

# The Kind Classroom

Three unique ways to incorporate kindness into your classroom routines

These easy additions to your routines can help you establish a culture of kindness in your classroom. They're also a great way to incorporate social-emotional learning into your curriculum. The activities in this lesson plan were adapted for classroom use from the *Kind Kids* activity deck to help acquaint students with the various forms kindness can take.



## 1. Thank Your Body

### A DAILY KINDNESS GREETING TO OURSELVES

Try adding a quick activity to your daily routine that encourages children to be kind to themselves by noticing all the ways their bodies help them.

#### Objectives:

- Help students self-regulate and prepare for learning by paying attention to the sensations in their bodies.
- Increase children's feelings of positive self-worth by appreciating their bodies' capabilities.

#### Instructions:

Guide a small or large group of students through the following exercise daily or weekly. Adjust the suggestions for physical movement as needed to accommodate the students in your group.

1. Stand or sit in a comfortable position and stretch your arms up as high as you can. Say, "Thank you, hands, for reaching way up high."
2. Keep reaching through your fingertips as you lean to the left, stretching your right side. Then lean to the right, stretching your left side. Say, "Thank you, muscles, for stretching."
3. Stand or sit up straight again, then fold forwards. Take a deep breath in and out. Say, "Thank you, breath, for calming me."



#### Kind Kids

50 Activities for Compassion, Confidence & Community

Written by Dr. Helen Maffini

Written by Whitney Stewart

Illustrated by Mariana Ruiz Johnson

Discover all the forms kindness can take! Fifty unique games, crafts and mindfulness activities help kids develop empathy and respect for themselves, their loved ones and the wider world.

CARD DECK



## 2. Kindness Jar

### CREATE A CLASSROOM CULTURE OF KINDNESS

Noticing and celebrating kindness is a great way to establish your classroom culture at the beginning of each school year – or any time of the year.

#### Objective:

- Students will notice when other children are kind and record their observations.

#### Materials Needed:

- Clear and empty large jar
- Paper
- Scissors
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils

#### Instructions:

1. Draw about 30 hearts about the size of your hand on pieces of paper. Cut them out and put them in a stack.
2. Set up a station in the classroom for the Kindness Jar. Make sure there are always plenty of paper hearts and writing utensils available at the station.
3. Introduce the activity to your students. Tell them that any time they notice a class member doing something kind, write or draw what they did on a paper heart, fold the heart and drop it into the jar.



4. Decide how often you want to share out the contents of the jar. This could be something you repeat weekly or monthly, or something you just do once a year until the jar is full.



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### 3. Cloudy Days, Sunny Days

#### SUPPORTING EACH OTHER'S UPS AND DOWNS

With this activity, build a culture of support by giving students some time each week to discuss their “cloudy” and “sunny” days. It’s an opportunity to develop children’s emotional awareness while also reinforcing respectful meeting behavior like active listening and being aware of one’s own talking time.

#### Objective:

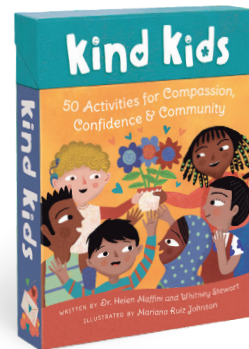
- Students will describe their experiences, label their emotions, and listen empathetically to their classmates’ descriptions of their feelings and experiences.

#### Instructions:

1. During a large or small group time, facilitate a conversation about cloudy days and sunny days: “Raise your hand if you’ve had a difficult (cloudy) day. You can raise your hand even if you don’t want to talk about it. That’s okay.”
2. Start with one person who wants to talk about their day. The rest of the group listens.
3. After the speaker is done, they choose another person who wants to share next.
4. When everyone who wants to share their cloudy days has done so, children can raise their hands and share about their happy (sunny) days. The rest of the group listens.
5. Let students know that sometimes cloudy and sunny things happen on the same day. So they might have something to share for both! Or maybe their day felt like a different kind of weather. Stormy? Foggy?
6. Ask students how it feels to have their friends listen to their cloudy and sunny stories.
7. Reassure students that even if they had a hard day today, they might have a happier day tomorrow. Classroom members can support each other every day.

#### Tips:

- The first time you do this, to get the ball rolling, you may need to model how to share about a cloudy experience.
- Encourage students to use words to describe their emotions. Depending on your group, a chart that shows a variety of feelings and their corresponding facial expressions could be useful.
- If it is helpful for your group, incorporate a prop that each student can hold during their talking turn. You may also need a timer to help children moderate their talking times.



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