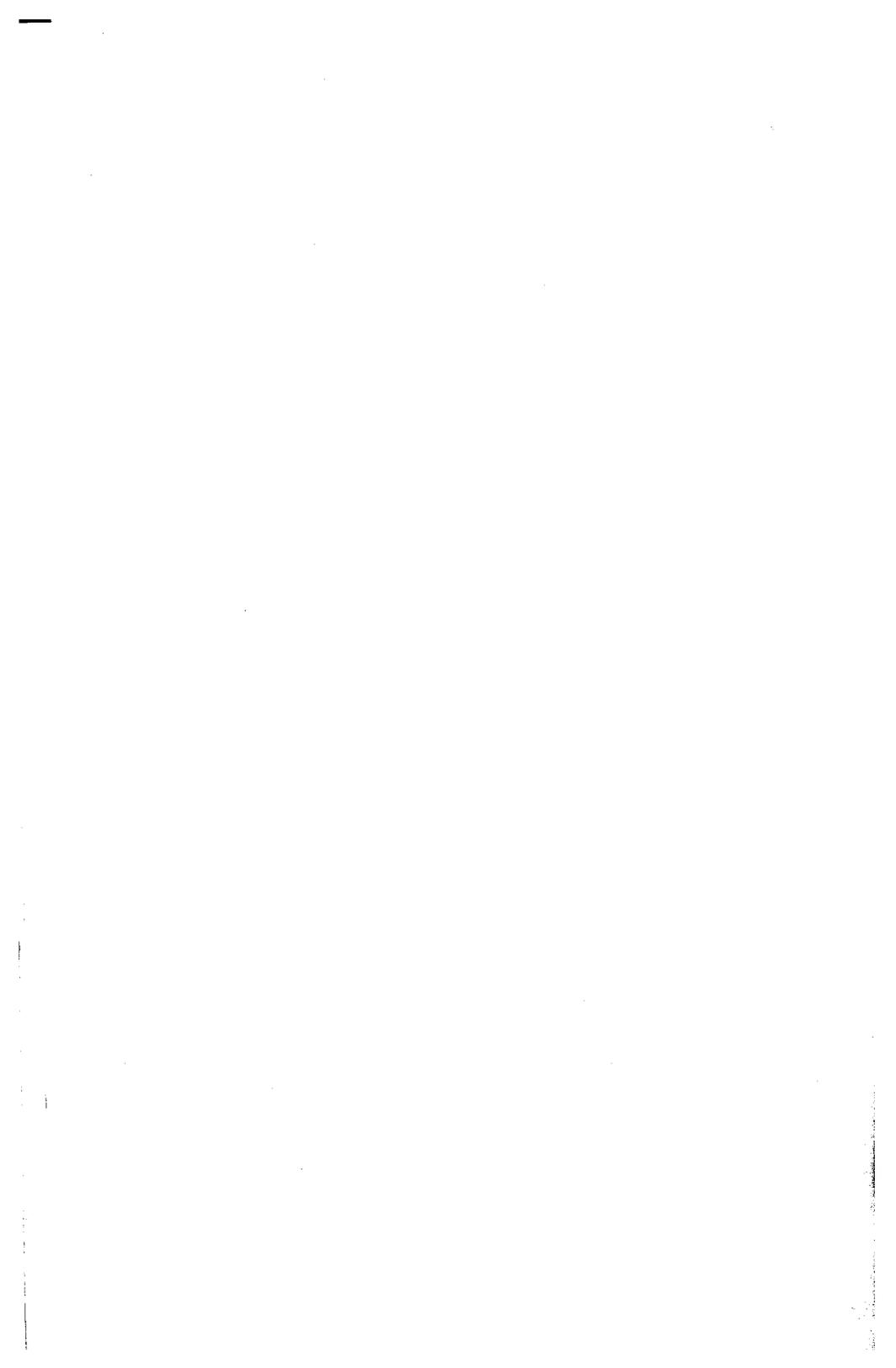


RAISING KIND KIDS:

An Activity Guide For
Fostering Kindness in Families



by
Barry K. Weinhold, Ph.D.



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Kindness is more than deeds. It is an attitude, an expression, a look, a touch. It is anything that lifts another person.

