Relationship-building is the ability to develop and keep healthy and rewarding friendships with all individuals and groups. Skills associated with relationship building include:

- **Listening Skills** - Active listening is hinged on the ability to intentionally make the effort to hear and understand what the other people are saying and respond appropriately. Foundational skills that are linked to active listening include good eye contact, limiting distractions, using facial expressions, and giving verbal responses.

- **Cooperation** - Students who cooperate become active partners working toward a common goal. Good cooperation requires students to be flexible, have awareness of self and others, take turns, and show mutual respect for thoughts and opinions.

- **Peer Pressure Resistance** - Strong self-management skills help students to make the decision to not engage in risky unbecoming behaviors. This type of behavior can range from academic integrity to self-destructive patterns.

For more information about the importance of social awareness and relationship building in school please visit CASEL Foundation, Relationship Building.

In order to build strong relationships and find out What Makes Good Friends (K-5) please follow these links: Casey Caterpillar Feels Left Out (K-2), Friendship Soup Recipe (3-5).

There are many fun activities that students can do at home to help them to improve upon or develop relationship skills. Here are a few activities and links that will teach students to work well with others.

- **For students confined to home**, please use the **Musical Scavenger Hunt** documents that are provided with this lesson. These can be great ways to pass the time. Using these worksheets, students will search for musical items around their home. This team effort will encourage solid relationship building skills.
Another activity that strengthens social skills is Puzzle Play. We now know that social skills are important to the cheer and achievement of any child. Further, good social skills allow children to grow and develop into good citizens. Social skills determine how children relate and react to each other and the adults who are in their lives. It is very important that social skills are taught to children at a very early age. Remember, learning does not have to be boring, so use jigsaw puzzles to make it fun and interesting. Puzzle Play teaches:

- **Physical Skills** - holding puzzle pieces and turning them until they fit. Puzzle play specifically develops and improve hand-eye coordination, gross motor skills, and fine motor skills.
- **Cognitive Skills** - solving the problems of the puzzle. The cognitive skills learned from puzzle play include shape recognition, memory, and problem solving.
- **Emotional Skills** - learning patience and goal setting gives a feeling of achievement and accomplishment upon finishing. Puzzle play teaches students to set a series of goals that will help them solve the puzzle. Unlike sports, puzzles require the patience to slowly work through the puzzle before you reach the end.

**Puzzle Play Directions**: Work together to complete a jigsaw puzzle together as a family or if a family is large enough, divide into teams. For an added challenge, add a time limit on completing the puzzle. This activity will teach children of all ages what can be accomplished with a little collaboration.

**Dolly Parton’s Coat of Many Colors** is a delightful story that will help students develop friendship skills. It focuses on how to be friendly, instills the value of self-worthiness, and celebrates differences. The story also teaches kids:

- Appropriate expression of feelings.
- Respect for the feelings of others.
- How to face new circumstances.
- How to deal with failures and rejection.
- How to care for others.

After reading **The Coat of Many Colors**, parents and students can reflect on the story by discussing Dolly’s reaction to being made fun of. Students can also color a coat of many colors or use construction paper to make a coat of many colors. Finally, tell your children about all the wonderful things Dolly Parton has done in her real life to help others.

Developing strong relationship skills leads to behaviors that shape healthy interactions at home, school, and in all future endeavors.