

Introduction



The world that elementary school youth will inherit is filled with **opportunity and hope**. Young people will enter a global marketplace that contains rich diversity and ethnicity, advanced technological achievement, and rewarding career opportunities. The world will also present significant challenges and new issues that today's youth will confront as adults. Technology and the information age has significantly changed the way we communicate, interact, and work with each other.

Today's society requires youth to achieve specialized credentials and skills to be highly successful in life. Successfully completing a quality K-12 educational experience is more important today than ever before.

In addition to specialized learning, youth also require full development of character and life skills to effectively navigate as highly productive and fulfilled individuals in our communities.

The 180 Degrees Program

Growing Into Life is one curriculum from the 180 Degrees Program. The 180 Degrees Program works to provide educational venues with research-based social and emotional learning (SEL) curriculum. We offer three social-emotional learning courses designed by educators for educators. We offer life skill curriculums for elementary students, middle and high school age youth, and a personal development program for young adults who are 18 to 25 years of age. Each curriculum is research-based and tied to specific performance outcomes.

The 180 Degrees Program LLC, has been involved in the development and delivery of social-emotional learning since 2008.

The 180 Degrees Mission

The mission of the 180 Degrees Program is to passionately help youth improve their lives by teaching personal accountability and the skills needed to achieve their full potential "one degree" at a time. In fulfilling our mission, we utilize comprehensive research-based and measurable methods.

Our fundamental belief is that individuals have the ability to lead highly productive and fulfilling lives. Each person has the potential to live a life that is driven by purpose, personal accountability, and the confidence and skills to be successful. The 180 Degrees Program asserts that success is not a linear, uniform process; it is an individual, complex journey that leads people down diverse paths.

We believe that a truly successful individual is one who is grounded in the three competencies of the 180 Degrees Program, and possesses the skills needed to

face the nature of our changing world. The 180 Degrees Program assists youth in establishing and achieving goals, and challenges them to reflect critically on their own behaviors, actions, and decisions. The program helps create competent young people who can contribute to the well-being of the society we live in.

Core Values and Competencies

Everything the 180 Degrees Program does is linked to the organization's core values which include the following:

- Integrity
- Trustworthiness
- Citizenship
- Purposeful Action
- Fairness
- Caring
- Respect
- Accountability

What is the *Growing Into Life* Curriculum?

Through a powerful curriculum, the *Growing Into Life* curriculum provides a social-emotional learning framework for elementary school youth to help them excel at school and at life. The program helps students create healthy goals and positive lifelong patterns based on a foundation of strong personal values, reflective and critical thinking skills, and social awareness and responsibility.

The curriculum supports the 180 Degrees Program core values and competencies in design and content. It is a comprehensive program that teaches elementary age children social-emotional development. As children develop, they gain skills and understanding one degree at a time. These skills build a foundation for a lifetime of healthy habits. This curriculum is designed to lead students through the core competencies of social-emotional learning. These competencies are addressed under three sections of the book.

PART ONE: Self-Awareness

The curriculum begins with Self-Awareness, the first of three core competencies established by the 180 Degrees Program.

Through self-awareness, students learn to accurately assess their feelings, interests, values, strengths and talents. They become aware of their dreams, goals, thoughts, and aspirations. Self-awareness is the first step toward self-development and a grounded sense of self-confidence.

Students will learn and demonstrate the concepts of personal reflection, mindfulness, and explore how their thoughts and feelings affect their thinking, action, and lives.

The final chapter in Part One concludes with lessons pertaining to development of personal resilience and begins the exploration of wellness.

PART TWO: Self-Development

Once students become more self-aware, they are able to learn the skills necessary to help them manage their thoughts and feelings and gain a sense of control over their actions. They learn to regulate their emotions, manage their stress, control impulses, and persevere in overcoming obstacles. They also gain skill with setting and monitoring progress toward personal and academic goals, establishing healthy relationships, and making decisions.

The section on self-development takes a holistic approach that addresses mind and heart. It is divided into five chapters that address different aspects of self-development. They are: Wellness, Emotional Intelligence, Communication, Relationship Skills, and Positive Decision Making.

As students begin discovery of self-development, they explore topics of personal wellness involving mind, body, and heart. Most schools are now required to meet a federal mandate to implement local wellness policies to improve the eating and physical activity habits of students. This relatively new requirement is found in Section 204 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, Public Law 111-296. One of the requirements of this law is to set goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school activities designed to promote wellness. The activities in this part of the curriculum are designed to help teachers meet the requirements for the Wellness Act, and to give students the tools they need for lifelong health.

