



Listening Time:



35:17

SEASON 3, EPISODE 2

We Belong

Belonging — being who you are and being accepted and embraced for who you are — is important for all children and for all people.

When children feel like they belong, they feel accepted and valued, which promotes their overall wellbeing and healthy development. A feeling of belonging helps children to develop healthy relationships, build social skills, and develop a positive self-image. It also helps children to feel supported and empowered, enabling them to explore their interests, express themselves, and take risks. Ultimately, a sense of belonging contributes to children's emotional, cognitive, and social growth, laying the foundation for their future success and happiness.

Establishing a community-oriented culture that fosters a safe and playful learning environment is an important part of helping children feel that they can bring their full selves to school.

These resources are intended to cultivate a shared understanding of what BELONGING looks like in your classroom and to help children find connection to one another in new — and maybe unexpected — ways.



Create a Declaration of Belonging

K-3rd Grade



Goals

- ♥ Help students know that they're in a safe space
- ♥ Inspire buy-in and ownership of classroom culture
- ♥ Help students to develop a sense of belonging

Instructions



Play the Episode

If the class has not yet listened to the Little Kids, Big Hearts "We Belong" episode, start by listening! It's wherever you listen to podcasts. Learn more (or listen) at playsparkler.org/podcast.

Materials



Get Ready! Here's what you'll need:

- ♥ White board/chalk board and dry erase markers/chalk
- ♥ Paper and crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Activity



Either in groups or individually, use the worksheet on p. 3 to invite students to share ideas that will become the seeds for your classroom's declaration of belonging.

- ♥ Say, "We ALL belong here and we all have a right to learn and play. Today we're going to create declaration of belonging, but we'll start with a brainstorm."
- ♥ **After handing out the sheet, ask:** "If we want a classroom where everyone has the right to learn, play, and embrace their unique selves, how might we answer these questions?"
- ♥ Younger children can draw pictures to represent their answers.
- ♥ Once everyone has shared their ideas, notice which themes are repeated by the group — these are the seeds for your declaration. Add these themes to the white board for everyone to see and then fill in the declaration provided:
 - ♥ I will... (personal commitment)
 - ♥ We will... (our classroom commitment)
 - ♥ I believe... (personal goals — what we want to accomplish)
 - ♥ We believe... (collective goals for a classroom that works for all)



Little Kids, Big Hearts Podcast

Learning Extensions

Myself

How should I treat myself and manage how I'm feeling?

Relationships

How should I treat others while working and playing?

Safety

How do we make sure everyone feels safe and listened to?

Learning

How can we tell that everyone is learning?

Our Declaration of Belonging



We are _____
(name of your class)

I will _____

We will _____

I believe _____

We believe _____





The “We Belong” Game


K-3rd Grade



Goals


- ♥ Discover unexpected connections between classmates
- ♥ Cultivate empathy for others
- ♥ Develop a sense of belonging

Instructions

-  **Play the Song “Just As You Are”**
Start this exercise by playing the original song [Just As You Are](#) by Benjamin Weiner in the “We Belong” episode of the Little Kids, Big Hearts Podcast or on YouTube.



Activity

-  The teacher will be the facilitator for the game. Invite everyone to stand with space around them. Then tell the children that they have 10 (long) seconds to find one or more other children who have something in common with them. You can start with the following prompts:

- ♥ Find someone who has the same favorite flavor of ice cream you do
- ♥ Find someone who has the same favorite color
- ♥ Find someone who has the same favorite animal
- ♥ Find someone who enjoys the same sport or hobby
- ♥ Find someone who has lost the same number of teeth you have
- ♥ Find someone who was born in the same month as you
- ♥ Find someone who has the same favorite restaurant you do
- ♥ Find someone who has the same favorite vegetable
- ♥ Find someone who has the same favorite board game
- ♥ Find someone who likes to play the same game/sport at recess