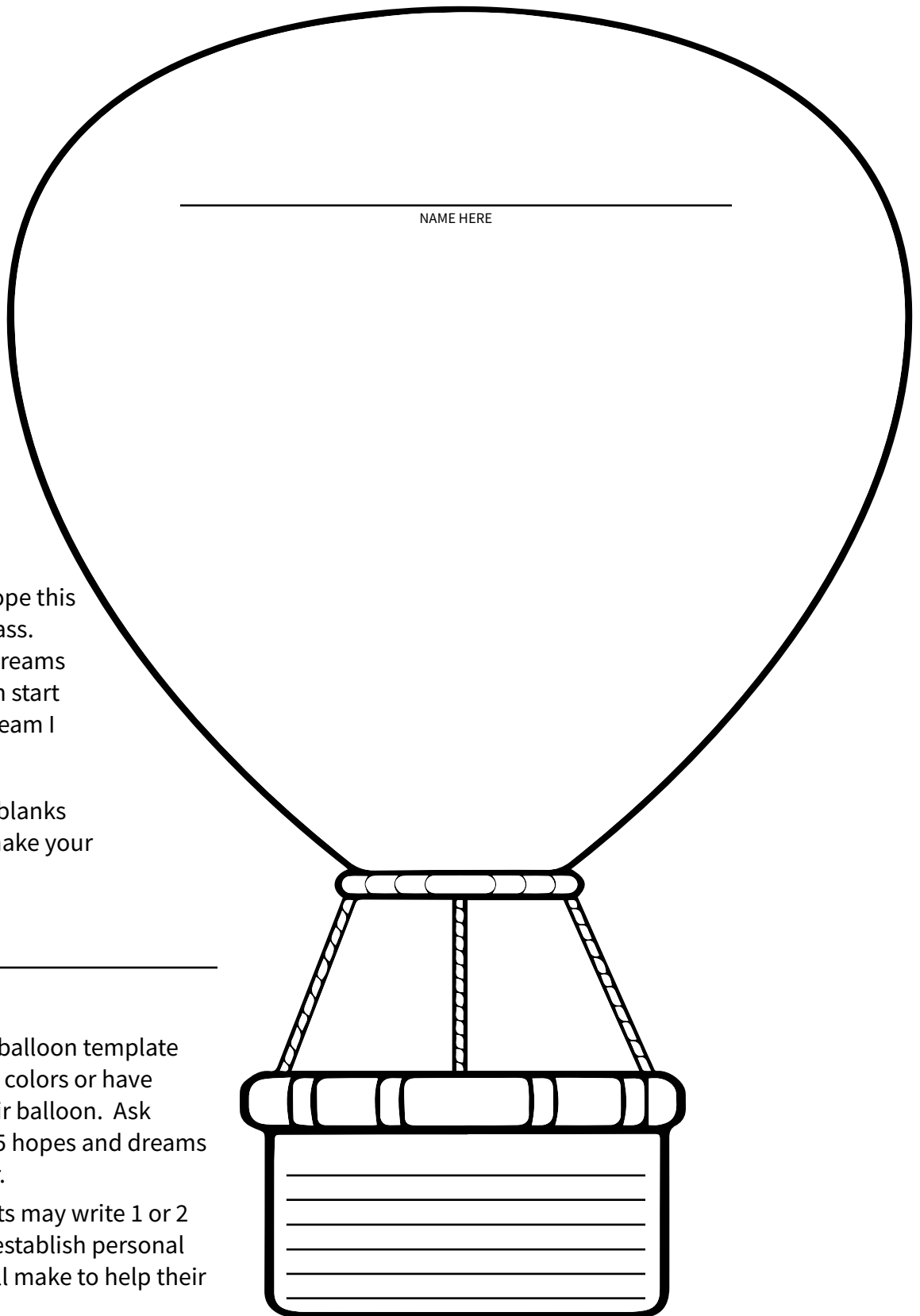
Give students a blank sun template. Ask students to write 3 to 5 hopes and dreams for your class this year on the sunburst strips. Students should cut out the strips and glue them to their sun. Post on your bulletin board or hang in a Hopes and Dreams Gallery.

Use the sunglasses to embellish your bulletin board, or print and write class goals on the sunglasses.

OPTION 2: This Year Is So Bright



The Sky is the Limit



Please put your name on your balloon.