C. Neil Strait

by
Barry K. Weinhold, Ph.D.

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INTRODUCTION

There is no magic formula that guarantees that you will be a successful parent and that your kids will turn out okay. But there are things that you can do that increase the odds in your favor. Interestingly, the closest thing to a magic formula is just showing up. The amount of time you spend with your children and quality of that time turn out to be very important. Some busy parents justify the amount of time they are gone by saying to themselves and others, "It's the quality time that counts." You still have to be there enough time to develop a relationship with your children.

A Canadian study showed that if children under a year of age are separated from their parents for more than 20 hours a week, they are at risk. The chart in this booklet titled, "Guidelines Concerning The Time Limits To Parent/Child Separations" will help you decide how to manage your time with your children. In addition to showing up, there are some "best practices" that can help you create a healthy and growthful family environment. Based on these practices, below are some questions to ask yourself:

How do you talk to your kids? Do you say mostly positive, kind things to them or do you find yourself mostly correcting their behavior or criticizing their efforts? When asked, most kids report that they get more negative attention from their parents than positive attention. About 80% of your children's behavior (and yours) is designed to get attention and approval from others. If there are not enough positive, kind responses available, you may find that your children will actually do things to get negative attention from you. Some attention, even though it is negative, is better than none at all. In order to raise kind kids, you have to provide them with positive attention and kind words. Many of the Family Kindness Activities contain excellent suggestions on how to provide your children with positive attention and kind words.

Do you give them hope? Children often lose sight of the big picture and get frustrated or easily discouraged when something doesn't go the way they want. They often need some help in keeping a bigger perspective on their situation. This does not mean discounting their feelings of frustration or disappointment, but after you have let them know you understand their feeling, you can also give them hope for better times. Again many of the Family Kindness Activities contain suggestions on how to instill hope in your children.

Do you let them know that you are counting on them? Sometimes parents do not want to speak their expectations for their children, so instead they don't give them any direction and even pretend that they don't have expectations. This can be confusing to children. Children may pick up subtle expectations, but because they are not spoken directly, children may think you don't really care what happens to them. Children need to know directly what you expect from them and hopefully

you as a parent will be open to hear from your children whether or not they feel that is something they also expect of themselves. For example, you can ask them to treat you and the other family members with kindness and respect. You also need to be a model of this kindness and respect for them. The short essay in this booklet titled, "Who You Are Makes A Difference," offers an excellent example of

Do I tell my children that I think they can do it? Children need encouragement from their parents. Children almost daily face new challenges as they grow and learn how to master the tasks put before them. You need to be their cheer leader and support their efforts to deal with life in a responsible way. This also includes listening to their frustrations and disappointments as well as helping them find acceptable alternatives to express these feelings. You also need to be there to help them celebrate their successes, however small or large they may be.

Do I play with my children? Play is the work of children. If you are going to understand their world you are going to have to enter their world of play. The essay in this booklet titled, "Parents Role in Children's Play" has excellent suggestions. In addition, several of the Family Kindness Activities include games and ways to play with your children.

Do I express my love and affection directly to my children? In some families, parents don't tell their children that they love them and assume that because they provide food, clothing and shelter for them and are nice to them, their children will know that they are loved. This is not necessarily true. Children need to be told that they are loved and they need to be shown that you love them through hugs and kisses and nurturing touch. This has to start from the very beginning. For example, we now know that talking and singing to your child in loving ways even when he or she is still in the womb is an important part of the bonding process. After the child is born this needs to continue along with nurturing touch and loving eye contact. However, it is important to realize that your children need this direct expression of your love and affection at all ages. The selection, "The Kindness Campaign's 100 Ways to Praise Your Child" has some good suggestions.

Do tell them that they are okay just the way they are? Children are human beings not human "doings" so they need unconditional, positive messages that let them know they are okay just the way they are. These include statements such as, "I like you" or "I love you" or "You don't have to do anything to earn my love, you got it just for being you." These are some of the most powerful and important messages you can give to your children because they affirm their basic core being. Everyone needs to feel lovable and when they do they don't have to try to please or manipulate others in order to get their needs met. If you tell them they are "okay" and behave toward them in ways consistent with this affirmation, they will know that they are "okay" just the way they are. The essay in this booklet titled, "The Seven Steps To Raising Kind Kids" offers some excellent examples.

