

Beyond Behavior Management

Are you spending your time ***dealing*** with children's behaviors or ***investing*** in teaching children how to have a friend and being a friend?

One of the main tasks for preschool-age children is to learn how to develop friendships and connections with people outside of the home. As early care providers, it is as much our responsibility to facilitate children's social development, as it is to teach them colors and numbers. The following are activity suggestions to help children notice friendliness. These activities are from the book *Beyond Behavior Management: The Six Life Skills Children Need to Thrive in Today's World* by Jenna Bilmes.



Helping Hands Tree

Help children move from focusing only on themselves to focusing on the interactions of others in the classroom. When children are guided to focus on others' friendly behaviors, they begin to build up a repertoire of friendly behaviors that they can draw upon in their own interactions.

- Draw a large tree on bulletin board paper or mount a real tree branch in a bucket of plaster of paris.
- Cut out hand shapes from paper in various colors.
- Have children identify when they have observed another child's helpful act, and record the event on the hand. For example, "Halley helped Jake turn on the water in the bathroom."
- Help the children who observe the act attach the hand to the tree.
- Periodically, read from the hands at a group meeting. Then pass out the hands for children to take home.
- It is important that all children be represented on the tree. If some children are not represented, observe those children and find examples of their helpfulness to add to the collection.

Random Acts of Kindness Board:

- Have children observe each other for acts of kindness.
- Record the acts on self-adhesive notes. For example, "Amity let Kelsey have the doll with the long hair."
- Help the children who observed the act attach the notes to the board.
- Read the notes, and distribute as in previous activity.
- Again, make sure every member of the community (classroom/group) is represented on the board.