

Teaching Kindness

Teaching children about kindness helps build classroom community. Simply telling children to be kind is not a very effective strategy because kindness is such an abstract concept for young children.

Preschool children have a vague sense of what kindness is. The act of being kind involves thinking about the needs of another person and then taking a compassionate or caring action in response to that thought. Adults play a key role in guiding and providing children with opportunities for kindness.

What you can do...

Make it routine: Create a ritual in your classroom schedule to take time and think about others. Circle time is a wonderful place to build in this ritual. Take time for children talk to you about something kind they saw or did. Write the response on construction paper squares and create a kindness quilt to hang in the classroom.

Model Kindness: Use the natural opportunities that pop up during the day. For example, during attendance you may notice when another child is absent. Model with words, “I miss our friend. I hope they are feeling better soon.” “Perhaps some friends might make a card in the writing center today.”

Acknowledge random sightings of kindness: Be on the lookout for children comforting one another, saying thoughtful things or taking care of the classroom. Acknowledge what you see! For example, you see a child comfort a friend with a hug or even bringing them a toy. Respond by saying, “How thoughtful you noticed your friend was sad. That was a very kind thing to do.”

How does this benefit children...

By connecting words to actions we are helping children to develop a deeper understanding of the concept of kindness. Children are learning how to be caring, responsive community members.

