



## The Toolbox Project in Overview

### What is The Toolbox Project?

The Toolbox Project provides schools, organizations, children and their families with a comprehensive and systematic K-5 curriculum that teaches fundamental tools and practices in personal and social awareness. Through a common language based on the metaphor of twelve simple tools, (see below), the necessary building blocks are established for literacy in self-knowledge, self-awareness, self-control and empathy for others. The Toolbox Project rekindles the intrinsic goodness and wholeness that lies within children, their families and communities.

### The following *twelve tools* provide the framework for The Toolbox Project: **Tools for Learning – Tools for Life**

1. **Breathing Tool:** Calming ourselves; checking in.  
I can take a breath. It takes only 3–5 seconds to calm myself.
2. **Quiet/Safe Place:** Remember your quiet place.  
There is always my quiet/safe place. It is there for me.
3. **Listening Tool:** We listen with our ears, eyes and heart.  
When I listen as well as hear, I can really understand.
4. **Empathy Tool:** Caring for others, caring for ourselves.  
When I walk in someone else’s shoes, it opens my heart.
5. **Personal Space:** Where my space ends and yours begins.  
I have a right to my space, and a responsibility to protect yours.
6. **Using Our Words:** The right words, in the right way, for the right reasons.  
I ask for what I want and need. I am a problem–solver.
7. **Garbage Can:** Put it in the garbage can and walk on by.  
I choose to let the little things go.
8. **Taking Time Tool:** Time-in and time-away.  
I use my time wisely.
9. **Please and Thank You:** Words that open.  
I treat others with respect, appreciation, and gratitude.
10. **Apology and Forgiveness:** Words that transform and repair.  
I admit my mistakes. I accept that others make mistakes, too.
11. **Patience Tool:** Quiet waiting.  
I am strong enough to wait.
12. **Courage Tool:** Using your Tools when others are not using theirs.  
I have the courage to do the “right” thing.



## **Why is This Program Unique?**

The Toolbox Project is unique because it offers broad and complex instruction in concepts and patterns regarding self and others without being encumbered by psychological jargon. It is accessible through its practicality, simplicity of metaphor and consequent practices. By redirecting children back to what they already know, the twelve tools strengthen a sense of self, which in turn naturally supports empathetic connection with others.

The Toolbox approach brings awareness to patterns of thought and behavior at the core of human development and experience. Once these patterns are accessed, the twelve tools strengthen self-awareness and reflection while transforming interactions within the entire school community. When students make this link, ownership of and value for the process is built from within, while self-worth and self-management get reinforced. As a result, *other* strength-based programs, which resonate with these self-evident truths, are more easily integrated and or embodied.

## **What are the Results of the Toolbox Project?**

The Toolbox Project has an immediate impact on challenges to children and adults related to emotion, motivation, and socially appropriate behavior, with a measurable effect across the entire school community regardless of socio-economic, religious or cultural backgrounds.

Within weeks after installation of the Toolbox Program, schools report a noticeable decrease in unkind and self-defeating behaviors among the children. Within 14 weeks, the school will see a measurable decrease in many affective and social difficulties among the entire school community. There will be improvement in communication and a lessening of conflict within the family system of many students, including, but not limited to, chronic issues of sibling rivalry, parent-child difficulties and daily stressors within their lives.

Most importantly, we see that The Toolbox Project has an immediate and continuing positive effect on the lower-functioning and underserved children of the student body. Toolbox gives these children a map, a voice and tools to navigate the complexity of their worlds. This includes children with learning differences, adjustment difficulties, cultural differences, A.D.D., and temperament issues. Of course The Toolbox Project also serves higher-functioning children and adults by strengthening their communication, making them even better role models in their communities.

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