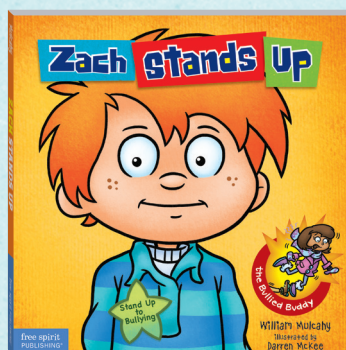
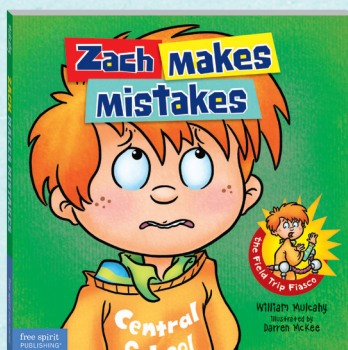
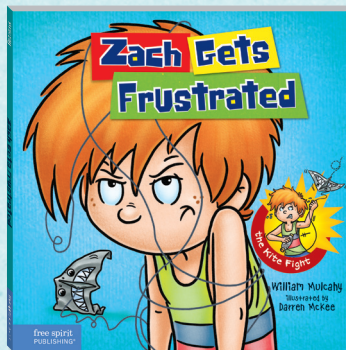


A Teacher's Guide to the

Zach Rules Series

William Mulcahy and Melissa Mulcahy



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A Note to Teachers, Counselors, Parents, and Other Adults

When I wrote the first Zach Rules book, *Zach Apologizes*, I had no idea that it would eventually become part of a five-book series with the scope of social-emotional skills Zach and his friends explore and learn while coping with everyday issues. Since its publication, it has been my mission to bring *Zach Apologizes* and the other books in the Zach Rules series and their tools into schools—a program I call Kids Cope Now. During this mission, I often have been reminded how difficult it can be to integrate social-emotional learning (SEL) into the classroom on a daily basis. And yet never has SEL been so important. Students of all ages and all backgrounds are faced with social, cultural, relationship, technological, and familial challenges unlike anything experienced before. Furthermore, we live in a society that subtly and not so subtly teaches our children to put off feeling and dealing with life’s challenges. It has been the goal of Kids Cope Now to use the Zach Rules books and tools to help kids cope with these challenges now, instead of waiting to feel and/or deal with them fifteen years in the future in my or another therapist’s office. The ability to handle or cope with challenges right now in healthy ways is paramount to children’s success and wellness in the present and in the future. As adults, it is our job to provide positive coaching about social-emotional health, including tools for enhancing students’ abilities to integrate feeling, thinking, and behaving, so students can achieve essential life tasks.

This *Teacher’s Guide to the Zach Rules Series* will help you use the five books in the series (*Zach Gets Frustrated*, *Zach Makes Mistakes*, *Zach Apologizes*, *Zach Stands Up*, and *Zach Hangs In There*) to integrate the tools and skills the Zach Rules books teach into the classroom on a daily or as-needed basis. In this guide, you will find a lesson plan for each book that contains objectives, benefits of using the SEL skills taught in the book (called “Benefits of Kids Coping Now”), social-emotional domains addressed, Common Core State Standards for the lesson, vocabulary from the story, suggested materials, and questions and activities teachers and other adults can use to facilitate learning, discussion, and further self-exploration.

The five lessons have been ordered to fit a developmental “common sense” approach rather than by when the books were published. Remember, social-emotional learning is not a linear thing, but a recursive process driven by the dynamic and ever-changing needs of students in the moment. Don’t forget to be flexible.

Integrating the Zach Tools and Their Core Skills into Your Day

- Introduce the Zach Rules books and tools at an early age and early in each school year.
- Have the books available in the classroom, library, and school counselor's office.
- Connect to PBIS, including encouraging and praising students for using the Zach tools.
- Use the books in friendship, mindfulness, and social groups.
- Create a cool-down or reflecting zone in your classroom where students can use the tools to sort out difficulties or conflicts.
- Use art, music, writing, and other methods to teach the Zach tools.
- Create posters or use the Zach tools handouts as prompts to remind students to use the tools.
- Coach students in using the Zach tools before behavior incidents occur and when teachable moments arise.
- Use current events to exemplify the Zach tools. (For example, draw students' attention to people in the news who make a good apology.)
- Use the books in guidance lessons.
- Use the Zach tools as visual aids to prompt behaviors.
- Model the Zach tools yourself.

In the spirit of Zach Rules and Kids Cope Now, here are three reminders to assist you in supporting your students in their social-emotional learning.

