



TEACH GRATITUDE WITHOUT FORCING A FEELING

A supportive SEL toolkit for noticing what matters while making room for real feelings.

Gratitude can be meaningful without asking children to ignore hard feelings or “look on the bright side.”

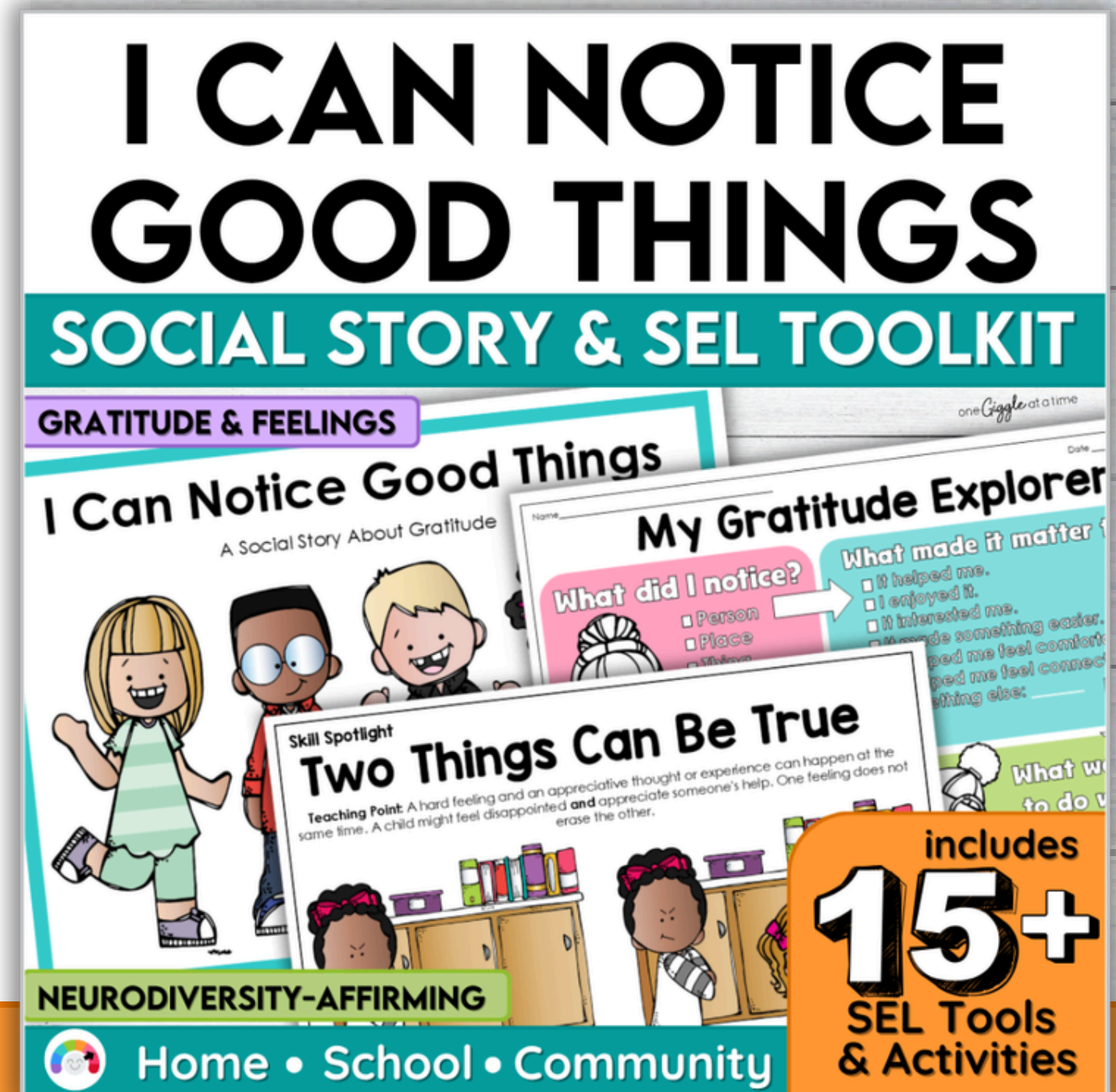
This resource helps children notice people, places, experiences, help, and moments that matter to them—while learning that gratitude can look different for everyone.