This booklet was prepared with the help of many families who “family tested” the activities and added some of their own. We thank them for their participation in the development of this booklet. In addition to applying the information contained in the essays in this booklet, you need to make sure that some Family Kindness Activity takes place every day. Read through the enclosed activities and pick some that seem to best fit your family situation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	1
Acknowledgements	2
Introduction	3
Table of Contents	6
Very Early Parenting: An African Model	7
The Seven Steps to Raising Kind Kids	8
How To Conduct a Family Meeting	13
Who You Are Makes A Difference	14
Independence Training: Self-Care and Household Tasks Chart	16
Conflict Resolution in Families	17
Disciplining With Kindness	18
The Eight Principles of Kind and Caring Families	20
Parents Role in Children's Play	22
Guidelines Concerning The Time Limits To Parent/Child Separations	23
The Kindness Campaign's 100 Ways to Praise Your Child	24
Symptom of Attachment Disturbances	26
25 Family Kindness Activities	28-52

VERY EARLY PARENTING: AN AFRICAN MODEL

There are many “old wives tales” that urge parents to begin their parenting even while the child is in the womb. Science has confirmed many of these folkways as sound principles of very early parenting. Research has confirmed the importance of beginning to interact with your child before or while he or she is still in the womb. This seems to promote a strong bond between the parents and the child during and after the birth experience.

For example, there is a tribe in Africa where the birth date of the child is counted not from when they’ve been born, nor from when they are conceived but from the day that the child was a thought in its mother’s mind.

When a woman decides that she will have a child, she goes off and sits under a tree, by herself, and she listens until she can hear the song of the child that wants to come. After she’s heard the song of this child, she comes back to the man who will be the child’s father, and teaches it to him. Then, when they make love to physically conceive the child, some of that time they sing the song of the child, as a way to invite it.

When the mother is pregnant, she teaches that child’s song to the midwives and the old women of the village, so that when the child is born, the old women and the people around the mother can sing the child’s song to welcome it. As the child grows up, the other villagers are taught the child’s song. If the child falls, or hurts its knee, someone picks it up and sings its song to it. Or perhaps the child does something wonderful, or goes through the rites of puberty, then as a way of honoring this person, the people of the village sing his or her song.

It goes this way throughout their whole life. In marriage, the songs are sung, together. Finally, when this child is lying in bed, ready to die, all the villagers know his or her song, and they sing it for the last time — the song of that person.

This story is attributed to Jack Kornfield and is in an audiotape by Wayne Muller titled “How, Then, Shall We Live?” available from Sounds True in Boulder, Colorado.

THE SEVEN STEPS TO RAISING KIND KIDS

1. Notice kind things. Every day there are kind things that others say and do that we often ignore. Right now think of at least 10 kind things that have happened to you in the last week. Can you remember? Who in your family greeted you with a smile today? Did a motorist slow down to let you on to the freeway? Did someone in your family tell you something positive they noticed about you? It is hard to remember these things, isn't it? We take for granted all the kind things that happen to us every day and often remember only the unkind things that happen to us.

One way to help your memory is to create your own "kindness notebook" where you record all these kind incidents every day. Record these each night before you go to sleep and notice the results. Do you begin to sharpen your awareness of these daily "small kindnesses?" Do you sleep better? Do you feel better about yourself and other family members? Do you find yourself giving out more compliments and saying more kind things to others in your family as a result? Does the quality of your family life improve?

2. Affirm kind things. Begin by affirming the kind things that happen to you and you will find that more kind things begin to happen to you. Affirmations are strong, positive statements that are written as if they are already true. What happens is that when we affirm these qualities in us, they seem to grow and become a reality in our lives.

A few examples of kindness affirmations you can use are:

- I am a kind person.
- I draw kind acts to me.
- I see all the kindness that is around me.
- I am open to receiving kindness from others.
- My acts of kindness help others to be more kind.

