



Roadmaps for Kernels: Overview



What are Roadmaps for Kernels?

Roadmaps for Kernels offers ideas for getting started. Each Roadmap addresses a common classroom situation and identifies a relevant set of Kernels that first target more basic skills followed by more complex skills, supporting you and your students' comfort and capacity over time. The Roadmaps are designed for these classroom situations:

- Kernels for Difficult Moments
- Kernels for Talking About Emotions
- Kernels for Building Relationships
- Kernels for Initiating Communication
- Kernels for Creating a Positive Community

How do I use the Roadmaps for Kernels?

Each Roadmap presents a series of Kernels drawn from the different Power skill areas along with a brief description of each Kernel. You can use the Roadmap exactly as is and follow the sequence of Kernels or you can use the Kernels listed on the roadmap in a different order depending on your students' strengths and needs. Remember: the Roadmaps for Kernels suggest one way to start, but the possibilities are endless!

How were the Roadmaps for Kernels created?

The EASEL Lab created the roadmaps by combining the knowledge and experiences of teachers who have used Kernels in their classrooms with research on developing social and emotional skills. In focus groups with teachers in the 2023-2024 Pilot of SEL Kernels in Ukraine, teachers shared how they used Kernels to address common classroom challenges. Their ideas are reflected in many of the Roadmaps, most notably in the Kernels for Difficult Moments. The EASEL Lab is grateful to the pilot teachers for sharing their wisdom. Background on social and emotional skill development is drawn from research summarized in the following articles:

- [Bailey, R. and Jones, S. M. \(2019\). An integrated model of regulation for applied settings. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 22, 2-23.](#)
 - [Bailey, R., Stickle, L., Brion-Meisels, G. & Jones, S.M. \(2019\). Re-imagining social-emotional learning: Findings from a strategy-based approach. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 100 \(5\), 53-58.](#)
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Kernels for Difficult Moments

When difficult or stressful moments arise, teachers can support students by helping them regulate their emotions and their bodies. Sometimes it can be helpful to engage in mindfulness or calm movement activities that help children relax. Other times, it might be helpful to play games to draw students' minds away from difficult moments. In the pilot of SEL Kernels in Ukraine, we learned that teachers often used Kernels to help create a positive environment during stressful situations. The Kernels on the Roadmap are designed to positively shift students' attention to the present, and do not require any materials or preparation which makes them easy to use at any moment, including in air raid shelters.

Belly Breathing

Students practice deep breathing using an easy, familiar strategy for relaxation.

Stretch!

Students perform a series of stretches and physical movements.

Abracadabra

Students build their focus skills and bring their attention to the present moment.



5 Senses

Students calm themselves by engaging in a mindfulness strategy to promote focus and emotion regulation.

Smile!

Students share ideas or stories that make them laugh.

Kernels for Talking About Emotions

It can be hard to know where to start when talking about emotions with children. To help students become comfortable with sharing their emotions when playing Kernels such as Feelings Circle or I-Messages, teachers can start by helping students identify their emotions, build their emotions vocabulary, and connect their emotions vocabulary to their experiences. Practicing the Kernels on the Roadmap below will help students build their emotion recognition and expression skills.

Over time, practicing these skills will help students have more complex conversations about their feelings.

Our Bodies' Clues

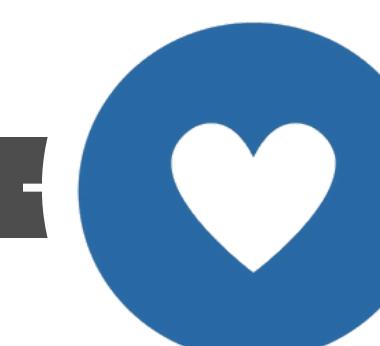
Students learn about different feelings and sensations in the body.

Feelings Bingo / Feelings Tree

Students build emotion vocabulary.

Feelings Ruler

Students use their emotion recognition and vocabulary skills to notice the intensity of an emotion they are experiencing.



Body Scan

Students learn to tune into different sensations and feelings within the body.

Feelings Stories/ Feelings Charades

Students practice using emotions vocabulary in context of a book or activity.

Kernels for Building Relationships

Building relationships with others creates positive classroom environments and supports child wellbeing, but children don't always know how to do build and maintain relationships. Teachers can support students to build relationships in the classroom by providing structured opportunities for children to socialize, play games, and have fun together. As children play the games listed on the Roadmap below, they are practicing key social and emotional skills such as communication, listening, and working collaboratively in groups, laying the foundation for strong relationships.

Similarity Signal

Students use a nonverbal signal to practice noticing similarities with others.

Active Listening Games

Students develop listening skills which are essential to building relationships with others.

A Cold Wind Blows

Students practice noticing similarities with others, listening to others, and sharing information about themselves.



Sharing Our Interests

Students practice sharing information about themselves with others.

Line Up Challenge

Students use their knowledge of their classmates along with their nonverbal communication skills.

Kernels for Initiating Communication

Initiating communication with others can be a challenging part of the school day, especially for students in or emerging from primarily online learning settings. When students practice communicating with others, they are learning essential skills to help them develop relationships, express themselves, and learn from others. To build communication skills, teachers can provide opportunities for students to express themselves with others in low stress ways, such as sharing with one person before sharing with the group. The Kernels on the Roadmap below create opportunities for students to practice sharing about themselves and their interests.

Petryk Says

Students practice noticing how others communicate without needing to make a sound.

Telephone

Students practice sharing a rehearsed statement with one other person.

Award to a Friend

Students put their communication skills to the test by having an unstructured conversations with a partner.



Names

Students share something about themselves with the whole group with the support of a consistent sentence structure.

Question Quest

Students practice having individual conversations with others with the support of structured topics.

Kernels for Creating a Positive Community

A positive classroom community makes the classroom an inviting place for all learners. Try the Kernels on the Roadmap below to establish guidelines for classroom behavior, create opportunities to celebrate achievements, and to share praise with others with daily or weekly routines.

Rules for Our Cool Community

Students have a conversation about expectations for classroom behaviors.

Biggest Fan

Students play a game to practice cheering each other on and celebrating others.

Our Achievements

Students create classroom goals. When the goal is reached, they choose a classroom celebration such as a dance party or a round of the students' favorite Kernel.



Looks Like, Sounds Like, Feels Like

Students reflect on classroom guidelines and describe how they look, sound, and feel.

Meaningful Compliments

Students learn how to give a compliment to others, based on important qualities and characteristics.

Cool Kid

Students give and receive compliments to their classmates on a regular basis.