Children explore how to:

- notice what matters to them
- recognize different thoughts and feelings
- understand that two feelings can be true
- think about why something mattered
- choose whether or how to show appreciation
- make room for difficult days, too

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KEEP SCROLLING TO SEE WHAT'S INCLUDED!



WHAT'S INSIDE THIS RESOURCE

15+
SEL Tools
& Activities

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Social Story



Let's Talk
Discussion Cards



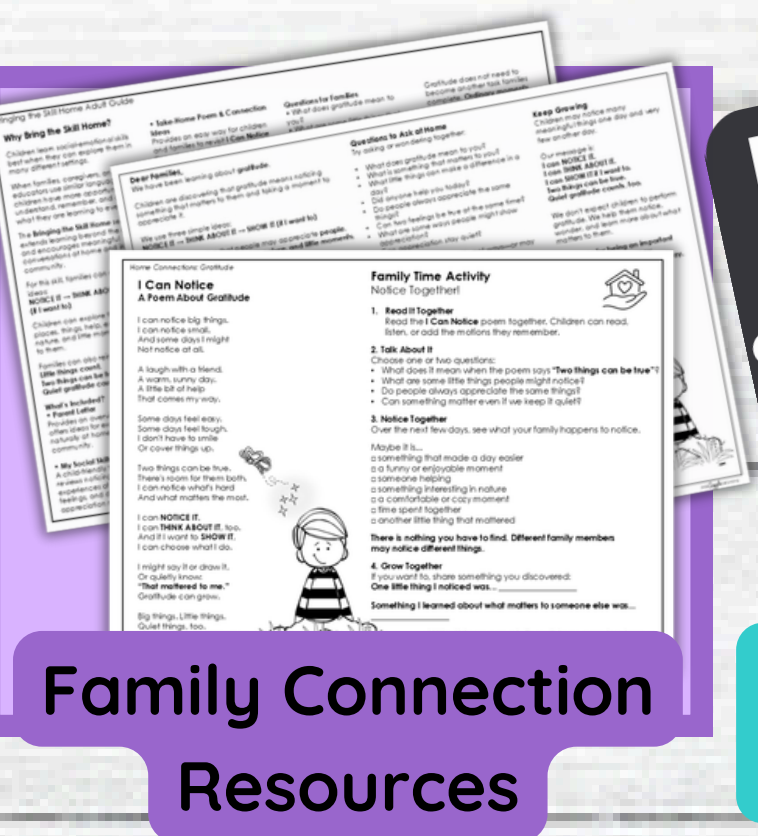
