# **Building Bridges: Empowering ADHD Kids in School Settings**

A neuroscience-informed, school-based framework integrating social-emotional learning, emotional translation, and self-advocacy — piloted at the dePaul School for Dyslexia (2024/25).



- This poster presents outcomes from an ongoing pilot collaboration at the dePaul School for Dyslexia (Clearwater, FL).
- The project examines how a multimodal, neuroscience-informed framework—integrating emotional regulation, psychoeducation, empathy-based communication, and self-advocacy—can enhance well-being, focus, and classroom participation for both neurodivergent and neurotypical students.
- Implemented flexibly across grades 2–8, the pilot included both in-class and after-school applications.
- Core components—Happy Core™ Program, Homework Hero™, More Than Behavior™ Letters, and Advocacy Lab™—illustrate how evidence-based mind-body, reflective, and narrative practices can create calmer classrooms, stronger communication, and confident, emotionally literate learners.

Student School Future

## **AWARENESS**

## Feel Seen

**Recognize Your Story** 



- Teaching practical, brain-based strategies for emotional regulation, attention, and resilience using humor and SEL storytelling.
- Turn reflection into real-world emotional and social skills practice.



## **Pilot Structure**

- Weekly read-aloud sessions from The Secret Society of G.O.A.T. and ready to print cross-subject worksheets that mix humor, SEL, and real-world learning.
- Adaptable 20–40 minute sessions for classroom transitions or SEL blocks.



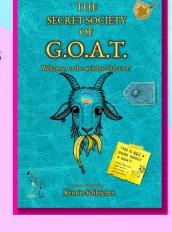
#### **7-Learning Objectives**

- Understand emotions using simple, brainbased language.
- Practice real strategies to calm, refocus, and recover.
- Build belonging, confidence, and selfacceptance.



#### - Expected Outcomes

- Greater emotional awareness and engagement.
- Improved self-regulation and empathy.
- Notable gains in calm, confidence, and connection.



## Regulation Build Focus

**Turn Emotion into Action** 



## Purpose:

- Help students channel strong emotions into focus, motivation, and goal-directed action.
- Teach practical tools for calming, initiating, and sustaining effort.
- Foster executive-function growth through integrated mind-body learning, play and art.



#### **Pilot Structure**

- After School Club/ 12 students / grades 2-4.
- Six weekly 90-minute sessions blending guided hypnosis, NLP strategies, play, movement, and art-based reflection to strengthen focus, confidence, and selfregulation.



#### Learning Objectives

- Recognize "Caveman Brain" vs. "Boss Brain" responses.
- Apply calming and focus tools to begin and complete tasks.
- Strengthen intrinsic motivation, regulation, and follow-through.



## - Outcomes

- Calmer transitions and higher engagement.
- Stronger self-regulation and empathy.
- Improved follow-through and focus.





## Connection

## **Be Understood**

**Turn Misunderstandings into Empathy** 



### **Purpose:**

- Strengthen home-school communication through empathy-based reflection.
- Translate behavior into emotional and practical insights for teachers and parents.
- Support educators in responding to needs, not just visible behaviors.



### **Pilot Structure**

- Grade 7–8 implementation using More Than Behavior™ letters ("Dear Me," "Dear Teacher," "Dear Grown-Ups").
- Two-part reflection: guided questionnaire + workshop on learning patterns and supports.



### **Learning Objectives**

- Increase emotional self-awareness and communication skills.
- Enhance educator understanding of learning and behavior roots.
- Model constructive 504/IEP collaboration language.



## Outcomes

- Stronger empathy and trust between home and school.
- Students reflected greater ownership of learning needs.
- 504 conversations shifted toward personalization and shared understanding.



## Advocacy Be Heard

**Advocate and Apply Your Strengths** 



## **Purpose:**

- Equips 8th-graders to express how they learn and what supports them best as they transition to high school.
- Using "Dear Younger Me" and "Dear Teacher" letters to transform reflection into self-advocacy.



## **Pilot Structure**

- Ongoing Project: The Advocacy Lab
   Session 1: Guided questionnaire; student-
- authored "Dear Future Teacher."
   Session 2: Compare & Practice Alrendered Dear Teacher letter; Advocacy

Snapshot + brief role-play/email script.



#### **Learning Objectives**

- Turning self-awareness into advocacy.
- Practice expressing learning needs using solution- based language.
- Strengthen confidence and readiness for new academic settings.



## **Expected Outcomes**

- Increased reflection and participation
- Greater comfort sharing learning needs
- Smoother transitions and stronger rapport



## Conclusion

- The Happy Core™ Framework offers a **replicable, school-based model** integrating emotional regulation, empathy-based communication, and student self-advocacy.
- Grounded in neuroscience and practical application, it bridges emotional, cognitive, and behavioral supports within everyday learning environments.
- Early results from the dePaul pilot show measurable gains in regulation, confidence, and engagement, highlighting its adaptability across school and counseling settings and its equal value for neurodivergent and neurotypical learners.
- Future studies will examine scalability and educator-training pathways to inform broader implementation and curricular alignment with standard SEL instruction.

Designed to be shared — adaptable for classrooms, counseling, and community learning spaces.







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