The ABCs of Kids Coping Now

Awareness—each of the five Zach tools contains, in some way or another, students becoming more aware of their behaviors, feelings, thoughts, and the current situation. Being aware is what allows us to grow and make changes. Otherwise we are ships sailing on the sea without a rudder and a sail. Promoting and developing awareness in our students through mindfulness, creative visualization, meditation, self-reflection, and other awareness activities is crucial for their success.

Be gentle—social-emotional learning can be hard work. Teach students to be gentle with themselves when they get frustrated, make mistakes, need to apologize, find themselves in a bullying situation, or work toward a goal. When students struggle, they often develop negative mindsets such as “I’m not good enough” that, if we’re not careful, can stick with them the rest of their lives. We need to help students know “I’m good enough,”

“I’m important,” “I can handle it,” and “I belong,” through teaching them to use positive self-talk and by helping them feel and deal with the situations at hand.

Create a safe place—social-emotional learning is often gritty, messy work that may trigger your own hardships of being a child or of struggling with relationships. In many ways it is much easier to focus on math or reading than it is to delve into the ambiguity of emotions, self-talk, and relationships. Therefore, it is vital that students feel comfortable bringing their social and emotional worries and needs into the classroom and sharing them with adults. In many ways, our classrooms and the cultures we create are like invisible conduits telling students whether or not it is safe to bring up this gritty stuff.

I want to thank my wife Melissa, a teacher of 15 years, for putting together the bulk of these lessons. I couldn’t have done it without her. And thank *you* for helping your students in their social-emotional growth and development. This work is vitally important.

Lesson 1: Zach Gets Frustrated

Objectives

- Students will understand that frustration is what we feel when things don't go the way we want them to.
- Students will choose a coping strategy or chill skill to help with their feelings of frustration.
- Students will understand that when we think negative thoughts, we feel negatively.
- Students will be able to use the frustration triangle when they become frustrated.

Benefits of Kids Coping Now

- Build confidence
- Increase a sense of peace and calmness
- Decrease the likelihood of the fight-or-flight response in the brain
- Increase the likelihood of successfully dealing with frustration and other difficult emotions in the future
- Lift feelings of sadness and anxiety
- Enhance relationships



Social-Emotional Learning Competencies

- Self-awareness—identify and recognize emotions
- Self-management—impulse control, stress management

Common Core State Standards: Key Ideas and Details

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1

Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.2

Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.3

Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

Vocabulary from the Story

- Frustration
- Tension
- Chill skills
- Concentrate

Suggested Materials

- *Zach Gets Frustrated* by William Mulcahy
- Worksheets: “The Frustration Triangle” and “Name It, Tame It, Reframe It Squares” (page 9)
- Coloring supplies and writing utensils
- Scissors
- *Optional*: whiteboard, poster paper, and markers for visual learning and making anchor charts

Discussion

1. Read the book *Zach Gets Frustrated* aloud to your class, a small group, or an individual student. Discuss the pictures that go along with the story as you read.
2. Ask students to identify the main characters in the story (Zach, Zach’s dad).
3. Have students **name** the situation that caused Zach to be frustrated at the beach (not able to fly his kite). What situation caused Zach’s dad to be frustrated? (Zach’s dad pinched his finger and got grease on his shirt when fixing Alex’s bike.)
4. Ask students to **name** other situations that may have caused Zach to become frustrated at the beach. (Sonya went to the theme park with another friend. Zach dropped his toothbrush into the toilet. Zach spilled the litter box onto the floor and his foot.)
5. Discuss with students what makes them frustrated and how they feel when they are frustrated. Where do they feel this emotion in their bodies?
6. Define *chill skills*, and share examples of chill skills identified in the book (squeezing face and hands then letting go, meditation, stretching, picturing something you love, closing eyes and breathing in through the nose and out through the mouth). Discuss other possible chill skills not mentioned in the book and what chill skills students use to **tame** frustration.
7. Discuss with students how thoughts affect feelings. (We can’t change what happened to us, but we can change how we think about what happened.) How did Zach’s dad help Zach **reframe it** with Sonya? (When Sonya couldn’t come to the beach, Zach thought, “Nobody likes me.” Instead, his dad told him to try, “Sonya is a good friend. I will see her soon.”) How did Zach **reframe** the beach? (“This kite won’t fly, but the beach is awesome. I love jumping in the waves.”)

Activities

Name It, Tame It, Reframe It

Print out a copy of the “Frustration Triangle” worksheet for each student (see page 26 in the book for downloading instructions). Make copies of the “Name It, Tame It, Reframe It Squares” on page 9. Have or help students cut out the squares. Students will put a red “frustration” square on “Name it,” a purple “chill skills” square to use in the situation on “Tame it,” and the corresponding green square on “Reframe it.” Continue having students match red, purple, and green squares using the frustration triangle.