SEL Teaching Cards



Gratitude Explorer



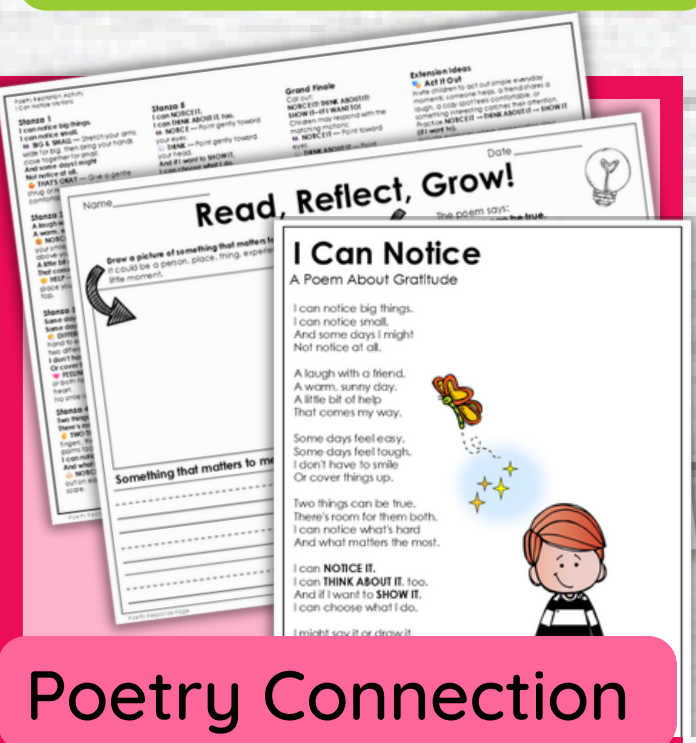
Calm & Confident
Toolbox



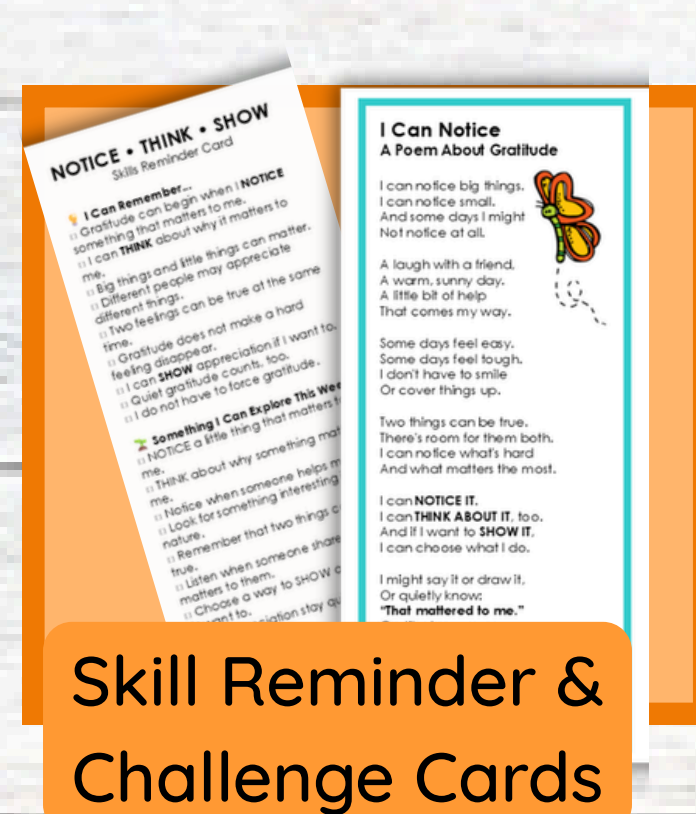
Family Connection
Resources



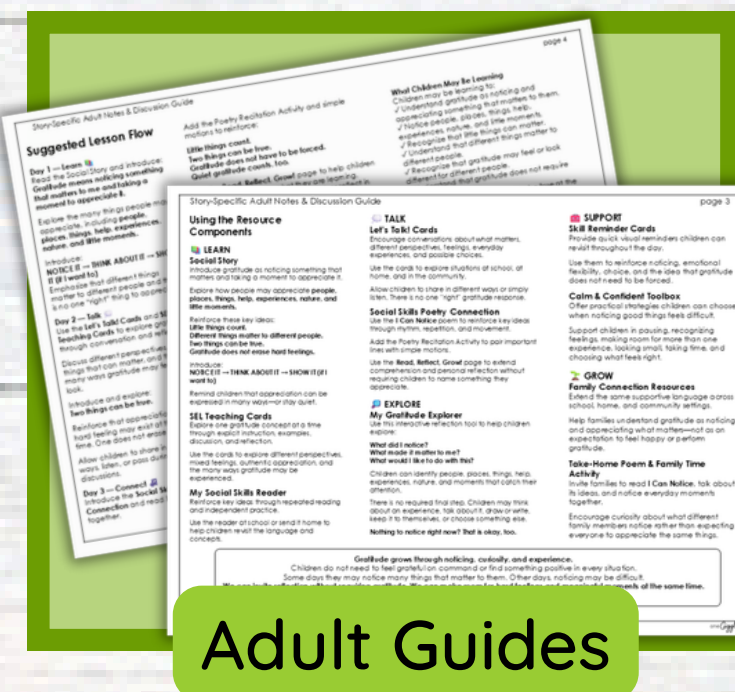
Social Skills Reader &
Narrated Story Video



Poetry Connection



Skill Reminder &
Challenge Cards



Adult Guides

Designed for school, home, counseling, special education, homeschool, and SEL groups

GRATITUDE DOESN'T ERASE HARD FEELINGS

Children can notice something meaningful AND have a hard day.