In addition, begin to affirm and recognize the kind things that others say and do in your presence. There is a basic law of behavior that you need to remember. It states that "what you pay attention to is what you are going to get more of." If you want to increase the amount of kindness in those around you, you have to "catch" them doing something kind for you or another family member and give them some recognition like, "Gee, that was kind of you to offer to help your brother with his math, without being asked. Thank you for being so kind and thoughtful." On the contrary, you can easily cancel the positive affects of this kind of interaction by continuing to notice mostly the negative things that happen in your family and give more recognition to them. In order to raise kind kids, you need to recognize twice as many positive acts of kindness in your children than the negative acts that you recognize or pay attention to.

Some affirmations you can use to help you develop this kind of parenting attitude are:

- I recognize the kindness in my family members.
- My children are kind and respectful to me and each other.
- My family is filled with kind acts every day.
- My children deserve to be recognized for their kindness every day.

3. Find kind things to say and do even if unkind things are happening. We don't all have "good days" all the time. However, even when we are having a "bad day" good things are still happening around us, but we fail to notice them because we are entirely focused on the "badness" of the day.

It is easy to take out your frustrations on others and "dump" your anger on your children or spouse. Children report that the times when they felt "dumped on" by one of their parents and are yelled at or physically punished for no known reason or because the parent was in a "bad" mood, are the most painful experiences to endure. These experiences can easily leave lasting scars on children who don't understand why they are being treated unkindly.

It is a choice that we all have to make at those times. Sometimes it is necessary to ask yourself, Am I focusing on the bad things that are happening to me because I have not had enough kindness in my life recently? Am I trying to get others to feel sorry for me and in this way get them to be kind to me in some way?

There are always two ways to experience the bumps and bruises of life. The first is from the position of the victim. This is when you ask yourself: "Why did this have to happen to me?" The second way is to allow your self to feel the hurt or disappointment and then say to yourself: "I am going to move forward and see what I can learn from this experience that will help me grow into a more beautiful and kind person. I am determined to find something about this experience to be happy about, even if I can't see it just yet."

Wouldn't it be better to just ask for a hug or something you need from others rather than "rain on everyone's parade" especially your children. Maybe they have had a great day at school and are eager to tell you about it when they get home. If you are in a "funk" because of things that didn't go your way, you will not be able to be present for your children.

Again, you may have to think about what you need in order to feel better about your day. Instead of focusing on the "bad" things that happened to you, try focusing on the good things that also happened. It is likely that you can find some "rays of light" in an otherwise dark day, if you try. Also, think about how you can be kind to yourself in order to change your outlook. You may be able to take a warm bath or give yourself permission to just take some time for yourself. You can always create something to feel glad about in any situation.

4. Teach kindness. Remember that your deeds are more powerful teaching tools than your words. If you want to raise kind kids, you have to be a model of kind behavior for them. The trick is to teach kindness and beauty instead of unkindness and pain. You can have a positive influence wherever you go if you are willing to be kind to yourself and others. You will see your children's face light up when you project kindness. This is the only reward you will need.

How can you teach kindness to the people closest to you? First of all, don't buy into the misery of others. When your friends and family members are moaning and complaining, help them look at their situation in a more positive way or help them define what they want or need in order to feel better and then encourage them to ask for it. They might not want to hear what you are saying, but keep saying it anyway. You know what they say: "Misery loves company." However, the same is true about kindness. After a while, you will notice that friends and family members will be attracted to you. Be persistent and courageous. It takes courage sometimes to be kind.

Children can be taught to view their life in a positive way. However, without parents who model kindness and a positive outlook on life, children can develop negative and unkind attitudes and behaviors. The best way to teach kindness to your children is to say and do kind things to and for them. Compliment them, be a cheerleader for them, encourage them and support their positive efforts in any way you can. Sometimes we get caught up in finding fault with our children and we forget that they need positive and kind words and deeds to grow up living a life of kindness.

Celebrate the kind things your children say and do. Make a big fuss about these things and minimize the negative things you say or do around them. Remember, much of their world outside the home is filled with negativity and criticism. Schools emphasize the negative and focus mostly on the mistakes that children make. You have to help balance this by emphasizing kindness at home.

