



Kind Campus Month 7: Kindness in our Community

Question of the Month

What does it mean to live in a kind community?
In what ways can you contribute to your kind community?

Kind Campus Week 1

Micro-moments of Connection: Humans experience the world as social creatures and rely on each other to survive and thrive. Knowing we're part of a larger community gives us a sense of belonging that in turn provides motivation to actively participate in behavior and activities that benefit the group, and therefore ourselves. It's easy to feel disconnected in our daily lives. One way we can feel more connected to our community is to focus on the small, yet meaningful, positive interactions that we have nearly every day. Training our brains to focus on what psychologist Barbara Frederickson calls "micro-moments" of connection changes the way our brain works and helps us feel deeply embedded in our families, schools, neighborhoods, and communities.¹ Frederickson explains that micro-moments develop an awareness of your surroundings, and even your sense of self. These micro-moments—such as sharing a smile or expressing concern—improve emotional resilience, boost the immune system, and reduce susceptibility to depression and anxiety. Bringing attention to our daily micro-moments helps us receive kindness from others, practice kindness toward ourselves, and share kindness every day.

Kind Campus Week 2: Self-Kindness

Benefits of Spending Time Outdoors: Spending time outdoors improves our health. From breathing fresh air to taking a walk to enjoying a scenic view, experts agree that getting outside improves our perspective. In fact, when we immerse ourselves in the beauty of the natural world, it actually makes it easier for us to be kind to ourselves and to others.² Studies show that exposure to the natural world—in both urban green spaces and natural environments—has significant and wide-ranging health benefits.³ Encourage students to go outside and then reflect on how they feel. What does being outside have to do with kindness? How does being outside affect your mood? What does being outside have to do with learning? How does it help you feel more ready to practice kindness with yourself and others? Set a goal for each student to spend 30 minutes outside every day for a week, if possible, and then talk about the results as a class.



Kind Campus Week 3: Kindness in Action with Everyday Practices

Spread Kindness in Your Community: People tend to underestimate the impact that acts of kindness may have on others, leading them to engage in prosocial actions less often in everyday life.⁴ However, research actually shows that one act of kindness can create a ripple effect that goes on to impact and inspire entire communities,⁵ which is great motivation for modeling kind behavior. Dr. Haesung Jung describes kind and helpful behaviors as “quite contagious” and explains that “we need a social environment where prosocial behavior is positively reinforced in order for people to imitate that behavior more.”⁶ Thank or acknowledge your kind community by having students write Kind Notes to deliver to someone at your school (such as a counselor, custodian, or crossing guard), or to a group in your community (nurses, animal shelter employees, etc.). Discuss how receiving Kind Notes will make the recipient(s) feel and how it might inspire kind behavior in the community. How does this impact us all?



Kind Notes
English | Spanish
Lined | Primary Lined



Kind Campus Week 4: Kindness in Action: Everyday Practices

Kindness and Social Media: Young adults spend an average of one-two hours online daily on multiple social media platforms.⁷ And just like in other areas of our life, social media is rife with opportunities for kind—and unkind—behavior. Students can call upon their kindness skills to mitigate the negative effects of social media. In fact, simply limiting screen time to one hour per day total (for all social media platforms) actually improves mental well-being, while more time decreases the positive impacts of connecting online.⁸ Be Kind Online: Youth Voices features advice from older adolescents to their younger peers, including tips for developing awareness around social media, ideas for being kind online, and Kindness Dilemmas specific to social media. For younger students who don't use social media, discuss why limiting screen time is kind, and how, when used responsibly, the internet can help us to stay connected to family/friends and local organizations/resources.



**Be Kind Online:
Youth Voices**



Be Kind Online Guide

Additional Activities

Waving like Seaweed: Students of all ages must sit for the majority of the school day. Standing up, moving our bodies mindfully, and breathing can help students refocus their energy and offset feeling bored or fidgety. This exercise invites students to imagine they're connected strongly to the ocean floor, yet with the simultaneous strength to bend with the ocean current. An adult or a student can lead this activity; feel free to get creative with the ocean scene you imagine!



Kindness at Home

Just as our kindness practice on campus can easily extend to the home, we can extend kind learning from our home to our neighborhood community as part of the ripple effect of kindness. Ask students to reflect on what it means to be part of a kind community and brainstorm activities that promote kindness in their neighborhoods. Ideas may include picking up trash when they see it or organizing a pick-up event, smiling or waving at neighbors, or displaying visual reminders of kindness in their windows. Ask them how they would treat a kind neighborhood, and to consider what it feels like to contribute to a shared space that is kind. Invite students to share their experiences back in the classroom.



References

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