

# Environment Lesson – Respectful Communication

## UNDERSTAND (Why?)

Respectful communication promotes empathy, understanding, and constructive dialogue among students, leading to stronger relationships and a sense of community. It also prepares students for success in future endeavors by equipping them with critical social and emotional skills that are essential for navigating diverse and collaborative environments.

## PREPARE (Students)

**Today, we're going to learn about something very important: respectful communication. Respectful communication is all about treating others with kindness, listening carefully to what they have to say, and considering their feelings. It helps us build positive relationships and create a supportive classroom environment.**

## TEACH (Explicitly)

**I am going to share what respectful communication looks and sounds like. Imagine you're having a conversation with a friend. How do you want them to speak to you?** (Possible student responses: "I want them to listen to me," "I want them to use nice words," "I want them not to interrupt.")

**Exactly! Respectful communication means listening when others speak, using kind words, and not interrupting. It's about making people feel valued and respected. We do this many times throughout the day, and we can do it during class discussions as well. There are some go-to phrases that we can use to help us be respectful communicators. For example, if you agree with something someone says and have something to add to it, you might say, "I agree with \_\_\_\_\_, and I would like to add \_\_\_\_\_." Or, if you do not agree with what someone says, you might say, "I respectfully disagree because \_\_\_\_\_." (Write down example statements as you share.)**

**If you need more to help you understand what is being said, you might say, "Can you please give me an example?" or "Can you please explain what you mean by \_\_\_\_\_?"**

**Let's practice! Turn to your partner and have a respectful conversation. I am going to ask an opinion question, and I want you to share your answer with your partner. They will respond with a respectful comment such as "I agree with you and I would like to add \_\_\_\_\_," or they might respond with "I respectfully disagree because \_\_\_\_\_." Are you ready? Turn to your partner and tell them which TV show you think is the funniest. Remember to listen, use kind words, and take turns speaking.** (Students engage in a conversation in which they practice respectful communication.)

**Great job! How did it feel to have a respectful conversation? Show me a thumbs-up if it felt good.** (Wait for student response.) **When we communicate respectfully, we build positive relationships and create a happy classroom environment. We will continue to practice respectful communication every day, and I will share more statements to help you communicate respectfully.**

## SUPPORT (Pivots)

- Designate a space on the wall or bulletin board to write respectful communication stems for children to use as springboards for their conversations.
- Revisit this lesson frequently throughout the year to introduce and practice different respectful conversation stems.