5. Create kind things for yourself. Are you waiting for someone else to make kind things happen to you? Kindness is a do-it yourself project and the present moment is the time to start creating kindness for yourself. Every minute of the day brings us opportunities to create kindness for ourselves and others. Kindness comes from within, not from without. It comes from asking ourselves, "How can I be kind to myself right now?" No matter how busy you are, you are never too busy to add kindness to your day's activities: get a massage, a leisurely bubble bath, a walk through a park, a telephone call to a beloved friend, a few minutes reading a book or listening to your favorite music.

If you don't consciously fill your own well with kindness, then you cannot give kindness to others. If we can find ourselves getting irritated at the kids' noisy play or their active imagination, then this is a signal to be kind to ourselves in some way. We owe it to ourselves and those we love to take time to enjoy the many simple joys that life has to offer. It is really our responsibility to fill our lives with kindness and joy and no one else's. Someone once said that we are all walking cases of suppressed happiness. This means we may have to break through our own "happiness barrier" and take the risk to create a kind and happy life for ourselves. Only then can we truly create kindness for others.

6. Do kind things for others. Make your life an act of kindness. Does this sound impossible? It really isn't, if you are willing to practice giving kindness to others. As long as you are acting out of the kindness that comes from your heart, you can't go wrong. The only truly happy people are giving people. This is the secret to true happiness.

This does not mean giving with some expectation of getting something in return. We may think, "Well, I gave that to you and now I expect you to give this to me." This kind of giving does not create kindness, but often creates unkindness and aggravation. Sometimes we try to fool ourselves into thinking we are giving freely when actually we are interested in getting something in return. Nothing causes greater unhappiness than the belief that we have to give to others in order to get something in return that we want or need for ourselves.

Begin by giving from the kindness of your heart. Give praise, support, acknowledgment, time, money, information, empathy and you will be amazed at how happy you feel. Develop a giving spirit, where your only reward is how good you feel while you are giving.

7. Receive kindness from others. This can be the most difficult step in raising kind kids. Most of us never learned how to receive. Even those people who seem to be so good at taking, don't know how to receive. If they did, they would not feel so needy and have to give to others out of this need. Because of this neediness we can focus so much on what people are not giving us that we forget what they are giving us.

Some people have to prove that they don't need others and can do it all themselves. These people are usually angry at the people from their past who have disappointed them. These people vowed to never, ever ask anyone for help, even if they needed it. They closed their heart to receiving anything from others, in order to avoid feeling hurt or disappointed again. When our heart is closed in this way, it is very difficult to receive even the small everyday kindnesses that people have to offer us.

Sometimes we refuse to receive or accept gifts from others because we then feel obligated to give something in return. We assume that these people do expect something from us in return, when in fact they likely do not. If someone wants to do something for us or pays us a compliment, the only response that is expected is "Thank you."

Sometimes we also feel guilty receiving kindness from others because we don't feel like we deserve it. We may carry around so many negative thoughts about ourselves that the thought of someone being kind to us is not possible, unless they want something from us. If this happens with our children, they may end up having more of a relationship with our guilt than they do with us. In addition, guilt is often paired with resentment. We end up resenting others whose innocent acts of kindness or giving evoke feelings of guilt in us. This pushes them away and makes them less willing to give to us. If we want to have close, intimate relationships with others than we have to open our heart and learn to receive the kindness that others offer to us.

Summary. These seven steps to raising kind kids work. Your life will be richer and more joyous if you follow them. In addition, you will raise kind kids who will have learned from being around you how to be kind to themselves and to others. These are not necessarily the easiest steps to follow. It takes energy and courage to follow them. There is so much unhappiness and unkindness in the world, it will seem like "what's the use" sometimes in being kind or trying to be a happy person. You may lose friends or you may be ridiculed, but if you truly are committed to the goal of raising kind kids, these steps will help you reach this goal and have a great time doing it. Have a great time.

