



Building Blocks

Laying the Foundation for Early Learning

Monthly Newsletter

February 2022 | Vol. 2

MAKING CONNECTIONS

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FEATURED STORIES THIS MONTH:

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BEING KIND

Being kind is a skill that we can practice just like math, science, or reading. It starts by helping our children recognize when a friend or family member is upset or needs help. Then, we can encourage kind behavior by suggesting ways to be kind and compassionate — and make the situation better.

Questions to ask your child:

1. How does it make you feel when someone is kind to you?
2. How can you show kindness to your friends, brother or sister, family members?
3. How can you be a good friend?
4. How can you include others?

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/being-kind>

HOW TO TEACH CHILDREN KINDNESS

- Teach them to share, especially when someone doesn't have very much.
- Reinforce the importance of saying, "please and thank you."
- Volunteer in your community to show them the importance of giving back.
- Remind them of the age old saying, "If you don't have anything nice to say, do not say anything at all."
- Set an example by involving them in doing something kind for a friend or neighbor.
- Send a special text message or letter to a friend or family member.
- Help children to understand another person's point of view to teach empathy and compassion.

tutor doctor
How learning hits home.

**"BE KIND
WHENEVER
possible.
IT IS
always
POSSIBLE."**

www.ThePrintablePrincess.com

-Dalai Lama



7 Ways to Practice Kindness in the Classroom

<https://www.theprintableprincess.com/7-ways-to-practice-kindness-in-the-classroom/>

1. Model kindness.

Of course, one of the easiest ways to encourage kindness in your classroom is by modeling it with your students every day. Start the day with a friendly greeting for each student. Speak kindly, model considerate behavior. Laugh with your students and listen attentively when they have something to tell you.

Acknowledge kindness publicly whenever you see it. Make a big deal out of little acts of kindness such as helping a friend, sharing a toy or using nice manners.

2. Use circle time to spread the love.

Circle time is a great time to talk about kindness. One teacher I know has a kindness stone (really just a regular rock with a shiny red heart painted on it). As the students pass the stone around, they acknowledge one of their classmates for an act of kindness. For example, "Ricky helped me clean up a mess that wasn't even his," or "Jamie said thank you when I gave her her paper."

To make sure every child is acknowledged, you can have each student say something complimentary about the student directly next to them. For example, "I appreciate Hayden for his nice smile," or "I appreciate Kaylie because she reads books with me."

3. Read books about kindness.

There are so many wonderful picture books for children that revolve around the theme of kindness. Choose one to read each week, or dive in and do a 'kindness study' and read many, comparing and contrasting the stories. Talk about the books with your students, examining the characters and their actions. Create an anchor chart listing characteristics of kind people.

4. Role play kindness.

Give your students the opportunity to practice situations that call for kindness by acting them out. For example, have a group of students act out a scenario where one child is being left out. The child being left out can show what that might feel like with their face and body. Then a couple of other students can approach her and invite her to play and see how she reacts.

Another situation could be acting out two different ways to ask a classmate for supplies. For example, "Give me the red crayon!" or "May I please have the red crayon?" It is important to provide examples and non-examples so students can see what kindness looks like (and what it does not look like).

Role playing really works for so many situations. You'll find that your students love participating and may even ask you to practice different situations as they come up.

5. Let kids tattle on each other (in a good way!).

Set up a kindness mailbox or bulletin board in your classroom. Have sticky notes or scraps of paper available for children to write down or draw pictures to acknowledge kind acts they witness in the classroom.

Set up a regular time to go over their notes, perhaps in the afternoon or first thing in the morning. Again, make a big deal out of their reports, praising and reinforcing the kind behavior you hope to see.

6. Create a kindness calendar.

Brainstorm ideas with your students about ways they can show kindness in the classroom. Create a calendar with their kindness ideas. Focus on one at a time for a day or a week. You might even put the ideas in a jar and pick one out per day. Some ideas:

- Invite someone to play
- Smile at three people
- Give someone a compliment
- Say please and thank you
- Let someone else go first
- Share a book with someone

7. Extend kindness beyond your classroom.

Plan activities that encourage your students to practice kindness around your school and community.

A few ideas:

- Draw a picture or write thank you cards for school staff members: custodians, secretaries, lunchroom helpers, etc. Set up an appointment to deliver the notes in person so students can witness the effect of their kind gesture.
- Hold a food drive/ mitten drive/ toy drive and donate to a local charity.
- Decorate the sidewalk with positive pictures and words (or use post-it notes and spread around the school).

Early Learning Matters

The Key to a Thriving Community

High-quality, Affordable Early Care and Education

Each Indiana community is unique in its needs and opportunities, but a common thread across the state, in every community, is the importance of affordable, high-quality early care and education.

The first five years of a child's life are foundational in their development. Research shows that investments in early care and education result in fewer investments later in the areas of K-12 remediation, health care, criminal justice costs and more. Accessible and affordable high-quality early care and education creates a two-generational economic impact, allowing parents to participate in the workforce and provide for their families while engaging and educating the next generation workforce.

Early care and education is a community-wide issue. Investments in early childhood educations create sustainable, thriving communities. By bringing community leaders, organizations and businesses to the table, community can create scalable, sustainable solutions that benefit them for years to come.

Key Facts About Early Learning in Indiana

Lifelong Learning:

85% of child's capacity to learn is developed by age 5.

High Cost of Care:

The annual cost of care for one child is \$9,000 - nearly equal to a year of in-state college tuition.

Return of Investment

For every \$1 invested in early learning, \$4 are returned to communities.

Few Options:

Four out of 10 Hoosier children live in a child care desert, which means less than one high-quality childcare seat exists for every three children. This puts many parents who want or need to work in a impossible situation.

Lack of Quality:

Less than 1/3 of Indiana's known child care programs rank as high-quality.

In Focus: 28 Counties in Southern Indiana



49,360

total children ages
0-5 with All Parents
in Labor Force

\$119

Average Weekly Cost
of Care in the 28
County Area in
Southern Indiana

723

Total Child Care
Providers in the 28
County Area in
Southern Indiana

47%

of children in need
of care enrolled in
a known program

Actions to Consider

Community leaders and organizations can come together to advocate for affordable and accessible high-quality early care and education. Consider the following

- Engage local stakeholders and leaders. Include individuals from early learning providers, elected office, K-12 education, higher education, healthcare, families, businesses, economic development organizations and other invested in early learning.
- Create scalable strategies, modeling after what other communities have done
- Engage businesses and encourage them to support their employees' child care needs
- Create an early childhood coalition (ask your Child Care Resource and Referral agency for tips and strategies.)
- Plan an event on early childhood education and economic growth.