



THE TOOLBOX PROJECT

Tool Icons and Hand Gestures



Breathing Tool

We chose a tape measure to represent the Breathing Tool. Like the breathing exercise you'll read in the lesson, the action of pulling and pushing a measuring tape in and out of its housing can be another good way to think about slow, deliberate breathing. As an alternative to the breathing exercise in the lesson, have students touch their thumbs and index fingers together on each hand like an "OK" sign, then touch the tips of the two "OKs" together. They can pull their hands apart as they count to five and then push them slowly back together as they count to five again. This slow pull-and-push can help students slow down and be intentional when they use the Breathing Tool.



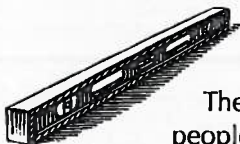
Quiet/Safe Place Tool

We use the earmuffs to represent the Quiet/Safe Place Tool. Earmuffs help us shut out the distractions around us and concentrate. After you talk about this tool, have your students put their hands gently over their ears and close their eyes while they remember their quiet/safe place. Let them know that this gesture can be their way of shutting out the noise around them and can remind them that they have on their own earmuffs to help them find their quiet/safe place.



Listening Tool

The Listening Tool is represented by two fingers gently tapping behind one of your ears. You can introduce this to your students by telling them how carpenters use two fingers tapping on the wall to find a stud. Before there were stud finders, carpenters and builders would tap along a wall with two fingers, listening to how the sound of the tapping changed, depending on whether the wall was covering a stud (a long, vertical piece of wood) or the hollow space between the studs. Have your students practice tapping on the walls and other objects in your classroom, and try to guess whether there is something solid or hollow behind them. You and your students can use the "two-finger-tap" gesture to remind yourselves to use your Listening Tools, and get the whole message behind the words.



Empathy Tool

The Empathy icon is a level. That's because, with empathy, we learn to balance other people's needs, emotions, and situations with our own. Have your students hold out their hands, palms-up, and "see-saw" them up and down, like a balance scale. This gesture can help them remember to weigh both sides of a situation and to show empathy. This gesture embodies the idea of "caring for others, caring for ourselves."



THE TOOLBOX PROJECT

Tool Icons and Hand Gestures, cont.

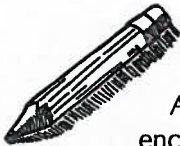


Personal Space Tool

A ball of yarn represents the Personal Space Tool. In this lesson, your students will be participating in an activity where they mark their personal spaces with yarn or string.

Have your students put their hands in front of them, palms facing outward, with the sides of their thumbs touching each other. They should move their hands away from each other, in a kind of curved motion to signify their personal space boundaries.

If you see your students forgetting about their own or someone else's personal space, use this gesture to remind them that we all have boundaries we must respect.



Using Our Words Tool

A pencil is used to signify the Using Our Words Tool. In the Toolbox lessons, we encourage children to write and draw about feelings and ideas, as well as talk about them. Have your students pretend to hold a pencil or marker and "write" their first initials in the air. This gesture can remind them that their words are personal and powerful, and are usually the best way to communicate what they are thinking or feeling.



Garbage Can Tool

The Garbage Can Tool is just what it sounds like—a way and a place to throw out the unkind words and "junky" things that come our way. The gesture for the garbage can goes like this: Have your students make thumbs-up sign with their hands. As they throw unkind words or actions into the garbage can, they flip their thumbs down into their fists to close the lid and "let it go." Alternately, they can form a circle at their sides with one arm, while gesturing with the other as if throwing something away into the space under their arm.



Taking Time Tool

A wristwatch reminds students that the Taking Time Tool is all about using time wisely—to pause and get distance, or to pause and think. Gently tapping their wrists with their index fingers can help students remind themselves to take some time-in or time-away.

rev 8-13



THE TOOLBOX PROJECT

Tool Icons and Hand Gestures, cont.



Please & Thank You Tool

The Please & Thank You Tool is represented by a key. Show your students how to hold an imaginary key and turn it in an imaginary lock. A reminder to “use your key” can help children remember to use these two magic words that can open communication and make a heartfelt connection to others.



Apology & Forgiveness Tool

Apology and forgiveness is the glue that holds and repairs broken relationships. Just like we glue two pieces of paper together, we use apology and forgiveness to glue friendships back together and to restore communication. Students can put their palms together and rub them, as though they are gluing together two sheets of paper, to remind themselves about apologizing and forgiving.



Patience Tool

The Patience Tool icon is a wood plane. A wood plane is used to smooth away the rough surface of wooden objects—but it must be used slowly, gently, and patiently, or it will leave a scar. Have your students put their hands in front of them, palms-down. Then they can put one hand on top of the other, and slowly make a pushing movement, like they are smoothing off a bumpy surface. Students can use this gesture to remind themselves that they need to wait patiently, calmly, and thoughtfully.



Courage Tool

The hanging lamp reminds students that shining a light in the darkness helps us feel safer and braver, and allows us to see things the way they really are. In the same way, it is easier to use our Tools when we see clearly what we are afraid of, and understand why it scares us. We can turn on the lamp inside us to illuminate the darkness and give us courage. Have your students take one hand and softly thump twice on their chests, over their hearts. This can remind them that the light of courage in their hearts will help them use their Tools, even in difficult situations.