Think about what you hope this year will be like in our class. Share 3 to 5 hopes and dreams on your balloon. You can start with, "I hope..." or "A dream I have for this year is..."

On the basket, fill in the blanks for what you will do to make your dreams come true!
I will _____.

Teacher Directions:

Give students a blank balloon template using several different colors or have students decorate their balloon. Ask students to write 3 to 5 hopes and dreams for your class this year.

On the basket, students may write 1 or 2 "I will" statements to establish personal commitments they will make to help their dreams come true.

Our Vision Board

Teacher Directions:

Pass out one copy of the #VisionBoard Activity Sheet to each student. Display their responses on a bulletin board or central location titled “#We’reTrending” or “#bestyearever.”

#VisionBoard Activity

Please fill in each box with your response.

#Name: _____

#MyFaves

Artist or Band: _____

Song: _____

TV Series: _____

Restaurant: _____

Sweet Treat: _____

Thing to Do: _____

Place to Be: _____

#MyCrew

These people are important to me.

#BigDreams

Write 3 personal hopes or dreams for your life.

#SchoolGoals

Share 1 or 2 goals for this school year.

#Let'sGo

If you could set up a field trip for our whole grade this year, where would we go?

OPTION 5

My Perspective

Think about your responses to the following questions.
Once you have answered them, write your answers on the cell phone template.

1. What do you hope to accomplish in this class?
2. Share 3 words you would use to describe the most successful class you've experienced.
3. Share 3 things you need from classmates to have a successful learning experience.
4. I hope my teacher will _____.

Teacher Directions:

Materials: My Perspective form for students, Chart Paper, Markers

- Pass out My Perspective form and ask students to respond individually.
- Once they are finished, form groups of 4-6 based on favorite type of candy (Skittles®, Sour Patch®, M&Ms®, Hot Tamales®, Reese's®, Starburst®).
- Ask them to select a recorder and highlight up to 3 responses for each question that represent their candy group.
- Each group will share, and the class will vote on top answers for each class to create your Classroom Vision Board.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Keys to a Successful Year

Bulletin Board, Poster, or Document in Online Classroom

- Allow students to write directly on the Classroom Vision Board or have them write on paper and staple to it so all students' ideas are represented somewhere in the responses.
- Use the Key Template (next page) to create a cohesive theme.

Statements to choose from:

A Successful Classroom Looks Like:

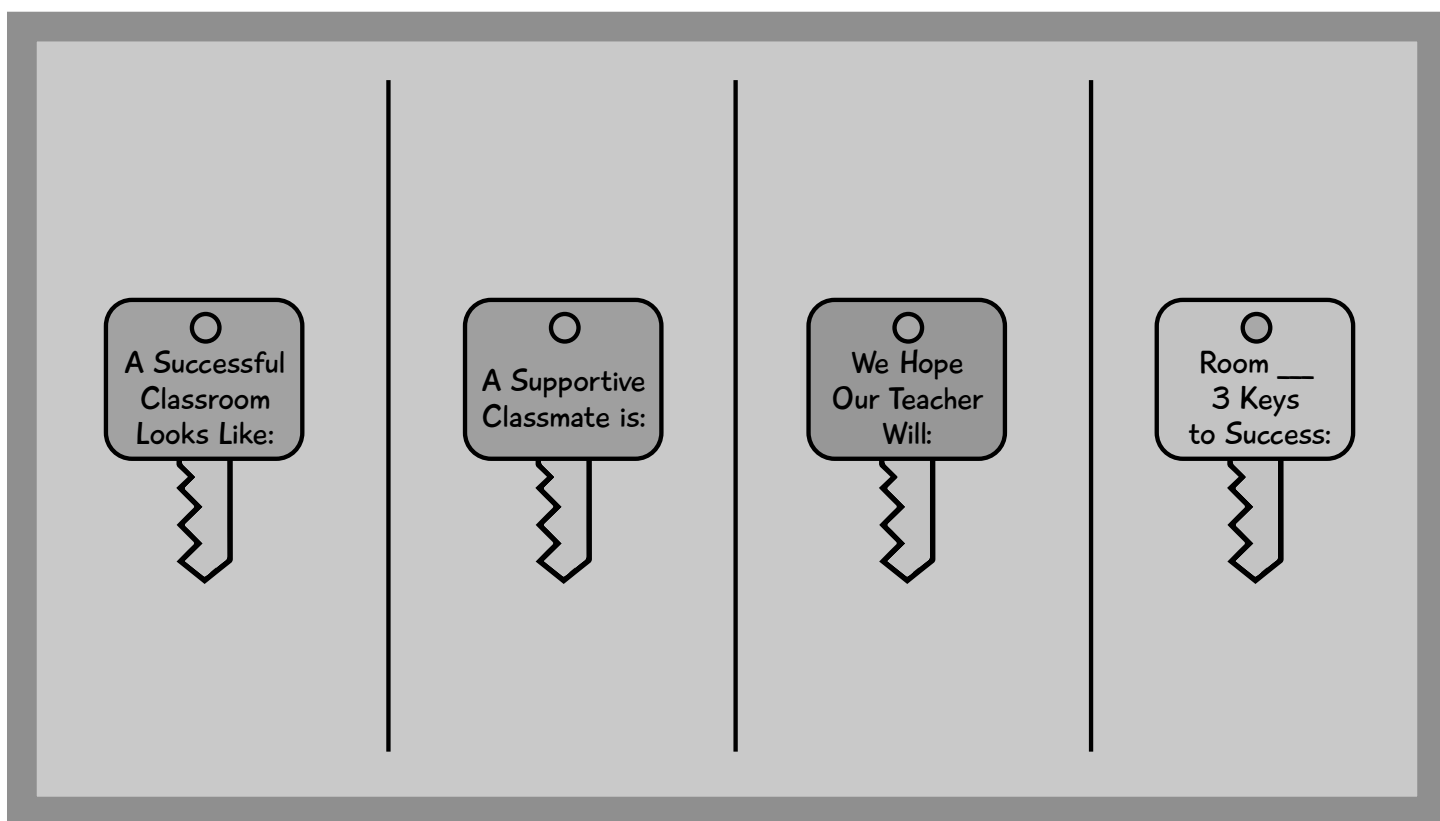
A Supportive Classmate is:

We Hope Our Teacher Will:

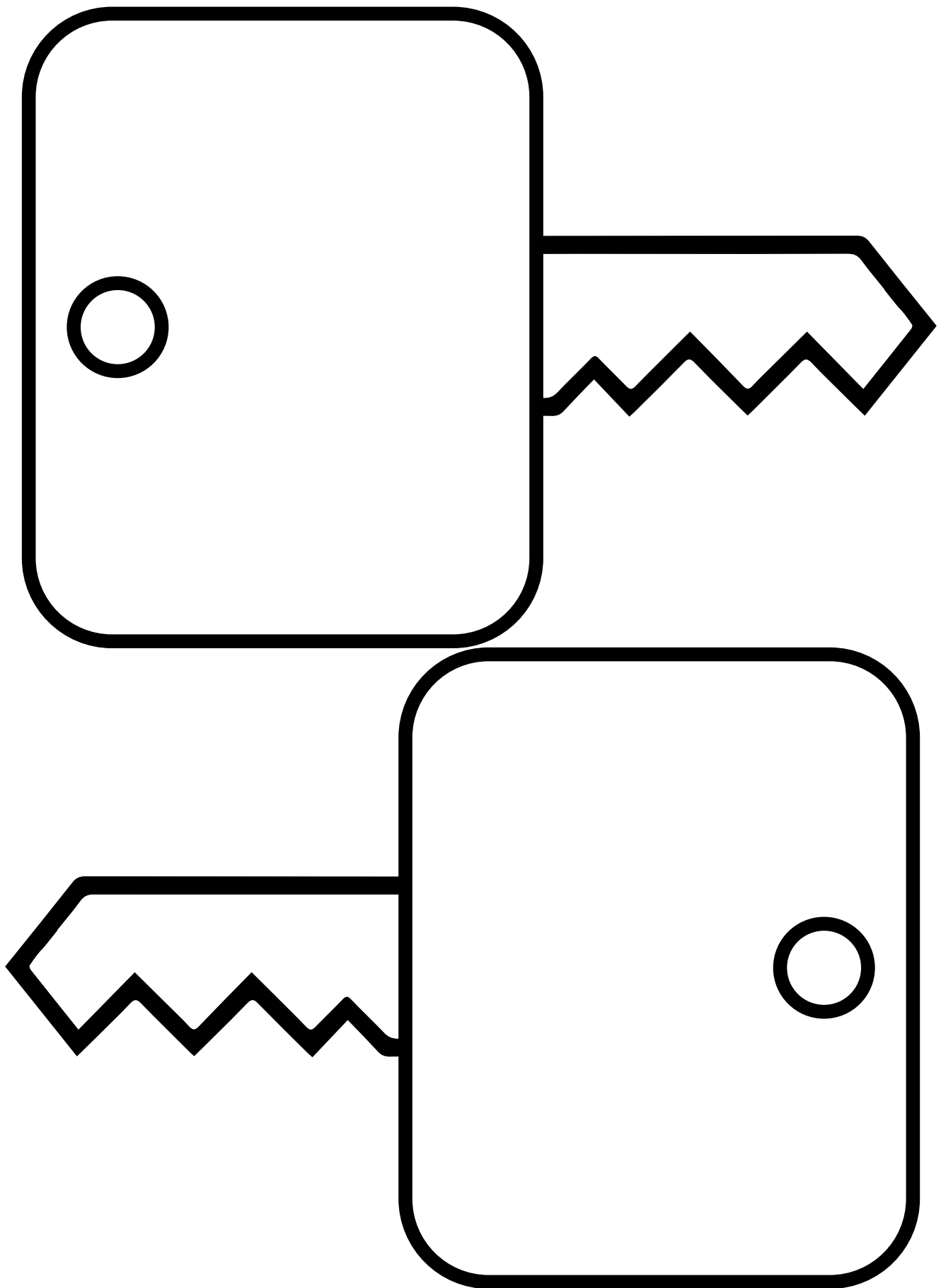
Room ___ 3 Keys to Success:

Teacher Directions:

Allow students to write their name and a response to one of the four statements on a Key Template. Use as many copies of the template as needed and then post in a central location as the “Keys to a Successful Year.”



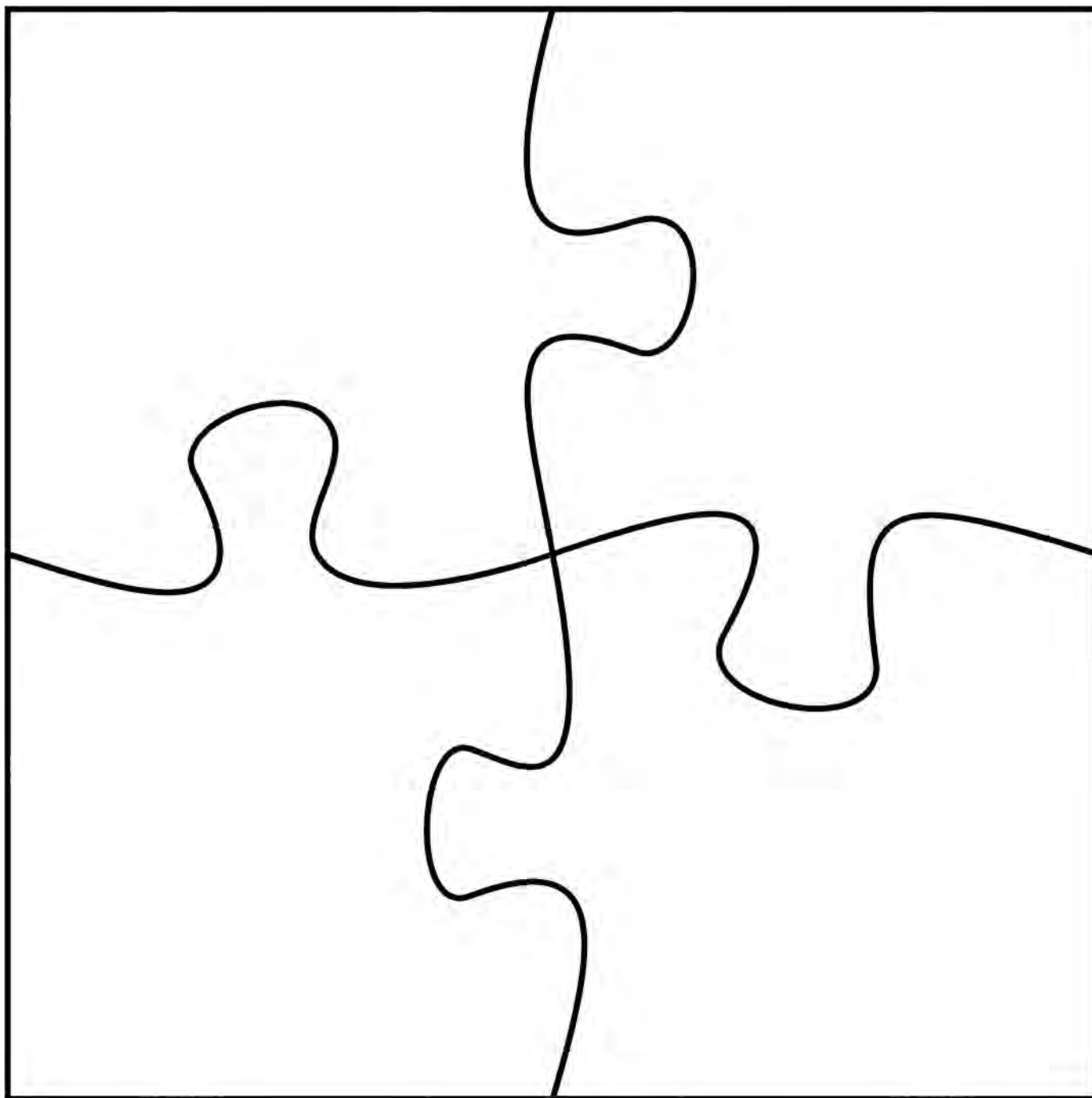
BULLETIN BOARD IDEA # 1: Keys to a Successful Year