HARD DAYS ARE REAL

Sad, angry, worried, tired, lonely, frustrated, or disappointed feelings still matter.

TWO THINGS CAN BE TRUE

Something can feel hard AND something else can feel helpful, enjoyable, or important.

NOTHING HAS TO BE FORCED

Children can notice what matters when they are ready.

Not every day feels good. Sometimes I might feel sad, angry, worried, tired, lonely, frustrated, or disappointed. Something difficult may have happened. On a hard day, noticing something I appreciate might be difficult, too. **I do not have to pretend that everything is okay.**



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Sometimes two things can be true at the same time. My day can feel hard... **AND** something can still make me smile. I can feel disappointed...**AND** appreciate someone helping me. I can miss someone... **AND** enjoy time with someone else. **One feeling does not erase another.**



Gratitude does not make a hard feeling disappear. I do not have to replace a hard feeling with a happy one. I can notice what feels hard. I may also notice something that feels helpful, comforting, enjoyable, or important. **There can be room for both.**



Sometimes my brain is busy with something else. My body might feel tired or overwhelmed. I may be having a really hard day. I might not be able to think of something I appreciate right now. **I do not have to force it.** I can try another time if I want to.



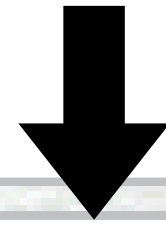
MAKE ROOM FOR THE HARD AND THE GOOD.

NOTICE IT • THINK ABOUT IT • SHOW IT

A flexible way to explore gratitude—not a rule for how children must respond.

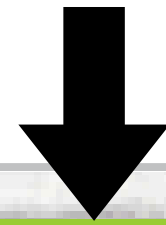
NOTICE IT

Something catches my attention or matters to me.



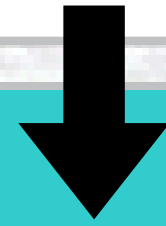
THINK ABOUT IT

I can wonder what I noticed and why it mattered.