Students also continue learning and developing their emotional intelligence skills: the ability to recognize, assess, and control their passions, feelings, and emotions in healthy and positive ways. Lessons and learning within the chapter on emotional intelligence builds upon previous discussions in Part One.

As students practice learning about emotional intelligence, they are introduced to a complete chapter covering concepts of effective communication (speaking, writing, and listening). Effective communication builds strong, positive, and productive relationships. Chapter 8 explores how to make the most of building and maintaining positive relationships.

The last chapter in this section focuses on responsible decision making. This chapter encourages students to draw on all the skills they have learned so far and apply them toward setting personal goals. Students gain skill in making decisions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, appropriate social norms, respect for others, and likely consequences of their actions. They also learn to begin applying decision making skills to academic and social situations, contributing to the well-being of their schools and communities. Students become skilled at moving toward positive individual and group goals.

PART THREE: Social Awareness and Responsibility

Part Three in the curriculum focuses on social awareness and responsibility. It also contains chapters on practicing tolerance and explores the effects of the media.

This section begins with the topic of social awareness. The 180 Degrees Program defines “social awareness” as encompassing two areas. The first component of social awareness is building the individual capacity to be understanding and empathetic toward others. Individual social awareness is about taking the self-awareness lessons learned in Part One of *Growing Into Life*, and learning to be tolerant and empathetic toward others, both in groups and further this in one-on-one relationships. Social awareness sets the stage for strong relationship skills. Students learn to navigate

through conflict, hope, desire, and the myriad of emotion and thought that comes with friendship and community living. They build skills necessary for establishing and maintaining healthy and rewarding relationships based on cooperation. They learn to resist inappropriate social pressure, prevent and resolve interpersonal conflict, and seek help when needed.

The second component of social awareness is from the perspective of society as a whole or, the “common collective”. Collective social awareness is about understanding one’s relationship within society, the influences of mass media, personal leadership, and our civic responsibility.

Lessons in Part Three teach students to take the perspective of and empathize with others, appreciate individual and group similarities and differences, identify and use family, school, and community resources, develop leadership skills, and understand civic and social issues.

Connections to Social-Emotional Learning

Each chapter of the *Growing Into Life* curriculum is tied to specific social-emotional learning principles. This highlighted content will allow educators to immediately identify specific areas of social-emotional learning content for each chapter within the curriculum.

Benefits of Social-Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning has been proven to produce positive outcomes among students. A recent Meta-Analysis study from Loyola University¹ in Chicago showed that students who participated in SEL not only improved their academic performance, but also demonstrated the following:

- improved social emotional skills
- increased positive attitudes about self and others
- improved connection to their school
- reduced conduct problems
- reduced emotional distress

The study also found that school-based programs are most effectively taught by school staff such as teachers and counselors. This means there is no need to bring in other specialized professionals to teach SEL. For this reason, the 180 Degrees Program is designed for staff within the school district.

The social and emotional character-building and life skills that youth will learn in the 180 Degrees Program will enhance their academic ability in the school setting. These skills will help youth successfully navigate the increasingly complex and changing dynamics within academics, health, social relationships, and personal citizenship.

Developing character education and social-emotional competence is a cornerstone to success in school and in preparing youth for post-secondary education, achieving a living wage career, and meeting the challenges of later life.

Education Standards

The *Growing into Life* curriculum has been developed to support and align with local Standards Based Education frameworks adopted in most states. Being the curriculum

¹Durlak, J., Dymnicki, A., Schellinger, K., Taylor, R., & Weissberg, R., (2011). The Impact of Enhancing Student’s Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions, *Child Development*

is used on a national scale, the 180 Degrees Program has developed its educational programming in alignment with the national Common Core educational standards.²

These education standards reflect what youth need to know and be able to do to be successful in life and in career. As of summer 2012, 45 states have adopted the Common Core education standards. Reference the standards at the end of the book.

Each chapter of the *Growing Into Life* curriculum concludes with additional enrichment material and activities specifically researched and designed to align with the Common Core standards of English language arts.