Now, ask students to think about a time when they were frustrated. Have them practice the frustration triangle, using their own frustrations to **name it**, **tame it**, and **reframe it**.

Check Out Your Chill Skills!

Look at the sample “chill skills” cards from the “Name It, Tame It, Reframe It” activity or ask students to come up with their own chill skills. Have students choose their three favorite chill skills. Have them draw a picture of themselves using one of the skills. Practice children’s chill skills as a group.



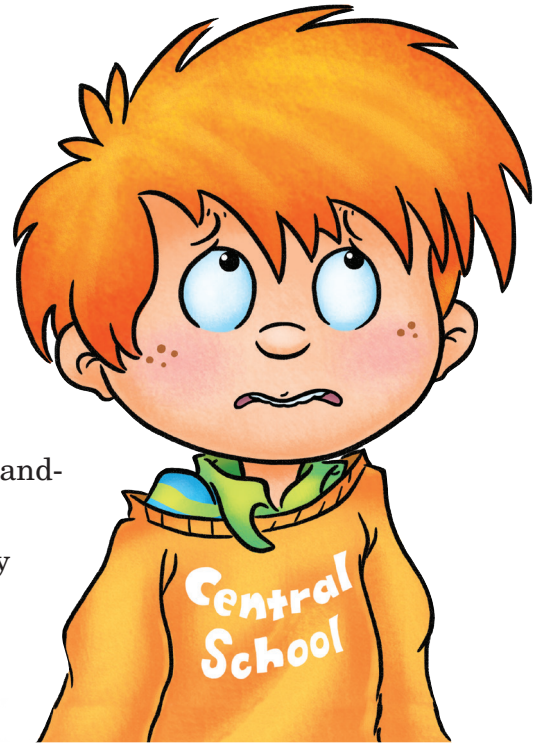
Name It, Tame It, Reframe It Squares

<p>You don't get picked to play on the team you want.</p>	<p>Your friend doesn't play with you.</p>	<p>You can't get to the next level of a game.</p>
<p>You didn't get to go to the movies today.</p>	<p>Your friend got something and you didn't.</p>	<p>You get a bad grade.</p>
<p>Take deep breaths.</p>	<p>Picture something you love or enjoy.</p>	<p>Stretch your body.</p>
<p>Rock in a rocking chair.</p>	<p>Go for a walk.</p>	<p>Squeeze your face and hands, then release.</p>
<p>"I didn't get picked to play on the team I wanted, but I love to play basketball and practicing with any team will make me a better player."</p>	<p>"I wanted to play with my friend today, but I was able to make a new friend and try a new activity."</p>	<p>"I didn't get to the next level, but I have made it really far in this game. I can try again later."</p>
<p>"I didn't get to go to the movies today, but I can make a plan to go when it will be a better time. The movie will be in theaters for a while, or I can see it on DVD."</p>	<p>"There are other times when I get stuff and my friend does not. It will be my turn next time."</p>	<p>"I didn't get the grade I wanted, but I have learned a lot. I can practice more and try to do better next time."</p>

Lesson 2: Zach Makes Mistakes

Objectives

- Students will use the key to mistakes to work through the process of correcting a mistake.
- Students will be able to admit their mistakes and discover why they made them.
- Students will look for ways to correct their mistakes.
- Students will be able to look back over their mistakes, learn from them, and make peace with themselves if they need to.
- Students will be more compassionate and understanding of others and themselves.
- Students will develop the power and responsibility to grow from their mistakes.



Benefits of Kids Coping Now

- Teach valuable life lessons and consequences
- Teach kids about strengths and weaknesses
- Teach kids how to forgive themselves
- Decrease fear and anxiety about making mistakes
- Help kids learn, grow, and evolve
- Help kids understand that nobody's perfect—and that's okay
- Help kids take responsibility for mistakes and feel empowered

Social-Emotional Learning Competencies

- Self-awareness—recognizing strengths, needs, and values
- Responsible decision-making—identifying problems and analyzing situations
- Self-management—self-motivation, discipline
- Relationship skills—seeking and providing help

Common Core State Standards: Key Ideas and Details

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1

Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.2

Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3

Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events

Vocabulary from the Story

- Confided
- Foolish
- Mistake
- Detect
- Correct
- Reflect
- Perfect

Suggested Materials

- *Zach Makes Mistakes* by William Mulcahy
- Worksheet: “The Key to Mistakes”
- Coloring supplies and writing utensils
- *Optional*: whiteboard, poster paper, and markers for visual learning and making anchor charts

