



## ***What do we mean by REAL Character Development?***

At its core, REAL is about delivering a Character Development Program that is:

- **Relevant:** Relatable to the needs of today's students, educators, and parents. We focus on family values such as honesty and hard work while also teaching about the real-world challenges that students will face such as stress management, relationship building, and future readiness.
- **Empowering for Educators and Parents:** Our program is based on educational transparency. We want all students, educators and parents to be involved in the learning process. Offering practical, hands-on activities that students can immediately apply in their lives.
- **Actionable Evidence:** Our program is tried and true tested by third-party experts and schools, grounded in research and best practices, ensuring that every strategy, activity, and lesson plan you implement is backed by scientific data and proven effective.
- **Lasting:** REAL Skills Building is not just a one-time intervention but a foundation that students build on over time, supporting their growth throughout their education and beyond.

## ***Why "REAL Character Development = REAL Results" Matters:***

Our slogan highlights that our true, high-quality program, when implemented thoughtfully and consistently, has the power to produce measurable and transformative results. It reinforces your school's commitment to delivering character development programs that make a significant and lasting difference for students and educators alike.



By embracing **REAL**, your school ensures that you provide the tools and strategies necessary to foster growth, ultimately leading to **REAL results**—not just in the classroom but in students' lives.

## ***How Does Storytelling Help Students Learn?***

### **The Power of Stories in Education**

Literature serves as a powerful tool in teaching Character Development because it immerses students in narratives that mirror the complexities of human emotions, relationships, and choices. Stories allow children to explore diverse perspectives and experiences, often different from their own, fostering empathy and social awareness. By stepping into the shoes of a character, students can understand emotions, motivations, and the consequences of actions in a safe and engaging way. This helps them develop emotional vocabulary and recognition, key components of self-awareness and emotional regulation.

### **Connecting Emotional Concepts to Real-Life Scenarios**

Through literature, abstract Character Development concepts such as self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making become tangible and relatable. Characters in stories face challenges and make decisions that resonate with students, providing natural opportunities for reflection and discussion. For example, when a character learns to navigate conflict or express gratitude, students can analyze the choices made and consider how they might handle similar situations. This connection between literature and real life deepens students' understanding of these principles and enhances their ability to apply these skills in their own lives.

### **Promoting Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving**

Reading literature also cultivates critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are central to Character Development. As students analyze a story's plot, characters, and conflicts, they learn to evaluate different perspectives and consider multiple solutions to problems. Literature invites them to reflect on ethical dilemmas, weigh the consequences of decisions, and practice perspective-taking. These activities align seamlessly with the program objectives, helping students build the cognitive and emotional skills that are based in core values. By integrating literature into the program instruction, educators not only enrich students' academic learning but also empower them to thrive.



### **Emozi®'s Story-Based Approach**

The Emozi® program uniquely integrates literature into character development instruction by using engaging, developmentally appropriate stories featuring beloved characters like Ollie the Owl, Benny the Bear, Harriet the Hare, Betty the Beaver, Sammy the Squirrel, and Buzz the Bee. In preschool and kindergarten, short, relatable tales introduce young learners to foundational character strength concepts through the adventures of these animal friends. For grades 1 and 2, the same characters continue to guide students through more complex social-emotional challenges, helping them develop skills like sharing, empathy, and problem-solving. By grade 3, Emozi introduces small chapter books featuring Ollie and his friends as they navigate relatable situations that reflect students' growing emotional and social experiences. In grades 4 and 5, the program evolves into a novel-per-grade format, with each lesson tied to a specific chapter. These novels provide deeper engagement and allow students to explore SEL topics like ethical decision-making, conflict resolution, and self-awareness in greater depth. By following Ollie and his friends' journeys, students connect emotionally with the characters, making Character Development concepts more meaningful and impactful.

### ***Program Components:***

Each Emozi® classroom implementation package includes the following materials:

- Teacher Guide
- Activities and Worksheets
- Posters for enhanced implementation



## ***Grade 5 Sample Lesson: Leading by Example with Positive Peer Influence***

Lesson Objective: Students will explore how their actions influence others by demonstrating positive peer influence and using the S.T.A.R. strategy to reflect on choices and their impact.