HOW TO CONDUCT A FAMILY MEETING

- 1. Start slowly.** It is best to initiate family meetings at a time when there are no crises in the family. Begin with short (15-30 minutes) meetings and hold them at convenient times for everyone such as with dessert after dinner. Start with fun and easy issues such as planning a family outing. Stick to agreed time limits, eliminate outside distractions such as TV, music or telephone calls (agree not to answer the phone ring during the meeting). Do not make the meeting a big production.
- 2. Give equal time to everyone.** Ask everyone to contribute something to the discussion, even if it is, "I don't have anything to add this time." The parents should encourage full participation by suggesting each person bring an issue for discussion.
- 3. Focus on solutions.** Avoid using meetings as gripe sessions. Present only problems and conflicts that cannot be worked out without full family input. Balance the presentation of problems with recognition of positive accomplishments by family members or positive issues such as planning menus for the coming week, where to go on a family vacation and plans for birthdays and family celebrations.
- 4. Be flexible about meeting times.** It's more important that the whole family be present at a family meeting rather than having it at the same time each week. If it is a problem getting everyone present, ask everyone to make this a high priority and rotate times to suit everyone's schedules.
- 5. Set clear ground rules.** Begin by talking about the agenda, length and what is expected of each person. Use a talking stick (See Kindness Activity). Follow basic communication ground rules: each person is heard; feelings are acknowledged and accepted; no interrupting, no put-downs or name calling. Stick to current concerns that affect the family or several family members. If possible, avoid using the meeting for individual issues ("Can I go over to Joey's house on Saturday?"). These can be taken care of later.
- 6. Avoid rescuing.** Rescuing is very common in families. It can be avoided in family meetings by having each person ask directly for what he or she wants. If everybody is aware of this rule, it is easier to support one another.
- 7. Avoid using meetings as a soapbox.** Parents may be tempted to use family meetings to vent pent up feelings or resentments or to assert their authority in the family. This can undermine the positive outcomes from family meetings.
- 8. Break bread together.** A good way to make family meetings special is to serve popcorn, dessert or other treats.

WHO YOU ARE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

A teacher in New York decided to honor each of her seniors in high school by telling them the difference they each made. Using a process developed by Helice Bridges of Del Mar, California, she called each student to the front of the class, one at a time. First she told them how the student made a difference to her and the class. Then she presented each of them with a blue ribbon imprinted with gold letters that read, "Who I Am Makes a Difference."

Afterwards the teacher decided to do a class project to see what kind of impact recognition would have on a community. She gave each of the students three more ribbons and instructed them to go out and spread this acknowledgment ceremony. Then they were to follow up on the results, see who honored whom and report back to the class in about a week.

One of the boys in the class went to a junior executive in a nearby company and honored him for helping him with his career planning. He gave him a blue ribbon and put it on his shirt. Then he gave him two extra ribbons, and said, "We're doing a class project on recognition, and we'd like you to go out and find somebody to honor. Give them a blue ribbon, then give them the extra blue ribbon so they can acknowledge a third person to keep the acknowledgment ceremony going. Then please report back to me and tell me what happened."

Later that day the junior executive went in to see his boss, who had been noted by the way, as being kind of a grouchy fellow. He sat his boss down and he told him that he deeply admired him for being a creative genius. The boss seemed very surprised. The junior executive asked him if he would accept the gift of the blue ribbon and would he give him permission to put it on him. His surprised boss said, "Well, sure." The junior executive took the blue ribbon and placed it right on his boss's jacket above his heart. As he gave him the last extra ribbon, he said, "Would you do me a favor? Would you take this extra ribbon and pass it on by honoring somebody else? The young boy who first gave me the ribbons is doing a project in school and we want to keep this recognition ceremony going and find out how it affects people."

That night the boss came home to his 14-year-old son and sat him down. He said, "The junior executive came in and told me he admired me and gave me a blue ribbon for being a creative genius. Imagine. He thinks I'm a creative genius. Then he put this blue ribbon that says 'Who I Am Makes a Difference' on my jacket above my heart. He gave me an extra ribbon and asked me to find somebody to honor. As I was driving home tonight, I started thinking about whom I would honor with this ribbon and I thought about you. I want to honor you."

"My days are really hectic and when I get home I don't pay a lot of attention to you. Sometimes I scream at you for not getting good enough grades in school and for your bedroom being a mess, but somehow tonight, I just wanted to sit here and well, just let you know that you do make a difference to me. Besides your mother, you are the most important person in my life. You're a great kid and I love you."