Discussion

1. Read the book *Zach Makes Mistakes* aloud to your class, a small group, or an individual student. Discuss the pictures that go along with the story as you read.
2. Ask students to identify the main characters in the story (Zach, Zach’s teacher Ms. Rosamond, Sonya, Tim the museum guide).
3. Ask students to **detect** what mistakes Zach made (didn’t wear his orange shirt, touched the bison exhibit). What mistakes did Sonya, Ms. Rosamond, and Zach’s dad make? (Sonya wore a costume to a dress-up party. Ms. Rosamond didn’t turn off her cell phone. Zach’s dad forgot his wallet at the movies.) What other mistakes can students **detect** in the pictures? (Students at lunch spill water. Thomas Edison quote: “I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.”)
4. Discuss how Zach and the others **corrected** their mistakes. Can we always fix the mistakes we make?

5. Ask students to **reflect** on the mistakes made by Zach and the others. Did the characters learn from these mistakes? What will they do differently next time?
6. Zach, Sonya, Ms. Rosamond, Zach’s dad, and the students at lunch all made mistakes. They worked to **detect**, **correct**, and **reflect** on their mistakes. Remind students: We all make mistakes. **Nobody’s perfect!**

Activities

Mistakes I’ve Learned From

Print out a copy of the “Key to Mistakes” worksheet for each student (see page 26 in the book for downloading instructions). With a partner, have students identify some mistakes they have made and what they learned from them. Have them practice the key to mistakes tool, using the mistakes they discussed with partners to **detect**, **correct**, and **reflect**.

Correcting Mistakes

With students, review two examples of mistakes from the book. Next, have students write or draw about how to correct each of the other mistakes in the book. Last, have students think of a mistake they have made and draw or write about how they can correct it.

MISTAKE

- Zach comes to school in his regular clothes.
- Ms. Rosamond’s cell phone rings in the museum.
- Sonya wears her Halloween costume to a dress-up party.
- Zach touches the bison exhibit.
- Students spill water on the lunch table.
- Zach’s dad forgot his wallet when taking Zach to the movies.

CORRECTION

- Zach calls his mom to bring his shirt but has to borrow a shirt from Ms. Rosamond.
- Ms. Rosamond turns off her cell phone and apologizes to the museum guide.



Lesson 3: Zach Apologizes

Objectives

- Students will be able to admit they have done something wrong and ask for forgiveness.
- Students will deliver meaningful apologies.
- Students will be able to cope with the emotions that go along with doing something wrong or hurtful.
- Students will understand the impact of their actions.

Benefits of Kids Coping Now

- End conflict without fighting
- Encourage further communication
- Restore self-respect
- Improve empathy for both the giver and the receiver
- Repair damaged relationships
- Heal negative feelings such as guilt, shame, and anger

Social-Emotional Learning Competencies

- Self-awareness—accurate self-perception
- Social awareness—perspective taking, empathy, respect for others
- Responsible decision-making—evaluation and reflection
- Self-management—impulse control, discipline
- Relationship skills—relationship building

Common Core State Standards: Key Ideas and Details

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1

Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.2

Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.3

Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.



Vocabulary from the Story

- Concentrate
- Apologize
- Scrambled up
- Appreciate
- Accept

Suggested Materials

- *Zach Apologizes* by William Mulcahy
- Worksheets: “The Four-Square Apology” and “Scrambled Up Inside” (page 17)
- Coloring supplies
- *Optional*: whiteboard, poster paper, and markers for visual learning and making anchor charts

Discussion

1. Read the book *Zach Apologizes* aloud to the class, a small group, or an individual student. Discuss the pictures that go along with the story as you read.
2. Ask students to identify the main characters in the story (Zach, Zach’s brother Alex, Zach’s mom).
3. Have students identify **what Zach did to hurt somebody** (pushed down his brother Alex). Discuss how hurting others doesn’t always mean doing them physical harm. People can be hurt emotionally too.
4. Ask students what happened after Zach pushed Alex. (Zach’s mom took the robo-rocket cruiser and sent Zach to cool down in his room.) Ask students where else someone could go to cool down at home, at school, or in the community.
5. When Zach is cooling down, he doesn’t look very happy and says he feels “crummy.” The story says he feels “scrambled up inside.” Have students discuss what they think this means and share a time when they felt scrambled up inside. (For example: Zach was mad when his brother took his toy, so he pushed Alex. Zach then felt upset when he was sent to his room to cool down. He felt nervous when going to give his apology to Alex. Afterward, he felt better, even happy.)
6. Discuss how at first, Zach thought only about how he felt. He imagines how he would feel if Alex shoved him. Zach then thinks about **how Alex felt** when Zach pushed him (sad and hurt). Discuss with students how others feel when we hurt them. Explain that feelings are not always seen. For instance, someone may cry when we hurt them, but the person might also feel disappointment and lack of trust in us, such as not wanting to be friends anymore.

