For Immediate Release

Kid Connection Program at LVJUSD Provides Skills for Success

April 25, 2019 - Livermore, CA - Every child should have a place and a group of people to meet them where they are emotionally. At the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District (LVJUSD), students have such a place and group of people in Kid Connection. The Kid Connection program provides students in elementary and K-8 schools with paraprofessionals who work with students in small groups to develop social-emotional skills to improve academic success. Thanks to this program, and the commitment of its staff, students are achieving their individual goals and thriving in school.

Since 1991, Kid Connection has supported social emotional learning (SEL) at LVJUSD, and it has dovetailed neatly with the District’s implementation of the Choose Love SEL curriculum in the 2018-19 school year. The Kid Connection program has been able to incorporate the Choose Love lessons that are taught to all students – based on four units revolving around the tenets of courage, gratitude, forgiveness, and compassion in action – into its small group interventions, building on the District-wide foundational SEL curriculum.

Each of the eleven LVJUSD schools serving TK-5th grade students has an established Kid Connection playroom where highly-trained paraprofessionals can teach and practice social emotional learning skills with students. These playrooms are areas wherein students can feel comfortable expressing their feelings and working out emotions. Each session begins with a brief lesson, after which children are provided an opportunity to practice the skills they are learning while engaging in activities such as board games, dramatic play, puppet shows, journaling, and arts and crafts. Playrooms are equipped with diverse materials that reflect abundant cultural backgrounds, such as dolls representing various ethnic groups, ensuring that every student feels welcome and included in the lessons of social collaboration.

“Kid Connection provides students with a safe, predictable time each week during which they can learn and practice social and emotional skills,” said LVJUSD School Psychologist Liisa Hanninen-Danner, PhD. “With a focus on TK - 5th grade, students in the Kid Connection are able to develop skills at an early age that will support their meaningful participation in the classroom, on the playground, and in their lives outside of school.”

The program is supported by LVJUSD, as well as through grants for mental health education and services in schools. Thanks to support from numerous sources, Kid Connection programs at LVJUSD have been able to maintain and update the playrooms and curriculum materials. Evaluation of Kid Connection has consistently shown improvement in overall school adjustment for young students that influences skills from study habits, participation,
listening skills, peer interaction, empathy, leadership, communication, and more. In developing a warm and cooperative relationship with the Kid Connection staff and their small group members, students develop a fundamental model for relationships with friends, teachers, and their family members.

In providing an environment of respect, cooperation, and inclusion, the Kid Connection program allows students to practice their social-emotional skills with peers and professionals who care for and nurture their success.

Photos courtesy of LVJUSD

Photo 1: Conversation skills lesson
Photo 2: Kid Connection Playroom at Rancho Elementary
Photo 3: Dollhouse activity
Photo 4: Game activity

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ABOUT LIVERMORE VALLEY JOINT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
LVJUSD is an award-winning district that serves more than 13,900 students in transitional kindergarten through 12th grade at nine elementary campuses, two K-8 schools, three middle schools, two comprehensive high schools, and two alternative schools. The LVJUSD features International Baccalaureate Programmes and a STEM pathway, TK-12. The mission of the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District is to ensure each student will graduate with the skills needed to contribute and thrive in a changing world. For more information about the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District, please visit [www.livermoreschools.org](http://www.livermoreschools.org)

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