# Lesson 1

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are delighted to introduce you to The SPARK Mentoring Child program – an evidenced-based, social emotional learning program we are implementing in your child’s class. Your school chose the SPARK curriculum because of the confidence they have in its capacity to positively impact your child and because of SPARK’s vision, mission, and values.

**Vision**

Everyone, everywhere realizes their personal potential and achieves amazing things!

**Mission**

To cultivate human potential, one thought at a time, through education, mentoring, and coaching.

**Values**

We believe that no one is broken.

We believe that we are all in it together.

We believe in honoring diversity and inclusion.

We believe in seeing the potential in everyone.

We believe in respect and compassion.

We believe that possibilities are infinite.

We believe in transparency and communication.

We believe that Love Wins!

Today in the first lesson, your child was introduced to the SPARK program. We had fun getting to know your kiddo through a game called “True or False”. During this game, we had to guess what was true about your child. The class also explored what each child would like to achieve during the school year, and in their lifetime. We then created a Goals and Dreams banner, filled with each child’s goals and dreams which will be on display in the classroom!

After each lesson, a note will be sent home with an easy way for you to incorporate your child’s learning at home. For today, ask your child about the big dreams they shared with the class!

Thanks so much for reading! We know communication can be too much sometimes and will try to find that balance between our desire to keep you informed and your very limited time. ☺

We invite you to find out more about the program here: [https://SPARKcurriculum.org/](https://sparkcurriculum.org/) and feel free to reach out to us for any reason at info@theSPARKinitiative.com.

Until next time,

The SPARK Team

# Lesson 2

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are delighted to share with you what your child learned in the SPARK Mentoring program today.

We started to learn about thought by using Play-Doh. Through making different Play-Doh creations, the kids saw that thoughts or ideas just pop into our heads, without us having to do anything at all! Further, if we did not like the first ideas about what to make with our Play-Doh, another thought, or idea came along naturally. We also learned that when we get stuck or do not have any ideas, it is only a matter of time before one comes along. This is one of the great things about thoughts – they will eventually come without us having to do anything!

Next, we introduced Curious the Dragonfly – an animated character who will appear in a few of our lessons. With Curious, we learned that thoughts are what is causing our feelings, 100% of the time. We showed them a video titled *Ice Cream and Monsters*. In the video it shows how it was Curious’ thought about ice-cream causing excitement and the thought of monsters causing fear. You can view the video at the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zd9jcAiadhE>

We have found this simple idea – thoughts cause feelings – to be very profound and liberating because it means we can stop looking for feelings outside of ourselves! As parents, we intuitively know that things like toys are not causing good feelings – mainly because they are forgotten about after a short while. Hopefully, now your child will start to see that too. When our feelings change about the same thing – a toy for example – it is because we have different thoughts about it.

This can be very helpful to remind your child of when they are angry or frustrated by something. As soon as the angry/frustrating thought leaves (like all thoughts do), they will have a different feeling. It can also be helpful to point out times this same thing happens to you. This will show your child, as humans, we all work the same.

Wishing you a great week!

Until next time!

The SPARK Team

# Lesson 3

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are delighted to share with you what your child learned in the SPARK Mentoring program! Today your child learned how their feelings can intensify and weaken. They also learned that their thoughts and feelings do not have to impact their potential!

We had so much fun demonstrating this by using icing and food coloring. We started with white icing and explained that it represents us when our mind is clear. We then added a drop of green food coloring to show what happens when we get a nervous thought. The icing changed slightly but was mostly still white. This represented what happens when we have a nervous thought pop in, but we don’t pay much attention to it. We may feel slightly nervous, but it quickly goes away. Next, we added in several more drops of green food coloring and then explained that this is what happens when we have a nervous thought pop in, think it is true and focus on it. The icing turned a very deep shade of green and we explained that this is what happens when we have LOTS of nervous thinking, it feels very intense. Next, we did the same thing with different food colorings to show how all feelings work the same way! We ended this activity by explaining that all feelings come from thoughts in the moment, and as soon as the thoughts pass (which they always do), a new thought comes through, giving us a new feeling. This is a great way to show how we are never stuck in one feeling. It’s natural to feel different feelings, however once those thoughts leave, we’re back to a clear mind again!

We continued our lesson with a fun skit the kids were able to act out! Through this skit, the kids explored how the main character, Dylan, had feelings that intensified and weaken, however he still managed to star in the school play and his feelings didn’t impact his potential to perform well.

Finally, the class decorated cookies with icing! Ask your child how they decorated their cookie. You can refer to this lesson to help your child navigate their own feelings. For example, you can remind them how we all naturally have white icing, until it gets colored with our feelings. No need to do anything, the thoughts and feelings will move on by themselves!

Wishing you a great week.

Until next time,

The SPARK Team

# Lesson 4

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are delighted to share with you what your child explored in the SPARK Mentoring program. Today, we went to the core of what the program is all about – learning about our SPARK! This is the metaphor that we use to describe that indescribable thing inside of us that is commonly referred to as our wisdom, intuition, common sense, or gut instinct. It is like our inner GPS that helps us navigate life.

