



Eileen Banks, Assistant Principal

Amanda Draghi, School Climate Coordinator

Spring 2026

Introduction

Students diagnosed with Learning Disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorders and Speech and Language Impairments sometimes experience social difficulties such as:

- **Conversing with peers and teachers.**
- **Asking appropriate questions for conversation and information seeking purposes**
- **Collaborating appropriately during group projects and problem solving social and cooperative dilemmas.**

According to a study by White, Koenig & Scahill, difficulties related to social skills “contribute to academic and occupational underachievement and later mood and anxiety problems.” (White, Koenig and Scahill, *Getting to the Core of Autism*, 2008) Furthermore, a report published February 4, 2012 in the peer-reviewed journal *Child Development*, found that students who took part in social and emotional learning, or SEL, programs improved in grades and standardized-test scores by 11 percentile points compared with non-participating students.

Following the success of the program in 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018–2019, 2020-2021, 2022-2023, 2023-2024 and most recently 2024-2025 including positive and constructive feedback from families, the groups reflected on what aspects of the program were successful and which would benefit from modification. Since 2019, families and staff have requested the program return to meet the needs of our students. Students who were previously in the program have also inquired about its return. This past school year students running from 1st grade to 5th grade have asked when PALS will start again. Parents will still be updated using the modified template from 2019. A progress report will be sent home three times a year after the thematic cycle is completed. The program will continue to be run for two hours twice a week to better meet the needs of our students. This will allow extra time for more in-depth

lessons and create additional time where students can be socializing with their peers. Through various Speech-Language Development articles; for example: *Facilitating children's language development through play*; the parallel of play and language development has resulted in cognitive growth (Irwin, 2009). Grouping will be similar to previous years where students will be placed in grade bands (k/1, $\frac{2}{3}$, $\frac{4}{5}$) with no more than 12 students per group. This will allow for students the opportunity to interact with everyone in the group.

It was decided that the students should be grouped by need, as identified by the child's classroom teachers and administration. It was also recommended that activities follow along a theme or focus, and therefore a flexible curricular calendar was created to address this need. Flexible and optional lesson plans were also created to assist teachers in planning. These lesson plans will be available to teachers throughout the program.

Target Population

The social skills instructor will reach out to special education and general education instructors in grades K-5 to identify 12-24 students per grade who might benefit from targeted social skills instruction. This would result in 3-6 groups of 12 students per every instructor.

Goals and Target Skills

1. Maintaining a conversation with peers and adults by sharing information and asking questions.
2. Playing cooperatively with others by sharing and taking turns during free play and structured games.
3. Identifying others' emotions and understanding what makes others feel certain emotions through role-play and social stories.
4. Initiating interactions with others during play and academic times by modeling and reinforcing appropriate initiations.
5. Maintaining appropriate proximity to peers and adults through explicit instruction of personal space and targeted movement activities.

Assessment

Students will be formally assessed at the beginning, middle and end of the program to monitor for progress and to ensure that the correct skills are being targeted. Ongoing assessment will take place informally each week. The students will be assessed using a grid that rates them on 6 components of socialization. The grid's targets were modified from the TRIAD Social Skills Assessment from Vanderbilt University Kennedy Center to fit the needs of the group and the target population. There are two versions of the rubrics being used, one for students kindergarten to 3rd grade and the second for students in 4th and 5th grade. The weekly lessons are also arranged for students kindergarten to 3rd grade and the second for students in 4th and 5th grade.

[Assessment Rubric K-3](#), [Assessment Rubric 4-5](#)

Sample Lesson K-3

Curricular Focus: The Art of Turn Taking

Target: Turn Taking and Initiating Interactions

2:10 Greeting and [Social Story](#)

- Social Story- Greetings and Getting a peers attention

Target: Initiating interactions with peers.

- [Greetings](#)
 - o Show the Video (video modeling Introductions)
 - o Split students into pairs or groups and practice saying "hi, how are you" and answering the question.
- Getting a peers attention (video: peers attention)
 - o Show the Video
 - o Show the pictures with the different ways to get a peers attention.
 - Tap their shoulder gently.
 - Say their name.
 - Say "excuse me."
 - o Split students into group and practice getting each other's attention.

2:30 Arts and Crafts Activity of your choice!