Materials Needed:



- Chapter 24 from *The Star Squad: Navigating Fifth Grade Adventures*
- S.T.A.R. Reflection Worksheet
- Chart paper or whiteboard
- Markers
- Home Connection Letter

Introduction to the Topic (10 minutes)

Greeting Outline:

- Welcome the children.
- Briefly discuss what it means to be a positive influence.
- Introduce a discussion starter.

**Greeting and Circle Time Teacher Script**

### **1. Warm Welcome and Opening Discussion:**

- "Today, we're going to talk about how the actions we take can influence others. Being a positive influence doesn't mean we have to do grand things—small actions can make a big difference in creating a kind and supportive community. We'll explore how the characters in our story learned this lesson and think about ways we can lead by example."

### **2. Discussion Starter**



- “Can you think of a time when someone’s kind action encouraged you to do something positive?”
- “Why do you think small actions can have a big impact (make a big difference)?”

Read the Chapter (15 minutes)

Story Time Outline:



- Read Chapter 24: "Leading by Example with Positive Peer Influence" aloud to the class.
- Ask questions during key parts in the chapter.
- Reflection discussion questions.

### Story Time Teacher Script:

#### 1. Prepare the Children for the Story:

- "We're going to read a chapter from The Star: Squad Navigating Fifth Grade Adventures, called Leading by Example with Positive Peer Influence." (Read the story aloud, pausing at key moments to ask questions and engage the children.)

#### 2. Read the Chapter with Emphasis on Key Moments:

- **While reading**, pause during key moments.
- **Ask Questions:**
  - What did Mr. Jenkins say about influence?
  - How did Harriet describe the ripple effect of kind actions?
  - What example did the friends use to demonstrate positive peer influence?
  - Why was it helpful to include the student in their group project?
  - What did Sammy do during lunch to show positive influence?
  - How did other students respond to the friends' actions?
  - What did the group learn about leading by example?
  - Why did Buzz feel good about their actions?
  - How did the friends reflect on their choices?
  - What commitment did they make moving forward?



### **Leading by Example with Positive Peer Influence**

As the end of May approached, the friends noticed that the school year had brought a lot of changes. They had grown not only as individuals but also as a group, and their experiences together had strengthened their bonds. Now, they started thinking about the kind of influence they could have on others at school.

Ollie had a conversation with Mr. Jenkins one afternoon. “You’ve all been great at learning to manage relationships and work together,” Mr. Jenkins said. “But remember, being a good friend and classmate isn’t just about how you treat each other. It’s also about how your actions can influence others.”

Ollie shared this thought with the group, and they began talking about how they could set a positive example for their peers.

Harriet said, “I’ve noticed that when one person does something kind, it often encourages others to do the same. Like, when someone picks up trash at recess, other kids start doing it too.”

Maya added, “It’s like our actions create a ripple effect. Even small things can make a big difference.”

The friends realized that setting a good example didn’t have to mean doing something big or dramatic; even small actions could encourage others to make better choices.

The group decided to use the S.T.A.R. strategy to guide them in demonstrating positive peer influence:

1. Stop: They would pause to notice situations where their actions could set a good example.
2. Think: They would consider how their choices could affect others. Would their actions encourage kindness, helpfulness, or responsibility?
3. Act: They would take actions that showed positive behaviors, such as including others, helping with tasks, or standing up for what was right.
4. Reflect: Afterward, they would think about how their actions had influenced others and what impact they noticed.





The friends kept an eye out for opportunities to demonstrate positive influence. One day, during a group project in class, they noticed that some students were frustrated because one person wasn't participating.

"I think we should try to include that person more," Bennie suggested. "Maybe they just don't know where to start."

The friends invited the student to join in the planning and assigned them a specific task. The student hesitated at first, but with a bit of encouragement, they began to contribute. Soon, the whole group was working more smoothly.

A few days later, during lunch, Sammy saw a classmate sitting alone. "Remember what we talked about during Cultural Appreciation Week?" he said. "Let's invite them to sit with us." The friends agreed and called the classmate over. As they chatted, they noticed other students doing the same with kids who were sitting alone. The simple act of inviting someone to join them had created a welcoming atmosphere.

The group met after school to discuss what they had noticed over the past week. "I didn't realize how much our actions could affect others until I saw it happen," Buzz said. "It felt good to know that we helped people feel more included."

Harriet agreed. "It's not about being perfect all the time; it's about making choices that encourage others to be their best too."