7. Discuss with students how Zach comes up with different ideas for **what he can do next time** to get his toy back instead of pushing. (Zach first thinks of pretend ideas, but then comes up with the best answer.) Have students brainstorm some ways they or Zach could get the toy back. What would they do if the person says no? What could they do next and still make a good choice?
8. Talk with students about how Zach **makes it up to Alex**. Pushing Alex was wrong, but what does Zach do to make it right again? Zach’s mom helps him come up with a good idea, such as doing Alex’s chores for a week, but Zach chooses an idea that he can live with and feel good about too. (Zach asks Alex if he wants to play with the robo-rocket cruiser.)
9. Talk with students about how at first, Zach was nervous to make his apology. He thought this was not going to be easy. What if Alex laughed at him or the apology didn’t make either of them feel better? Have students think of a time when they had to apologize and share how they felt before, during, and after the apology. Where did they feel these emotions (head, tummy, heart)? Zach puts his apology into action using the four-square apology he created to help him. Zach’s mom reminds him that he is a good person even though he did something wrong. Remind students, “We may make wrong choices, but we are still good people.”

Activities

Scrambled Up Inside

What does “scrambled up inside” look and feel like? Pass out a copy of the “Scrambled Up Inside” worksheet on page 17 to each student. Ask students to think of a time when they felt scrambled up inside and draw a picture of themselves feeling scrambled up. Did their heads feel one way? Did their tummies feel another way? Have students share their drawings with a partner and talk about what scrambled up looks and feels like. Ask students what they do to help themselves feel better and not be scrambled up.



How I Feel: Before, During, and After

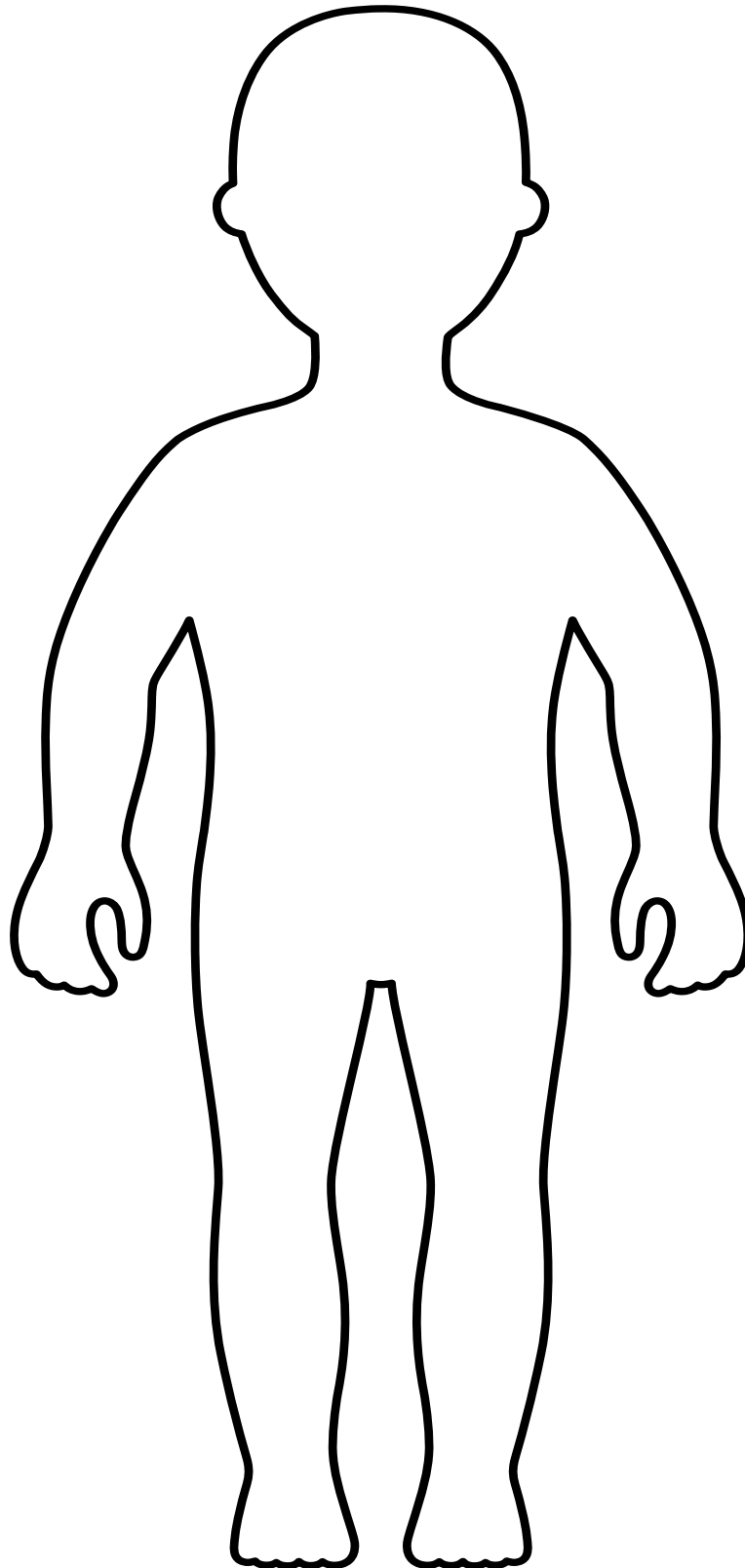
Talk with students about how apologizing can be hard. Can they remember a time when they made a wrong choice? How did their bodies feel before making the wrong choice? How did they feel after? If students made an apology, how did they feel before, during, and after apologizing? Have students draw their emotions before, during, and after the apology.