- Within the activity, focus on students requesting items. Try to limit the number of items, so that students are forced to request from one another. (in the folder I have three different level of actives. You can use one of those or one of your own too)
- Pick one activity for day 1 and another activity for day 2

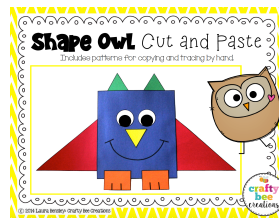
3:00 Snack

3:20 Free Play

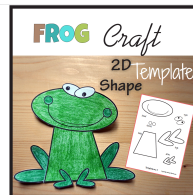
4:00 Goodbye and Dismissal

Actives provided in folder:

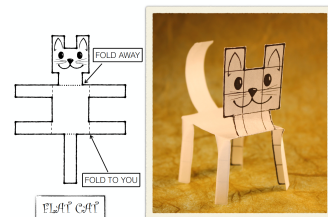
- [Easy- requires more prep work](#)



- [Middle- they cut and paste](#)



- [More challenging – they do it all, different options](#)



Sample Lesson 4-5

Curricular Focus: Executive Functioning

(Self Control, Attention, Working Memory)

Target: Self Control

2:10 [Greeting](#)

- Please display the PowerPoint slide attached with this weeks greeting. (Each week will have a different slide or question- if you would prefer a paper copy please let me know for next week)

- Greetings
 - o Show the question (*Greet each other with, "_____, what's the news?" Student answers with, "This weekend, I ____."*)
 - o Split students into pairs or triads, have students take turns asking each other and then share out with the entire class.

2:30 Self Control

- Pick any of these two- three activities from the task cards (next week you will select the other options)
 - o [Freeze](#)
 - o [Dance it Out](#)
 - o [Guard Duty](#)
 - o [Stoplight!](#)
 - o [Try not to laugh](#)
 - o [Act it Out](#)

3:00 Snack

3:15 Free Play/Craft

3:55 [Share](#)

- Display the share image to students and have students share out- this is a way for students to get to know each other, there will be a different share activity each week (*What is something that freaks you out? Why?*)

4:10 Goodbye and Dismissal

[Extra Activity](#) - There will always be an activity slide too- this is optional that can be done after the task cards or before the share (it is always great to have something else incase the lesson doesn't last as long as expected)

Schedule

Time: 2:10 - 4:10

January: Teachers receive form requesting student recommendations

February: Parent Permission Slips are Sent Home.

The delay is having all permission slips in and badges to be issued. This will meet the need when it comes to assessments throughout the program.

February: Staff Training Session

Pals Curriculum Overview 2026

Cycle/ Assessment	Assessment	Cycle 1	Assessment	Cycle 2	Assessment	Cycle 3	Assessment
Title	<i>Pre Assessment</i>	<i>The Art of Turn Taking</i>	<i>Mid Assessment</i>	<i>Listen to the Music</i>	<i>Mid Assessment</i>	<i>Follow the Rules</i>	<i>Final Assessment</i>
Date(s)	Week of March 10th	March 17th- March 31st Maintaining Interactions and Social Language Development	Week of March 14th	April 14th- May 5th Affective Understanding/ Perspective Taking and Body Awareness.	Week of May 12th	May 19th- June 2nd Maintaining Interactions and Social Language Development	Week of June 9th
Emotional Regulation and Calming Down- As Needed							

Weekly Breakdown of Pals Curriculum

Each cycle lasts for a minimum of 3 weeks

Weekly Breakdown of Pals Curriculum

Grades	K-3	4-5
Week 1 March 10, March 11	Pre Assessment/ Routines	Pre Assessment/ Routines
Week 2 March 17, March 18	Cycle 1	Cycle 1
Week 3 March 24, March 25	Cycle 1	Cycle 1
Week 4 March 31	Cycle 1	

Week 5 April 14, April 15	Mid Assessment	Mid Assessment
Week 6 April 21, April 22	Cycle 2	Cycle 2
Week 7 April 28, April 29	Cycle 2	Cycle 2
Week 8 May 5, May 6	Cycle 2	Cycle 2
Week 9 May 12, May 13	Mid Assessment	Mid Assessment
Week 10 May 19, May 20	Cycle 3	Cycle 3
Week 11 May 26, May 27	Cycle 3	Cycle 3
Week 12 June 2, June 3	Cycle 3	Cycle 3
Week 13 June 9, June 10	Post Assessment	Post Assessment

Hour Totals

Teachers

	Hours Per Week Per Grade	Number of Teachers Per Grade	Number of Weeks	Total Hours Per Grade Times Teachers
Kindergarten/ Grade 1	4	1	13	52
Grade 2/ Grade 3	4	1	13	52

Grade 4/ Grade 5	4	1	13	52
Preparation and Planning Hours	N/A	1	13	13
Lead Teacher	6	1	13	78
Supervisor	6	1	13	78
Total	24	6	78	325

Paraprofessionals

	Hours Per Week Per Grade	Number of Paraprofessionals Per Grade	Number of Weeks	Total Hours Per Grade Times Instructors
Kindergarten/ Grade 1	4	1	13	52
Grade 2/ Grade 3	4	1	13	52
Grade 4/ Grade 5	4	1	13	52
Preparation and Planning Hours	N/A			
Totals	12	3	39	156