

# The Domino Effect

This lesson focuses on our responsible actions and how they affect others. Students will work together to generate a list of ways we each practice responsibility and how it influences others. They will then use dominoes to show how it creates a chain reaction. When someone drops the ball and is irresponsible, others are affected.

**Caring Sub-Concepts**

Self Discipline, Kindness

**Lesson Timeframe**

25-30 minutes

**Required Materials**

❑ Dominoes (15 per pair/group)

**Standards Map**

This lesson aligns with CASEL Competencies, National Health Education Standards, and Common Core State Standards. Please refer to the [Standards Map](#) for more information.



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AS A RECOMMENDED PROGRAM  
FOR SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING.  
See last page for details.

## Lesson Objective

Students will be able to:

- Develop a collaborative list of common ways/environments to show responsibility.
- Use dominoes to demonstrate an understanding of one-to-one correspondence up to 15.

## Teacher Connection/Self-Care

Being responsible is often equated with being perfect. Each one of us will drop the ball at some point. How you choose to handle those moments says a great deal about how you view your responsibilities. Take some time this week to examine your response to natural human error. Be kind to yourself and move forward.

### Tips for Diverse Learners

- Provide number cards as a visual representation during the domino counting.
- Draw a simple picture next to common words used in the brainstorming session.
- Pair students up during the domino activity to help with poor dexterity.



## Share

5 minutes

Look for signs of self-discipline and responsibility using your desk. (Make sure to have areas that demonstrate self-discipline as well as areas that could use improvement):

- What are some ways I, as the teacher, have practiced self-discipline (my desk is organized, the papers are sorted, etc.)
- What are some areas that need a little more attention? (make sure to have at least one area)

**RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS**  
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As a class, take a quick tour of the cubbies/coat rack area and highlight some cubbies that are well-organized and demonstrate responsibility.

We can help each other choose responsible actions as we start and end our day in this area of our classroom!



## Inspire

### How are We Responsible?

10-12 minutes

Review the definition of **responsible**: *being reliable to do the things that are expected or required of you.*

Explain that each of us makes responsible choices every day, all day long! We chose to get up today. We chose to get on the bus and come to school. We chose to learn. We chose to be kind to our classmates and teacher. When we treat others with kindness and respect, we are acting responsibly. Let's work together to create a giant list of all the ways we have shown responsibility in our day so far.

#### Instructions:

1. Divide your whiteboard into 3 categories: Students, Teacher, People at Home (parents/families, guardians, siblings, etc.)
2. Ask the following question for each category: *How did people in this group show responsibility this morning?*
  - a. **Students:** Get up on time, make bed, clean up after breakfast, treat others kindly on the bus, listen to the teacher, etc.
  - b. **Teacher:** Dressed for work, packed lunch, planned for school, set up classroom, made copies for math, etc.
  - c. **People at Home:** Woke up children, ate breakfast, followed rules when driving to work, completed work duties, etc. (Make sure your list has at least 15 items altogether)

All of these actions demonstrate responsibility. All of us work together, each person doing their part. It is very important to follow through on your responsibilities.



## Empower

15 minutes

Students will use a math activity to illustrate the importance of following through on their responsibilities.

#### Instructions:

1. Divide the students up into pairs or groups of three.
2. Pass out 15-20 dominoes for each group.
3. Explain that each domino represents a responsible choice that someone made today. Let's see how all of our responsible choices build up and create a positive chain of responsibility.

### Conducting the Activity:

- Read off each responsible choice written down during the brainstorming session.
- As you read it, have each group line up a domino. *You will need to demonstrate how to line up the dominoes so they create a chain.*
- Read at least 15 choices so every group has a nice long domino chain in front of them.

**NOTE:** Explain that dominoes will fall down during this activity. That's ok! This represents our forgetfulness at times. Sometimes we fall down. Sometimes we forget to do the things we said we would do. However, we can always be honest about our forgetfulness and go back and try again. Make sure to pick up those fallen dominoes. They deserve a second chance too!

- Circulate around to pairs/groups as they finish. Have them each count the number of responsible choices made today. This can serve as an evaluation for one-to-one correspondence counting up to 20 if needed.

### Finishing the Activity:

- When the chains are completely standing, tell students that the very first domino represents getting up on time. Imagine everyone overslept that morning and did not wake up on time. What might happen? *Allow students to respond.*
- Then, have students push that first domino over, which should knock down the whole chain. *Explain how that one incident has an effect on others and on our ability to complete other morning activities. It can send everything toppling over.*
- Explain that we all have days where it feels like everything is going wrong (like a lot of dominoes are falling!). During these times, we can use perseverance to help us to keep trying. You have a choice to get back up, brush yourself off, and try to make responsible choices next time!



## Reflect

5-10 minutes

Have your class gather in your circle time/community area. Review the definition of responsibility and the importance of completing our personal responsibilities and how it affects others around us.

- What would happen if you always forgot to feed your dog?
- What would happen if I didn't make enough copies for our math lesson?
- How can we fix things when we forget?



## Extension Ideas

- Evaluate for addition and subtraction knowledge using the dominoes. Remove or add dominoes and have students create number bonds to show the new amounts.



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LEARNING.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has been reviewing evidence-based SEL programs since 2003. Kindness in the Classroom® meets CASEL's SElect Program and is included in the CASEL Guide to Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs.

Kindness in the Classroom® met or exceeded all of CASEL's criteria for high-quality SEL programming. Kindness in the Classroom® received CASEL's highest designation for high-quality SEL programming.

<https://casel.org/guide/kindness-in-the-classroom/>