



Counselors' Corner

February 2015

"Be Your BEST"

The Warren Township School District continues to promote positive character and social skills development through the implementation of our Character Education curriculum. This month, we are discussing important communication skills, while focusing on how to "Be Your BEST." The "BEST" skill prompt is a chief component of *Elias' Social Decision Making/Social Problem Solving (SDM/SPS) Model*. This research-based program teaches students critical thinking and problem-solving skills by integrating these skills within academic and daily life circumstances.

As a part of our ongoing character education efforts, we strive to teach students essential skills to communicate effectively, work collaboratively with peers, monitor personal behavior, and demonstrate respect. By utilizing these valuable tools, all students can be their "BEST" both inside and outside of school!

The specific components of the "BEST" skill prompt include:

B - for **Body Posture**. Students should be relaxed and in "Listening Position."

E - for **Eye Contact**. Students should look directly at others and make *good eye contact*, which demonstrates respect towards others.

S - for **Speech** – Students should *speak clearly* and use *nice words* to communicate with others.

T - for **Tone of Voice**. Students should use a *calm, even, medium tone of voice* when interacting with others.

Ways to Practice "BEST" at Home

Throughout the school day, your child is practicing the "BEST" elements of good posture, eye contact, using appropriate words, and speaking in a pleasant tone of voice. When you catch your child demonstrating respect in these ways, your praise will have a positive impact on future behaviors.

If conflicts arise at home (such as between siblings), encourage the use of "BEST" behaviors when working through the problem.

- Remind your child to focus on *what* is being said, as well as *how* it is being said.
- Encourage your child to use a calm tone of voice and nice words.
- How is his or her body posture?

Helping your child to be more aware of effective communication will ultimately provide the tools necessary for successful problem solving. Encourage your child to transfer and generalize the "BEST" skill set to other environments as they learn and grow.

Elias, M., & Butler, L. (2005, 2011). *Social Decision Making, Social Problem Solving: A Curriculum for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning: Grades K-1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-8*. Champaign, Ill.: Research Press.

For further details or information, please contact your child's guidance counselor.

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