

Beyond Nice
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Learning Journal

Grouping Activity

Someone you know

Kindness and Human Nature

Definition

Mindfulness

Touch

Music and Stories

Empathy

Emotional Intelligence

In the Community

Forgiveness and Apology

Intervention

Professionalism

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Emotional Intelligence

Children can identify when they are feeling frustrated or angry, because that is when rudeness is more likely to happen. They may benefit from learning a process.

1. Notice when you are feeling frustrated or angry.
2. Put your hand over your mouth.
3. Take deep breaths and walk away.
4. Come back when you are feeling better.

It may be helpful to practice this strategy in a time of neutral emotion. Children need ways to regulate their own emotions. The time an emotion lingers by itself in our brains is very short, but when we hold on or can't let go, the consequences can last a lifetime.

Activity 2. Listing Behavior

Make a list of ten kind and unkind behaviors. Do not focus on any child or any recent or ongoing interaction. This is not a chance to process problems, but to think on a larger scale. This activity allows children to build vocabulary to address and assess situations later.

Activity 3. Listing Feeling Words

Make a list of words that describe how someone feels when they've acted kindly, and how it feels when they have been recipients of a kind action. Make a second list of feeling words that relate to how it feels to be treated unkindly. Again, don't let the list get personal or specific to anyone.

Forgiveness and Apology

First Process

1. The person who's been hurt says how they are feeling and what behavior caused the hurt. "I don't like it when you hit me with the toy truck. I was angry when you did that."
2. The person who's hurt the other says, "I'm sorry, ____" while looking into the eyes of the other person and saying their name.
3. The first person has the opportunity to say what they would like to have happen in response.

Second process. four steps in apology.

I'm sorry for...

This is wrong because...

In the future, I will...

Will you forgive me?

A more detailed process follows.

1) I'm sorry for...: *Be specific. Show the person you're apologizing to that you really understand what they are upset about.*

Wrong: *I'm sorry for being mean.*

Right: *I'm sorry for saying that nobody wants to be your friend.*

2) This is wrong because...: *This might take some more thinking, but this is one of the most important parts. Until you understand why it was wrong or how it hurt someone's feelings, it's unlikely you will change. This is also important to show the person you hurt that you really understand how they feel. Sometimes, people want to feel understood more than they want an apology. Sometimes just showing understanding- even without an apology- is enough to make them feel better!*

Wrong: *This is wrong because I got in trouble.*

Right: *This is wrong because it hurt your feelings and made you feel bad about yourself.*

3) In the future, I will...: *Use positive language, and tell me what you WILL do, not what you won't do.*

Wrong: *In the future, I will not say that.*

Right: *In the future, I will keep unkind words in my head.*

Wrong: *In the future, I won't cut.*

(Right: *In the future, I will go to the back of the line.*)

Wrong: *In the future, I won't push.*

(Right: *In the future, I will keep my hands to myself.*)

Wrong: *In the future, I won't take your eraser.*

(Right: *In the future, I will ask you if I can borrow your eraser.*)

4) Will you forgive me? *This is important to try to restore your friendship. There is no rule that the other person has to forgive you. Sometimes, they won't. That's their decision. Hopefully, you will all try to be the kind of friends who will forgive easily, but that's not something you automatically get just because you apologized. But you should at least ask for it.*

Stories

A Lion lay asleep in the forest, his great head resting on his paws. A timid little Mouse came upon him unexpectedly, and in her fright and haste to get away, ran across the Lion's nose. Roused from his nap, the Lion laid his huge paw angrily on the tiny creature to kill her.

"Spare me!" begged the poor Mouse. "Please let me go and some day I will surely repay you."

The Lion was amused to think that a Mouse could ever help him. But he was generous and not too hungry, and he let the Mouse go.

Some days later, while stalking his prey in the forest, a hunter's net ensnared the Lion. Unable to free himself, he filled the forest with his angry roaring. The Mouse knew the voice and soon found the Lion struggling in the net. Running to one of the strong ropes that bound him, she gnawed it until it broke, and soon the Lion was free.

"You laughed when I said I would repay you," said the Mouse. "Now you see that even a Mouse can help a Lion." ⁱ

Once upon a time there was a demon that ate anger. You can imagine that he was never hungry. He went throughout the world, and every time someone argued or fought, every time there was a war or battle, the demon grew stronger and larger. He caused anger, too, by stirring up hatred or resentment, which sometimes grew into huge problems.

After a while, he got bored. It was too easy. He thought he should try his skill out on the gods. He went to the Heaven of 33 gods, ruled by King Sakka, and seated himself at the table. When the 33 gods came in, they shouted and insulted the demon, saying, "What are you doing here, you ugly creature? You should be thrown down and cut into pieces." With every insult and angry word, the demon grew bigger and stronger. He seemed to glow with a smoky red mist.

King Sakka entered the hall and saw what was happening. He approached the demon through the mist, holding out his hand and saying, "Hello, friend. How nice of you to visit. Can I bring you something to drink or eat? Is your chair comfortable?"

With every kind word, the demon grew smaller and weaker, until he disappeared, leaving behind only a trace of stinky smoke, which soon dissolved.