Performance Measurement

The *Growing into Life: One Degree at a Time* curriculum includes program assessment in the areas of student academic performance as well as behavior. The following are program performance outcomes of the Growing Into Life Curriculum: GPA, Disciplinary Incidents, Personal Development. Specific information regarding program assessment and reporting is covered during the facilitator/teacher curriculum training.

Using the *Growing into Life* Curriculum

When addressing students' basic social-emotional needs and motivations, teachers create the foundation for a more harmonious and productive classroom, paving the way for a happier and healthier learning environment. We have created the Growing Into Life curriculum with a holistic approach to social-emotional learning. It presents activities that engage the emotions, body, and mind.

The curriculum recognizes teaching in the 21st Century is a demanding and complex task. To compete with electronic media for student attention, address student stressors, and meet the demands of today's academically driven education environment, teachers need new tools that actively engage their students, prepare them for learning, and develop their communication and collaborative skills.

To support you in meeting these challenges, the Growing Into Life curriculum provides experiential, interdisciplinary activities that engage students' natural social interest and search for self identity at this age. Recognizing your classroom time is valuable, student activities are purposely designed to be quick, clear, easy to use, and effective in meeting multiple standards. But more importantly, you will find that they will help to emotionally support your students in discovering the joy of learning, and for you, the joy of teaching.

The curriculum is designed for a full year of daily classroom instruction. The activities are simple and easy for classroom teachers to use. With each grade level, students gain skill and understanding in the three core competency areas of social-emotional learning. The teacher curriculum guide for the 5th and 6th grade level includes exercises that are used in both the 5th and 6th grade student workbook. The activities for the different grade levels are marked by the following icons:



² See: Common Core States Standards Initiative: www.corestandards.org

Throughout your teacher curriculum guide you will see material that is highlighted in blue. [The blue text indicates material that is included in the student workbooks.](#)

There are twelve chapters in the student workbook and each chapter has eight to ten lessons. The lessons range from 10 to 20 minutes in length. It is recommended that a routine be set up for the practice of these lessons. It is suggested that you practice the routine at the same time each day and include a closing activity for each lesson. The closing activity can be as simple as allowing a few people to give feedback about the lesson, or having them write a few notes about what they appreciated.

There are nine characters in the curriculum and you and your students are introduced to these characters at the beginning of the year. Students will follow these characters as they learn about their emotions and thoughts, personal challenges and relate them to their own personal experiences.

At the end of the year, students are invited to celebrate their success in the program. Students are encouraged to make a portfolio of activities from their workbook to share with friends, families, and teachers. They will also receive a certificate of completion, which is included in each student workbook.

Enrichment Activities - English Language Arts

At the end of each chapter, you will find a section on enrichment activities within the area of English Language Arts. This material is in the form of researched works of literature for children. The literary works are intended to be used as supplemental enrichment material for enhanced instruction. Each literary work has been specifically researched and selected by a Literacy Consultant knowledgeable in the best literary works available for children.

Furthermore, we have developed easy to implement enrichment activities for each of the books for use in the classroom. Each activity has been tied specifically to Common Core educational standards.

The Role of the Family

Recognizing the powerful influence family life has in student development, we have included opportunities for family members to be involved in the 180 Degrees Program. In each section there are homework assignments and activities that help students identify their unique family environments and help them engage in dialogue with their family members. In addition, the family is invited to attend a graduation ceremony at the end of the year to celebrate the social-emotional education of their children.

Introducing the Program to the Students

5th and 6th Grade:

Below is the introduction to the student workbook. Read it with your students and discuss the concept of their life journey. Ask students what kinds of obstacles they may face and what kinds of fears they might encounter on their own life journey. You can refer to stories or movies and ask what kinds of obstacles the characters face. Then ask what kinds of obstacles children face. They may indicate trouble in them with friends, family issues, homework, or moving. Then read with them the profiles of the nine characters that will accompany them on the journey.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome! You are about to embark on a life journey in which you are the main character. Everyone has a story and everyone has a life journey. You may have noticed that lots of things are changing at this time in your life. Some of you are experiencing growth spurts. Some of you are finding that, at times, you are more emotional than you have been in the past. All of you have a desire to know yourself and to find a place in life where you can be happy and appreciated by others. This workbook is designed to help you understand yourself and to map and create your own unique journey through life. You already know a lot about yourself and your story, so we're going to start with what you already know. Along the way we will meet new friends, confront difficult obstacles, face fear, celebrate our gifts, and meet special helpers.