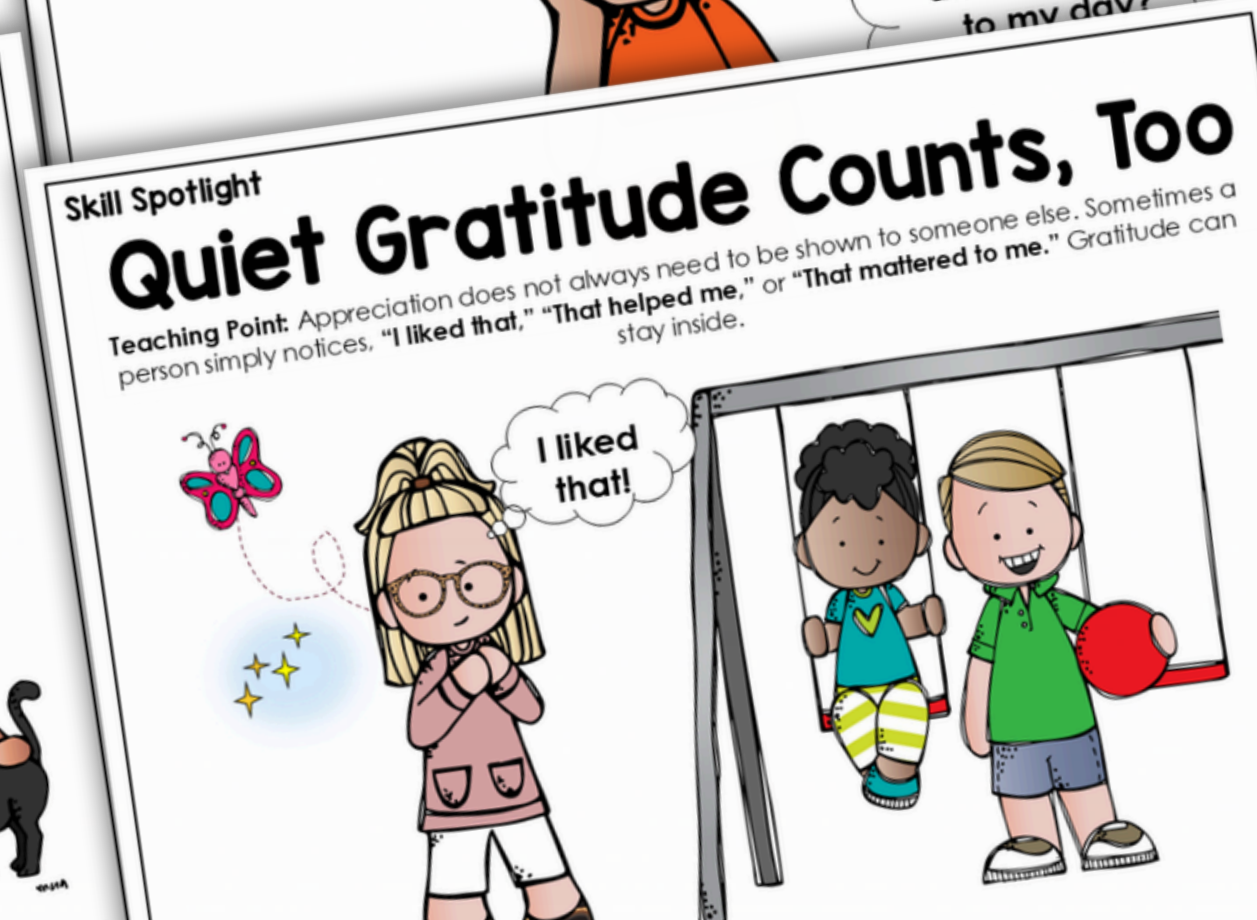
SHOW IT-IF I WANT TO

I may choose words, writing, drawing, gestures, AAC, helping, or another way.



OR KEEP IT QUIET

Appreciation can stay inside me, too.



THERE ISN'T JUST ONE WAY TO EXPERIENCE GRATITUDE.

GRATITUDE CAN HAPPEN EVERYWHERE

Children explore what matters to them throughout everyday life.

AT HOME

People, pets, food, comfort, help, routines, play, and meaningful moments.

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AT SCHOOL

Classmates, adults, books, activities, accomplishments, help, and quiet moments.

IN THE COMMUNITY

Parks, libraries, playgrounds, teams, clubs, neighborhoods, experiences, and people.

There may be things I appreciate at home. Someone might help me. I might enjoy a favorite food. My pet might make me laugh. I might have a comfortable place to rest. People in my home may appreciate different things. **We can listen to one another's ideas.**



There may be things I appreciate at school. A classmate might include me. An adult might help me understand something. I might solve a tricky problem. I might enjoy a book, activity, game, or quiet moment. **Even an ordinary school day may have something that matters to me.**



There may be things I appreciate in my community. I might enjoy a park, library, playground, team, club, neighborhood, or another place. Someone might help me. I might see something interesting. I might have an experience that matters to me. **Gratitude can happen in many places.**



There are things to notice in nature, too. Warm sunshine. A crunchy leaf. A funny-shaped cloud. Rain tapping on a window. A tiny bug moving across the sidewalk. Different people enjoy different things in nature. I can notice what interests **me**.



Notice What Matters...Wherever Life Happens!

GRATITUDE GROWS WITH PRACTICE

Multiple activities help children explore, reflect, communicate, and connect.



READ

Explore gratitude through a relatable social story.



DISCUSS

Talk about feelings, perspectives, and what matters.



NOTICE

Practice recognizing meaningful moments.



REFLECT

Think about why something mattered.



