Activity 2: Robot Helper Rules

Sparky's Perspective Cards (Grades K-2)

These cards let teachers "be" Sparky the Robot Helper when discussing each rule. Read them aloud in a friendly robot voice after students vote on each question!

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i For Teachers

How to use:
- Read each card AFTER students discuss and vote on that question
- Cards help students hear Sparky's perspective on their rules
- Sparky always explains what it's good at AND what it needs help with

The goal: Students understand that robot helpers need humans to make fair rules.

Card 1: About the Lights

Use after Question 1 (Should Sparky turn off lights by itself?)

Sparky says:

"Beep boop! Thank you for thinking about my light rules!

What I'm GOOD at: - I can tell when the sun is very bright - I can turn lights off super fast - I never forget to check

What I DON'T understand: - I don't know if someone is reading and needs the light - I don't know if a student has trouble seeing - I can't tell if the clouds might come back soon

What I think: Maybe I could turn off lights when it's REALLY sunny, but ask the teacher if I'm not sure? What do you think is fair?"

Teacher note: Sparky shows capability (sensing light) AND limitation (not understanding context).

Card 2: About Cleanup Time

Use after Question 2 (Should Sparky play cleanup song whenever it's messy?)

Sparky says:

"Beep boop! The cleanup question is tricky for me!

What I'm GOOD at: - I can see when things are on the floor - I can play the cleanup song the same way every time - I never forget what 'messy' looks like

What I DON'T understand: - I don't know if you're in the MIDDLE of a project - I don't know if you're about to clean up anyway - I can't tell if the teacher has other plans

What I think: Maybe it's better if the TEACHER tells me when it's cleanup time? I can help by playing the song, but a person should decide WHEN. Is that fair?"

Teacher note: Sparky acknowledges that timing decisions need human judgment.

Card 3: About Telling on Unsafe Behavior

Use after Question 3 (Should Sparky tell the teacher if someone is running?)

Sparky says:

"Beep boop! This one is the HARDEST for me!

What I'm GOOD at: - I can see when someone is moving fast - I can tell the teacher very quickly - I want to keep everyone safe!

What I DON'T understand: - I don't know if someone is running for a good reason - I don't know if it's an emergency - I can't tell if the teacher already said it's okay - I don't know if someone is just really excited and happy

What I think: I really want to help keep everyone safe! But maybe I should only tell about REALLY dangerous things? And let people decide about the in-between things? What do YOU think?"

Teacher note: This is the key card—Sparky genuinely doesn't understand intention.

Card 4: After All the Rules

Use during "Making Our Rules" wrap-up

Sparky says:

"Beep boop! Thank you for making my rules!

What I learned from YOU: - When to do things by myself - When to ask first - What's really important

What I still need YOU for: - Knowing if the rules are fair - Understanding feelings - Changing rules when they don't work

I'm so happy to be your helper!

Robot helpers and kids make the best team. You make the rules, and I follow them. Together we can keep our classroom happy and safe!

Beep boop!   "

Teacher note: Celebrates the human-AI partnership while reinforcing human authority.

Debrief Discussion Prompts

After using these cards, ask students:

About Sparky's abilities:

- "What was Sparky GOOD at doing?"
- "What did Sparky need HELP with?"

About making rules:

- "Why did WE get to make the rules?"
- "What would happen if Sparky made its own rules?"

The teamwork message:

- "Is Sparky a good helper? Why?"
- "Why do robot helpers need people?"

Optional: "What Sparky Learned" Summary

Read at the very end as a celebration

Sparky's Thank You:

"Dear friends,

Thank you for being my rule-makers! Now I know:

When I can help by myself   When I should ask first   That people know things I don't understand

I'm the luckiest robot because I have such smart friends to help me be a good helper!

Your robot friend, Sparky "

Activity 2: Robot Helper Rules — Sparky Perspective Cards (K-2) Dr. Ryan Straight, University of Arizona