Meet the Characters

It's time to meet the nine main characters who will accompany you on your journey. You may have already met the characters if you have been involved in the Growing Into Life program in earlier grades.

There are nine characters in the book, and through stories, you will get to know them as they learn to stand up to bullying, work through disagreements with friends, and celebrate their unique personalities. You may find that some of the characters are like you and others are very different.

Each of these characters is acquainted with each other because each summer they attend **Camp 180 Degrees** located on a farm outside of the city of Salem, Oregon. "**Camp 180**" as it is affectionately called, is a one week long summer camp nestled in the Willamette Valley where youth from all over the world come to learn, play, grow, and prepare for the next year of school. The camp was created to provide youth with fun and exciting activities aimed at building their social and emotional learning skills.



SOPHIA

Sophia lives in a small town in Washington State called Wishram. She loves to play outside and especially climbing on the rocks in the Columbia River Gorge near her home. That has earned her the nickname Lizard. She lives with her parents, grandparents, and her three siblings. She loves sports. Her least favorite class is art because nothing she draws or paints ever looks right to her. She loves looking at travel magazines and thinks it would be exciting to be a flight attendant. She dreams of someday traveling to places all around the world.



AKIO

Akio came to the United States from Japan when he was eight years old because his dad got a great job at Microsoft in Seattle, Washington. That is cool to Akio because he loves computer games. In fact, he dreams about someday becoming a game designer. He excels at schoolwork and particularly loves math. He also loves music and plays the piano. Sometimes Akio's classmates tease him because he is overweight and does not like physical education.



HAYDEN

Hayden lives with his mom, dad, and two younger sisters in Phoenix, Arizona. He is very strong and athletic and likes all kinds of sports. He has a lot of friends and spends a lot of time with them. He has just started practicing Parkour, which is a physical discipline that conditions the body and the mind by maneuvering over obstacles with speed and efficiency. He likes to read and write stories, and dreams of traveling the world. He thinks it would be amazing to practice Parkour in France where it was developed.



LILY

Lily lives in San Francisco, California with her mom and dad. She is an only child, but would love to have a sister. She doesn't like PE, but loves to read and draw. She excels in all things artistic including drama, music, and pottery. School is easy for her so she sometimes draws during class time. Lily spends most of her time texting her small group of close friends and chatting on the web.



AUSTIN

Austin lives in Salem, Oregon, the capitol city. He lives with his mom, his step-dad, his half brother, his step brother, and his newly adopted sister, Ayana. He loves to play computer games and wants to be an astronaut. He also loves sports. He is great at playing basketball and baseball. He has a best friend named Dean who is his constant companion.



AYANA

Ayana was born in Ethiopia and was adopted by Austin's family. Ayana enjoys being an American and loves her new family. She is amazed how many toys there are and fun books to read in her new country.



CHLOE

Chloe lives with her dad, grandmother, and her older brother in New Orleans. She is tall, has a big smile, and a great sense of humor. Chloe loves to sing and makes friends easily. She loves to run and jump and often plays basketball with the boys in her neighborhood. Sometimes she plays soccer too. She has a cat named Polly and a dog named Anna.

**DEAN**

Dean lives in Salem, Oregon and is Austin's best friend. Dean and his family are originally from Oakland, California. Dean met Austin in elementary school when they both attended first grade. They have been best friends ever since.

**WILLIE**

Willie is Austin's dog that he has had since he was a small boy. Willie is a golden retriever that loves to frolic and play with Austin and his friends. One of his favorite things to do is to go to the dog park and on long walks with Austin and Ayana.

Using the Workbook

There are times when you feel like keeping things to yourself and there are times when you want to share with your friends. As you move through the activities, there will be times you will be asked to share with a partner, and there will be times when the writing is designed only for you. Of course, you can share whatever you want from your workbook with your friends and family. Icons throughout the book will help you decide what you want to share.



When you see this icon, (pair share) you will be asked to meet with a friend and share what you have written.



When you see this icon, (lock) this writing is designed to be private. You will not be asked to share it in class.



When you see this icon, (activity) it means your teacher will be leading you through a class activity.



When you see this icon, (portfolio) the activity is designed to be placed in your portfolio. Your portfolio will be a collection of work that you will share with your friends and family at the graduation ceremony at the end of the program.

Welcome to the program!