To introduce this idea, we did a skit about Freddy who wondered off at the mall and got lost. It was his SPARK that told him to ask for help and remember his mom’s phone number. When he was scared and confused, he could not remember the number because all his scared and nervous thoughts covered his SPARK. His SPARK was still there, ready to help, it just got covered up by nervous thinking.

We then had the class sit on the ground with chairs around them. We explained that the light in the classroom represented our SPARK, shining bright. We then asked the class to share some thoughts Freddy may have had that covered up his SPARK. We wrote the thoughts onto sticky notes and stuck them onto tablecloths. We then started to layer the “Thought Tablecloths” over the chairs, one by one. With each layer of “thought” (tablecloth), the light in the room got dimmer and dimmer. It was still there but the thoughts prevented it from appearing as bright as it was before. We explained that this is exactly how our mind works! When our mind is clear, our SPARK is shining super bright, making it easy to accomplish things. However, when our mind starts to get cluttered with “sticky thoughts”, our SPARK is a little harder to see, but it never goes away. This showed the class, even when they do not feel at their best, their SPARK is still there under the sticky thoughts, ready to shine bright again!

We have seen that when kids realize they have a SPARK that it is always available and can never be broken, life gets MUCH easier for them. They start to become the best version of themselves!

To help reinforce this at home, point out times you can tell their SPARK is shining bright. In other times when it is covered up with loads of sticky thoughts, remind them that it’s still there, waiting to help, just like Freddy’s SPARK was in the story.

Have a great week, until next time!

Love,

The SPARK Team

# Lesson 5

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are delighted to share with you what your child explored in the SPARK Mentoring program today.

This SPARK class was all about decision-making. First, we played a game to demonstrate that we are constantly making decisions, even if we are not aware of them. Decisions like eating, what to wear, brushing our teeth, doing our homework, etc. We are decision-making machines!

We then learned about the “thought chain” - a tool we use to explain how thoughts create our feelings, feelings can lead to a behavior, and the behavior leads to results or consequences. We have found that by explaining this “chain”, it helps them see how they cannot always control their thoughts and feelings, but they can break the chain before the behavior/result occurs. For example, when they recognize how an angry feeling is coming from angry thinking they can pause before it leads to behaviors with negative consequences. We also talked about how thoughts pass and when they do, their feelings will pass as well. Therefore, they can feel their feeling and break the chain by not acting on it, if they know the results will not be good for them. To help internalize this process, the class made their own thought chains with paper strips. Ask your child to show you their Thought Chains!

To help reinforce this at home, when you see your child is acting from an angry or frustrated feeling (and therefore angry or frustrated thought), remind them they can break the chain reaction! They can let the angry/frustrated thoughts pass and act when they are feeling better. As adults, it is easy to see how this is helpful. We all know it is generally not helpful to send an email or call someone we are upset with when we are in an angry/frustrated state. It is the same with our kids! We all get better results when we make decisions from a calm, clear mind.

Wishing you a great week. As always, feel free to reach out anytime with questions or concerns!

Love,

The SPARK Team

# Lesson 6

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are delighted to share with you what we learned in the SPARK Mentoring program today.

We explored creativity and the role that Thought plays in it. The class learned how everyone can be creative since we are constantly having new thoughts and ideas coming in!

We explained that when our SPARK is shining bright, we can think of many cool ideas to create things. We then explored what happens when we do not feel creative, it is simply because our mind creates “sticky” thoughts that discourage us. These sticky thoughts are things like: “I’m not creative”, “I can’t do this”, “I’m not good enough”, etc. The class learned that just because we may have sticky thoughts come in, we do not have to listen to them if we know that is all they are and not necessarily the truth.

We then made “Creativity Creatures” out of nylon, soil, grass seeds and other decorative items to show that all creations in the world, first came from a thought. The class got to see how everyone came up with different ways to decorate and make their “creativity creatures” even though they were all given the same supplies. How cool?!

We hope that your child now understands they ALL have the capacity to receive and nurture ideas from their SPARK. In other words, everyone can be creative. Next time your child feels stuck while trying to make something, remind them to listen to the small voice of their SPARK to show them the way and get unstuck!

Wishing you a great week!

Until next time,

The SPARK Team

# Lesson 7

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are delighted to share with you what your child explored today in the SPARK Mentoring program.

Today was all about the concept of confidence. To start, we discussed what confidence means to us. We compared and contrasted times we felt confident and times we did not feel confident. This led to the class learning that when we do not feel confident, all that is happening is insecure or scary thoughts are covering up our SPARK. Our SPARK is naturally confident, we know it is shining bright when we are feeling “in the zone.”

We demonstrated this idea with volunteers who wore Confidence necklaces. If they believed a sticky thought like, “I’m not good at soccer”, we put a sticky note over their Confidence necklaces. If they did not believe the thought, we tried to put the thought on the confidence necklace, but NOT on the sticky side, which of course resulted in the thought falling right off! This is the perfect metaphor to show how everyone has confidence, the only thing that happens when we do not feel it, is because it gets covered up by sticky thoughts!