Four-Square Apology

Print off a copy of the “Four-Square Apology” worksheet for each student (see page 26 in the book for downloading instructions). Ask students to think of a time when they made a wrong choice and hurt somebody. Using the worksheet, have students write or draw about **what they did to hurt the person, how they think it made the person feel, what they can do next time, and how they can make it up to the person.** Have students share their four-square apologies with a partner. Remind them that even though we may do something wrong, we are still good people. With their partners, have students discuss three good things they’ve done. Celebrate students’ good choices as a class.



Scrambled Up Inside



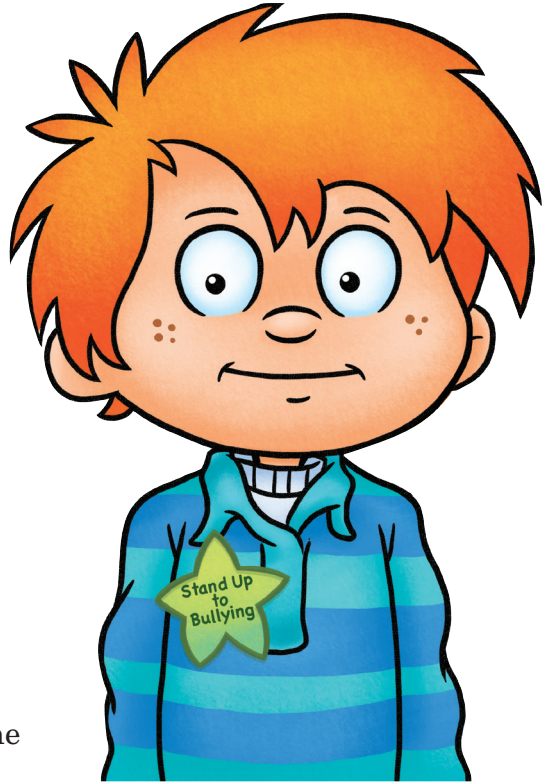
Lesson 4: Zach Stands Up

Objectives

- Students will take an active role in becoming upstanders.
- Students will learn to become active listeners.
- Students will take an active role in helping targeted peers get away from bullying situations.
- Students will help peers review the situation and report the incident to an adult.

Benefits of Kids Coping Now

- Increase self-esteem and self-worth
- Increase sense of self-efficacy
- Help kids stand up to their fears
- Help kids feel empowered
- Help kids realize that neither the target nor the bystander is to blame
- Restore self-respect
- Build confidence
- Increase a sense of empathy



Social-Emotional Learning Competencies

- Self-awareness—identifying and recognizing emotions
- Social awareness—empathy, appreciating diversity
- Responsible decision-making—personal, moral, and ethical responsibility
- Self-management—impulse control, stress management
- Relationship skills—communication, relationship building, negotiation, conflict management, seeking and providing help

Common Core State Standards: Key Ideas and Details

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1

Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.2

Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.3

Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

Vocabulary from the Story

- Speak up
- Take off
- Active listening
- Reporting
- Tattling

Suggested Materials

- *Zach Stands Up* by William Mulcahy
- Worksheet: “The Stand Up to Bullying STAR”
- Coloring supplies and writing utensils
- *Optional*: whiteboard, poster paper, and markers for visual learning and making anchor charts

