



Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to Soul Shoppe! We're looking forward to supporting your children in their friendships, school life and **social-emotional development** this year. Our workshops are fun and interactive, weaving life skills and tools through stories that look like common "real-life" challenges and experiences. In their first workshop, "Check In: Who's In Charge?," we'll work on developing **emotional self-awareness** and **self-management** skills.

Here is the language we'll be using:

- The "Balloon": An imaginary place inside all of us where feelings build up. Feelings can build up when we don't get our needs met or when challenges arise. If you're upset, acting out or withdrawing, you probably have a "full balloon."
- "Leaking"/"Emptying" the Balloon: If we don't pro-actively let our feelings out in healthy ways (emptying), they build up, and we often end up taking them out on those around us (leaking). When we empty, we're "in charge" of our behaviors, but when we leak, the full balloon is in charge, and we sometimes do or say things we regret.
- "Checking In": The practice of stopping and noticing what feelings are in our balloons and what needs we have. If your kids are fighting, whining or acting out, ask them, "Can we check in? What's in your balloon?" Look for the need underneath the feelings, and help them articulate it with the I Message.
- I Message: One of the best ways to communicate our needs and ask for help! The I Message has 4 steps. Simply fill in the blanks: 1. I feel.... (name a feeling, if you're starting with "like..." you're probably not naming a feeling!) 2. When people.... (say what happened) 3. I need.... (try to say what you need for yourself, not from another. Ie, I need space NOT I need you to move!) 4. Will you please....? (make a request kindly)

Please ask your kids what they learned at Soul Shoppe, ask them to explain the balloon to you, and talk to them about how you can use the tools as a family! We all have feelings and needs, and we could all use help sometimes with getting those needs met. Feel free to let us know what your kids think, or any questions you have!

We look forward to serving your children and your school this year.

Peace,

The Soul Shoppe Workshops Team