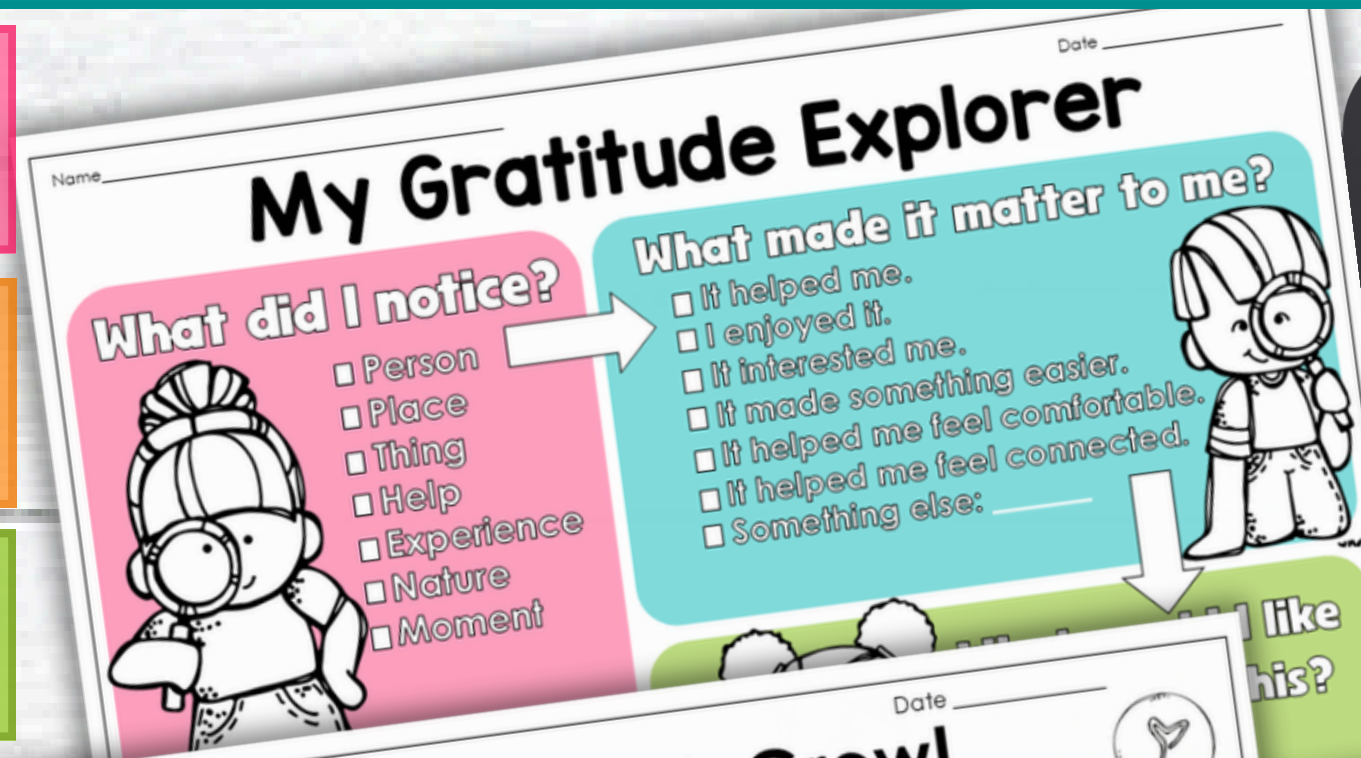
EXPRESS

Explore different ways appreciation can be communicated.



CONNECT

Continue learning at home and in everyday life.



Read • Discuss • Notice • Reflect • Express • Connect

SUPPORT GRATITUDE WITHOUT FORCING POSITIVITY

Practical guidance helps adults respond with curiosity, acceptance, and connection.

NOTICE

Make room for the child's real experience.

GET CURIOUS

Wonder what felt important, helpful, enjoyable, or meaningful.