Discussion

1. Read the book *Zach Stands Up* aloud to your class, a small group, or an individual student. Discuss the pictures that go along with the story as you read.
2. Ask students to identify the main characters in the story (Zach, Sonya, Alex, Roxy, Jaden, Ms. Rosamond).
3. Have students identify the events where Sonya is being bullied by Roxy and Jaden. (Sonya is not allowed to sit at the lunch table. Jaden and Roxy tell Sonya she smells and Roxy makes a gesture. Roxy trips Sonya on the bus. Roxy pulls Sonya’s coat off the hook and puts it on the ground. Roxy says Sonya’s coat smells, and Jaden calls her “Sonya-Stinkola.”) How does Sonya feel in these situations? How does Zach feel? What other bullying situations do students notice in the book? (Alex’s crackers get stolen at snack time and the kids call him a crybaby. Some girls spread mean rumors about Roxy.)
4. Talk with students about the different roles people can play in a bullying situation (bullying student, target, bystander, upstander). Ask them which roles the characters in the book play. (Roxy and Jaden bully Sonya, who is the target. Zach and the other students at lunch and on the bus act as bystanders. In the coatroom when Roxy puts Sonya’s coat on the floor and Jaden calls her a name, Zach acts as an upstander by standing up for Sonya and helping her get away.)

5. Ask students if ignoring the bullying stopped Roxy and Jaden from bullying Sonya. (No, they continued to bully her.) Why didn't Zach stop them? (Zach was too scared and didn't know what to do.)
6. Discuss with students the plan Zach and Alex made to help Sonya (STAR—**speak up, take off, actively listen, report**). Discuss with students the difference between reporting and tattling.
7. How do Zach and others **speak up** when Sonya is being bullied? (Zach picks up Sonya's coat. Zach says he is helping Sonya. Zach says that Sonya has been his friend for a long time and she doesn't stink. Another girl says, "I like Sonya, too. We go fishing.")
8. Zach and Sonya **take off**, and Zach **actively listens** to Sonya. How do you think this helped Sonya and Zach feel better? (Zach helps Sonya get away from the bullying situation. Sonya tells Zach the ways she tried to stop the bullying, but they didn't work. Sonya feels better knowing that Zach cares about her.)
9. Zach and Sonya **report** the bullying to Ms. Rosamond. Discuss with students which adults they can go to when they need help. After Zach and Sonya **report** the bullying, Ms. Rosamond speaks with Roxy and Jaden. Why do students think it is important to report bullying to trusted adults?

Activities

Someone I Can Go To

Ask students to identify three adults in their lives that they can go to when they need help. These adults can be in the school, at home, or in the community. Students can draw a picture of these adults to keep as a reminder of who they can go to for help.

Let's Take Off!

When someone is being bullied, it is important to help the person **take off**—get the person away from the bullying. Ask students to brainstorm activities they could invite a peer who is being bullied to do during recess, in the classroom, or in their neighborhood. Have students draw a picture of themselves helping a friend take off.

Be a STAR

Print out a copy of the "Stand Up to Bullying STAR" worksheet for each student (see page 26 in the book for downloading instructions). Put students in pairs and have one student play the target and the other play the upstander. Have students role-play being upstanders by **speaking up**, helping the targeted student **take off**, asking questions and **actively listening** to the targeted student, and **reporting** the incident to an adult. Let students know they can keep the worksheet handy to help remind them what to do if they see someone being bullied.

Lesson 5: Zach Hangs In There

Objectives

- Students will identify the goal they are trying to accomplish and why it's important.
- Students will take an active role in making a viable plan to accomplish their goal.
- Students will review and revise the strategies they have been using to meet their goals.
- Students will learn to keep on trying until their goals are accomplished.
- Students will be able to use self-talk to help themselves in accomplishing their goal.

Benefits of Kids Coping Now

- Build perseverance to stick with it through tough times
- Build confidence
- Help kids distinguish between ideas that work and those that don't work
- Help kids learn responsibility and feel empowered
- Foster autonomy and a sense of accomplishment
- Improve positive self-talk
- Help kids make constructive choices
- Help kids understand the importance of the journey as well as the end goal

Social-Emotional Learning Competencies

- Self-awareness—self-efficacy
- Responsible decision-making—identifying and solving problems
- Self-management—goal setting, organizational skills
- Relationship skills—working cooperatively



Common Core State Standards: Key Ideas and Details

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.1

Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.2

Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.3

Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

Vocabulary from the Story

- Plan
- Confidence
- Achieve
- Goal
- Positive self-talk
- Accomplish



Suggested Materials

- *Zach Hangs In There* by William Mulcahy
- Worksheet: “The Hang-In-There Rings”
- Coloring supplies and writing utensils
- Whiteboard or poster paper and markers
- *Optional*: whiteboard, poster paper, and markers for visual learning and making anchor charts

Discussion

1. Read the book *Zach Hangs In There* aloud to the class, a small group, or an individual student. Discuss the pictures that go along with the story as you read.
2. Ask students to identify the main characters in the story (Zach, Sonya, Ms. Rosamond).
3. Have students identify the **goal** Zach wants to reach (getting across the tricky trapeze rings).
4. Ask students what Zach’s **plan** to reach his goal is (go across as fast as possible before his arms get tired). Does he achieve his goal? (No, he falls to the ground after reaching for the second ring.)
5. Discuss with students that as Zach is about to give up on his goal, Sonya reminds him of the difficult level he beat in the Robo Rocket Quest video game. Is there something students had to work hard at to complete?

