



RECENT CLASSROOM COUNSELING LESSONS AT AES

Robin Gregg, School Counselor

All students at AES, Kindergarten through Fourth Grade, experience regular “classroom counseling” lessons with the school counselor. The lessons generally occur every other week in each class. First Friends students also get to know the school counselor. Ms Gregg regularly visits both First Friends classrooms and occasionally has snack time in the counseling room with a small group of First Friends students or teaches a classroom lesson to the preschoolers.

KINDERGARTEN

In addition to stretching/yoga and “silent seconds,” classroom counseling lessons have focused on skills for learning, such as paying attention, focusing (using an “attentoscope”) and being assertive (asking for what you want or need in a respectful, brave way.) The children also enjoy visits from Impulsive Puppy and Slow Down Snail. They sometimes need to remind Impulsive Puppy about classroom rules!

FIRST AND SECOND GRADES

Recent classroom counseling lessons have focused on focusing, listening, paying attention and following directions. First grade students participated in a “directions challenge” in which they needed to follow multiple directions after hearing them and being shown the expected actions only one time. They learned about assertiveness, practicing polite interruptions and asking for help. The book, *The Lion Inside*, by Rachel Bright reinforced the idea that all of us “have a mouse and a lion inside.”

Second grade students participated in some focused listening activities, learned the “Doodle Dance,” and practiced assertiveness skills. They also learned “four square breathing” and often ended the lesson with “silent seconds,” a chance to be quiet and restful, focusing on their breathing.

THIRD GRADE

Classroom counseling lessons in the third grade classes have focused on active listening, avoiding “knee-jerk reactions,” remembering that there are always at least two possible explanations for someone’s behavior, and self-regulation. Most recently, the students created their own “mind-control” remote controls.

FOURTH GRADE

Fourth grade students have been learning about some brain components (prefrontal cortex, hippocampus, and amygdala.) Classroom counseling lessons also have focused on mindfulness practices, such as mindful listening and mindfulness of touch. The lessons generally include some “mindful movement”/yoga and also a time for “silent seconds.”

Future classroom counseling lessons will focus on emotional literacy, empathy, dealing with strong feelings, and problem-solving, among other topics.