The friends realized that setting a positive example didn't mean they always had to be leaders. Sometimes, it was about doing the right thing quietly and letting their actions speak for themselves.

The friends decided to keep practicing positive peer influence by making an effort to show kindness, help out, and include others whenever they could. They knew that leading by example was an ongoing process, and they felt inspired to continue setting a good tone for their class. Ollie summed it up. "When we make good choices, we're not just helping ourselves. We're helping everyone around us too. And that's the kind of influence I want to have." As the school year drew closer to its end, the friends carried with them the understanding that their actions could create a ripple effect, spreading kindness and



encouraging others to do the same. With each small choice they made, they were showing that being a positive influence wasn't just about talking—it was about doing, and doing it together.

### 3. Post-Chapter Teacher Script

- “Wow, what a great chapter! It was so interesting to learn about positive peer influences.”

### 4. Post-Book Questions

These questions encourage children to think deeply about what they listened to and how they can make positive peer influences.

- How did the friends' actions influence others in their class?
- Why is it important to notice when someone is left out?
- How can small actions lead to big changes?
- What does it mean to lead by example?
- How did using the S.T.A.R. strategy help the friends make thoughtful choices?
- What makes it challenging to set a positive example sometimes?
- Why is it important to reflect on our actions?
- How can you apply what you learned from the story in your own life?
- What are some ways you can show positive peer influence in class or at home?
- How does leading by example contribute to a better school environment?

### Do an Activity (20 minutes)

- Students will reflect on a recent situation where they noticed they could have influenced others positively or missed an opportunity to do so.
  - Using the S.T.A.R. Reflection Worksheet, they will identify what happened, how they could have acted, and how they can apply what they learned in the future.
- Create an Action Plan for Positive Influence
  - Students will brainstorm and write down one way they can demonstrate positive peer influence this week.





- Encourage them to think of small actions, like including someone in an activity, offering help, or giving a kind word to a classmate.

### Activity 1: S.T.A.R. Reflection and Action Plan



#### 1. Introduce Activity

- "We're going to reflect on a time when you could have influenced others positively and did not."

#### 2. Explain the Worksheet

- "Using the S.T.A.R. Reflection Worksheet, write what the situation was and how you could have acted differently."

#### 3. Brainstorm

- Brainstorm and write down one way you can demonstrate positive peer influences this week.

#### 4. Wrapping it Up

- "Great job! Think of small actions like including someone in an activity, offering help, or giving a kind word to a classmate."

### Wrap Up the Lesson (5 minutes)

#### 1. Review and Reflection Overview:

- Review what they learned about making thoughtful and positive choices.
- Ask a few of the reflection questions:
  - "What new insight did you gain from reflecting on your actions?"
  - "What is one action from your plan that you're excited to try this week?"
  - "How do you think leading by example can improve our class community?"



## Review and Reflection Teacher Script

### 1. Gather in a Circle for Reflection:

- "Today, we learned that leading by example is about making thoughtful choices that encourage others to be their best. Each small action we take can create a ripple effect and inspire others to make positive choices too."

### 2. Closing

- "You all did an amazing job today learning about positive influences and how you can make a difference in the classroom."

## Parent Letter

### Sending Information Home:

- Provide each child with a letter to take home to their parents explaining the lesson.
- Include the story summary, the importance of trust and dependability, and how parents can reinforce these concepts at home.



Dear Caregiver,

Today, your student participated in a lesson on leading by example and using positive peer influence. Through discussions, reading, and reflective activities, students learned how small actions can have a big impact in creating a supportive community.

Your student also used the S.T.A.R. strategy to reflect on their actions and develop an action plan for the week:

- ★ Stop: Breath.
- ★ Think: Brainstorm Solutions.
- ★ Act: Choose the best solution.
- ★ Reflect: How did it go?



Encourage your child to share their action plan with you and reflect on their experiences throughout the week. Thank you for supporting your child's growth in becoming a positive influence within our school community.

Sincerely,



## ***S.T.A.R. Reflection Worksheet***

### **Situation:**

What situation did you experience where you could have had a positive influence?

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### **Stop:**

How did you feel at the time?

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### **Think:**

What would have been a positive way to influence the situation?

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### **Act:**

What could you have done to lead by example?

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### **Reflect:**

How do you think your actions would have made a difference?

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### **My Action Plan for the Week:**

One way I will demonstrate positive influence this week is:

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