Next time you see your child question their confidence - whether it be about doing something or being good enough – remind them that their confidence can always be found in their SPARK, just below those sticky thoughts.

We hope that you and your child will excel in areas you never thought possible with this new way of seeing confidence. We sure do wish we had been taught this as kids!

Have a great week!

With love,

The SPARK Team

## Lesson 8

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are delighted to share with you what your child explored today in the SPARK Mentoring program.

Today was all about frustration and stress. Your child learned how to recognize it, the fact that it is normal and ok to feel those feelings, how to better navigate it, and how situations look differently when we are feeling stressed or frustrated.

To explore these concepts, we did two different activities. First, we had them draw pictures of themselves doing something like taking a test, playing soccer, or talking to friends. We then poured a cup of beads over those pictures and explained that the beads represented frustrated and stressful thoughts. We talked about how it is easier to do those things when our head isn’t full of stressful thoughts. We can still do them, but it might take more time because we are buried under our thoughts.

Next, we used a snow globe to demonstrate the same idea. Our mind will always naturally settle on its own when left alone, like a snow globe when no one is touching it. However, when we shake the snow globe up, it is like what happens when we hold on to things, keep on thinking about a problem, or give our thinking a lot of meaning. It becomes hard to see with all the snow (thoughts) swirling around. However, when we put the snow globe down, the snow eventually settles. We explained that this is just like our mind! It will naturally settle, and things will become clearer again. This explains why sometimes a situation, or test may look harder or easier – it’s all a function of our own “snow globes!” Once we explored this concept, we had the class create snow globes to keep!

Next time you or your child gets stressed, pull out the snow globe and shake it up. Then, set the globe down on a flat surface and watch as it naturally settles on its own. This can help be a reminder to your child that stress and frustration are just thoughts swirling around in their mind and when it settles, so will they!

Have a great week!

With love,

The SPARK Team

# Lesson 9

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are delighted to share with you what your child explored today in the SPARK Mentoring program. We talked about how everyone has different views and preferences and that all of them are coming from our own individual thinking in the moment. In this respect, we are all living in our own separate realities.

To demonstrate how other people’s views and preferences are neither right nor wrong, we showed a variety of different ambiguous pictures and had the kids describe what was going on in each picture. As expected, there were many different ideas of what the picture was. Through a discussion, the kids could see that their version of the truth was just what their thoughts were telling them and not necessarily the *only* truth.

Next, we played a couple of games, including *Would You Rather* to demonstrate that we all have different beliefs and preferences based upon our backgrounds and the thoughts in our heads. We can have the same interests as our friends and family, but we will never think the EXACT same as someone else, and that is okay. That is what makes us who we are and being different than others is unique and is your SPARK in action!

The next time there is a disagreement in your household, remind your kiddo that we are all seeing the same situation through the filter of our own mind – our own realities. When we see this, it is much easier to handle disagreements.

We hope that remembering we are always living in our own separate reality 100% of the time will help everyone in your family and community with their daily interactions.

Have a great week!

With love,

The SPARK Team

**Lesson 10**

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are delighted to share with you what your child explored today in the SPARK Mentoring program. Today was all about unmasking their potential. Our goal was to show the class that their thoughts do not always reflect their abilities and they are the ones who innocently create their own limits. To show this, we used homemade paper masks to visibly demonstrate the “thought masks” that they may sometimes wear that can help or hinder their true potential. In our first activity, we had volunteers wear different paper masks with common thoughts like “no one likes me” or “everyone likes me.” We asked the volunteers how they would respond to different situations depending upon the “thought mask” they were wearing at that time. For example, if a group of kids were standing in a circle talking next to them, how would they react if they were wearing the “no one likes me” mask vs. “the everyone likes me” mask. This was a real eye-opener to show how they are always acting according to whatever “thought mask” looks real to them in the moment. We talked about how the masks are not necessarily the truth and they can metaphorically take them off once they understand that they are simply thoughts!

We then revisited the goals and dreams flags that we created in the first lesson. We had them think about any “thought masks” they were wearing at the moment that might prevent them from realizing their goals and dreams. We then had the class create “thought masks” that could help them achieve their dreams and had fun decorating them!

We hope that after today your child will see that possibilities and their own potential are truly infinite. When you see them wearing a “thought mask” that is inhibiting their potential, invite them to take it off, like we did today!

Next week is the last week of our program. We will be holding a simple graduation ceremony and would be delighted to see you there. Please join us at: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

With love,

The SPARK Team

# Lesson 11

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As we come to the end of our SPARK program, today we had fun playing a trivia game to review everything that we have learned. Through this game, we were able to see how much learning had taken place and are really excited about your child’s ability to thrive in life, utilizing this new knowledge.

We were delighted to see some of you at the graduation ceremony today and share with you the wonderful achievements of the class!

We were also grateful for those of you who filled out our surveys, which will help us continue to improve the impact that we are having. For those who haven’t filled out the short, five question survey and would like to help us in this endeavor, please find a link to the survey here: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Wishing you well in your critical role raising your amazing little humans. We are always here if you have questions or want to get in touch for any reason.

With love,

The SPARK Team