In This Class, We All FIT IN!

Teacher Directions:

- Assign or have students choose a puzzle piece below. Ask each student to write their name and one or two goals for the year on it then cut it out.
- Use as many copies of the template as needed.
- Encourage students to be creative and decorative.
- Post in a central location as one large puzzle.



This is a first-week activity as you are establishing how everyone will treat one another so everyone feels welcome, safe, and included. These three feelings are critical to maintaining a safe, positive learning environment. I suggest developing your Community Agreement *with* your students. If you teach multiple classes, all classes will have input, but only one final document will be posted.

Teacher Directions:

Using chart paper or bulletin board paper:

1. First, share your non-negotiables about respect. These are 2 to 3 things that are very important to *you*, the teacher, about how students will speak to you and one another. Be very clear and teach them what it *looks* and *sounds* like. Examples:
 - I will not yell, and students will not yell.
 - We will learn other ways to ask someone to leave us alone or stop talking.
 - “Shut up” is not allowed.
2. Next, teach coping skills or acceptable strategies to calm down. You may want to ask a few questions to introduce the idea of self-regulation. I refer to these ideas as Coping Strategies, Cool Downs, or Stress Relievers. There are also many videos on YouTube and books to read to younger students to introduce the concept of self-regulation. I typically have a 15–20 minute discussion with students beginning with these questions:
 - Have you ever felt angry at someone you love? (Teacher responds: Yes, me too.)
 - Have you ever felt so frustrated with something you couldn't do, you quit trying? (Yes, me too.)
 - Have you ever felt so sad about something, you thought you were never going to get over it? (Yes, me too.)

It is okay for you to feel your feelings. It is not okay to disrupt teaching and learning.

Explain that humans of all ages experience these feelings, and sometimes they are hard to manage. Ask students to share different ways they work through hard emotions or calm themselves down. If any of their strategies will work for your setting, include them in this section of the poster. You may also offer three to five alternatives to yelling, destroying property, walking out, etc., for your classroom.

NOTE: The Calm Down Space will be explained, modeled, and practiced during weeks 1 and 2 for ALL grade levels and throughout the first month for elementary grade levels.

3. Finally, for part three, the teacher asks the students, “How do you want me to treat you? What does respect look and sound like to you?” The teacher can either write responses as students share, or have the students talk in small groups and respond on sticky notes. Once all responses have been shared on the board, group the similar responses, and choose four to five that represent the consensus.

Examples:

- We will use calm voices.
- We will hold each other accountable respectfully.
- We will be inclusive.
- We will apologize when we mess up.
- We will control our emotions or ask for help.
- We are a team in this classroom.

Community Agreement

Room _____

Teacher Expectations (non-negotiables)

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

2. Classroom Calm Downs

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

3. Class Agreements—In Room _____ we will:

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

peace.

it does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. It means to be in the midst of those things and still be calm in your heart.

(unknown)