6. Zach decides to make a **new plan** with Sonya’s help. Why did Zach need more than one plan? (His first two plans didn’t work.)
7. While trying out his **new plan** to get across the rings, Zach used positive self-talk to build his confidence. Sonya said, “You can do it. Don’t give up!” Zach repeated these words in his head while trying to get across the trapeze rings. His positive self-talk helped him **keep trying to the end**. Discuss perseverance with students. What positive self-talk do students use to persevere through tough times and reach their goals?

Activities

Instead of Thinking That, Think This

Discuss with students how our thoughts affect our feelings and our abilities to reach our goals. Ask students how negative self-talk might affect their ability to meet their goals. How might positive self-talk affect them? Draw a T-chart on a whiteboard or on poster paper. Ask students about negative self-talk messages they have used or heard. (For example, in the book Zach says, “I’m not sure I can do it” and “I am so done with these rings!”) Write or have students write their examples of negative self-talk on the left side of the T-chart. Now, ask them to turn those negative messages into more positive ones. (For example, Zach changes his self-talk from “I’m not sure I can do it” to “You can do it, don’t give up.”) Write or have students write their positive self-talk statements on the right side of the chart.

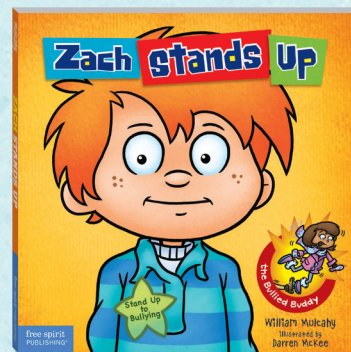
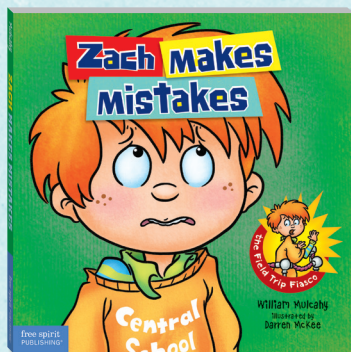
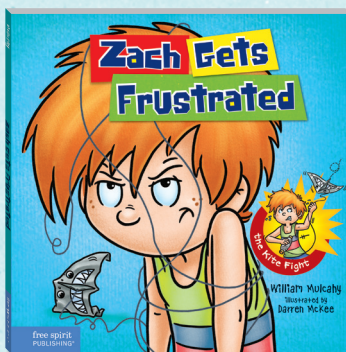
I Can Stay Positive

Have students give themselves positive messages! Students will write three positive self-talk messages they can use in any situation. As a bonus, have students think of a positive message to give someone else. Ask students to share their positive self-talk messages with the class.

I’m Hanging In There!

Print out a copy of the “Hang-In-There Rings” worksheet for each student (see page 26 in the book for downloading instructions). Have students think of a **goal** they’d like to achieve and write it in the first space on the worksheet. Have or help them **make a plan** to achieve this goal and write the plan in the second space. In the fourth space, have or help students come up with positive messages they can tell themselves to help them **keep trying to the end**. Periodically check in with students on the progress they’ve made toward their goals. If their original plan isn’t working, have or help them **make a new plan** and write it in the third space on the worksheet.

Zach Rules Series



Zach, his brothers Alex and Scott, and his parents are a typical family. The boys struggle with getting along, frustrations, social issues, and other everyday problems typical of kids ages five to eight. Each book in the Zach Rules series presents a single, simple storyline involving one such problem. The stories in these early childhood books are humorous and realistic (these boys are not angels), and Darren McKee's illustrations add a lighthearted, commercial appeal that kids will find familiar and fun. As each story develops, Zach and readers learn straightforward tools for coping with their struggles and growing up healthier—healthier because children who know these skills have the potential for building stronger relationships now and in the future. The tools are presented visually to make them easier to understand and remember. Kids will enjoy the familiar, funny stories and easily grasp the important life skills. Each book concludes with a short note to adults to help parents, teachers, counselors, and other grown-ups reinforce the books' messages and practice the skills with their kids.

Each book: 32–36 pp., color illust., HC, 8¼" x 8¼".

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