VALIDATE

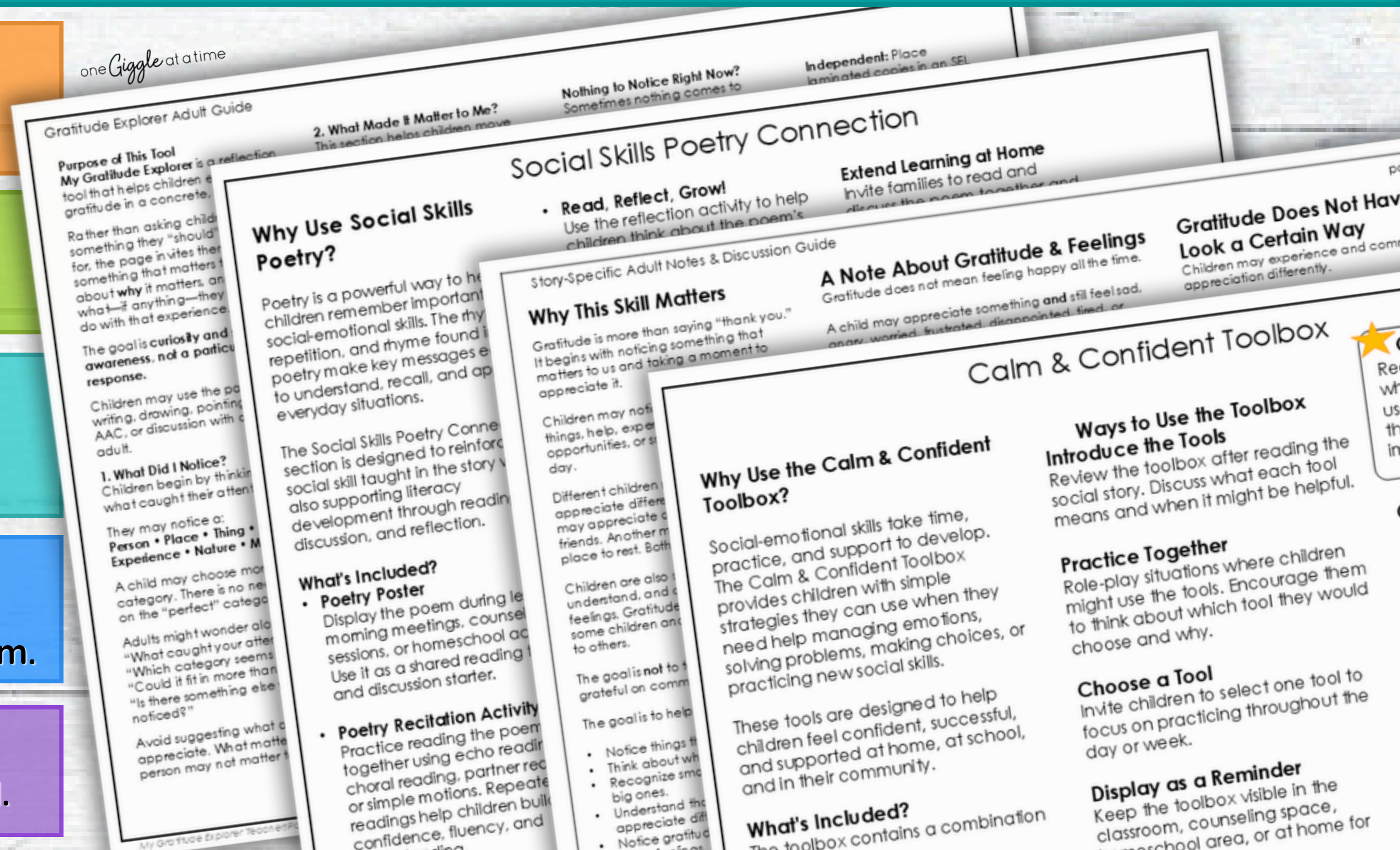
Hard feelings and appreciation can exist together.

OFFER

Provide ways to reflect or communicate without requiring them.

CONNECT

Listen to what matters to the child.



Real feelings + Meaningful moments + Room for both.

ABOUT ONE GIGGLE AT A TIME



Diane Romo is an elementary educator, children's author, and SEL resource creator dedicated to helping adults support children's social, emotional, and behavioral growth.

Her resources are designed for teachers, counselors, interventionists, and families who want practical, engaging tools that build confidence, strengthen relationships, and help children succeed across school, home, and community settings.



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one giggle at a time is a passionate supporter of:

- ♥ Helping teachers create classroom communities that foster positive relationships.
- ♥ Helping students unlock their potential for greatness.
- ♥ Helping parents provide support for young learners to set them up for success.
- ♥ Making learning FUN!

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social emotional learning



classroom community



parent/family connection



classroom management



teaching ideas



seasonal activities