The boy started to sob and sob, and he couldn't stop crying. His whole body shook. He looked up at his father and said through his tears, "I was planning on committing suicide tomorrow, Dad, because I didn't think you loved me. Now I don't need to."

You never know what kind of difference a little encouragement can make to a person. Send this message to anyone who is important to you, or do a similar ceremony for each of your family members (See Kindness Activity: "Who You Are Makes a Difference.")

INDEPENDENCE TRAINING: SELF-CARE AND HOUSEHOLD TASKS PARTICIPATION CHART

The chart below provides some guidelines to help parents decide when children can assume responsibility for certain self-care and household tasks. Based on a study by Elizabeth Crary, the chart includes the percentage of children that were found to be involved with each task and the average age these children were found to be able to handle different levels of involvement.

Symbols:

H = the child needs help with the task.

R = the child needs reminding or supervision.

A = the child does a task as needed without being reminded or needing supervision.

Task	% of Children involved	Ages and Level of Involvement											
		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Dress self	99%	H	-----	R	-----	A							
Brush teeth	99%	H	-----					R	-----	A			
Bathe self	99%	H	-----					R	-----	A			
Pick up for self	99%					H	-----			R	-----		A
Put dirty clothes away	99%					H	-----			R	-----		A
Hang up clean clothes	97%					H	-----			R	-----		A
Make bed	93%					H	-----			R	-----		A
Tidy room	98%					H	-----			R	-----		A
Wipe spills	93%	H	-----					R	-----	A			
Vacuum floors	79%					H	-----					A	-----R*
Clean sink	75%							H	-----			A	-----R*
Take out trash	72%							H	-----			A	-----R*
Care for pet	72%							H	-----			R	-----A
Do laundry	54%									H	-----	R/A	14.4
Set table	93%	H	-----							R	-----		A
Wash dishes	75%					H	-----					R	-----A
Fix snack	89%					H	-----					R	-----A
Cook meal	71%							H	-----			R	-----A

* Children may require some supervision again after becoming independent

CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN FAMILIES

It is important to develop a way to deal with conflicts in your family. Conflicts between siblings are very common in families and parents often have to be the mediator. The best rule of thumb is to help siblings resolve a conflict as soon as possible, but sometimes you are not present at the time the conflict occurs or the timing requires a delayed resolution. Some families use a portion of family meetings to deal with conflicts that cannot get resolved on the spot. Set a standard for dealing with family conflicts by saying to your children something like, "In this family, we talk things out instead of fighting." Make it clear that violence of any kind is not acceptable.

Some families use preventative measures such as reading stories to children that show them how the characters in the stories resolve their conflicts in cooperative, non-violent ways. In addition, it is wise to limit the amount of television and videos that your child watches, particularly those that have violent scenes that teach children that violence is the best way to resolve conflicts.

Your children may be attracted to play that uses pretend violence. This is a normal part of a child's play and should not be forbidden. Instead, show your child alternatives that are non-violent. If your child imitates violent TV characters, help them create non-violent options for the characters.

Children, especially young children, may have trouble understanding how their actions affect others. You can reenact a conflict using puppets or stuffed animals to act out the conflict. This can help your child name the feelings people are having in the conflict and can help them find non-violent resolution that don't "hurt" the other person. It is important to acknowledge your child's feelings in a conflict. Teach your children to make "I" statements such as "I am upset because you promised to take me to the beach and now we are not going." Then say things like, "You are right, I did promise. You have a right to be upset. I'm sorry that didn't work out this time. What would you like to do instead?"

Remember, how you handle your own conflicts provides a model for your children to follow. Do you tend to avoid conflict? Fly off the handle? Negotiate? Know your "triggers," or the words, actions or attitudes that tend to set you off. If you get triggered, recognize it, take a time out to think about what is happening and then deal with the conflict.

Aim for win-win solutions where both parties get close to what they wanted. Avoid resolving conflicts for your children that they can resolve for themselves. Learn to be a mediator who gets the parties together and then helps them come up with a resolution they can agree on, rather than telling them what they should do.

DISCIPLINING WITH KINDNESS

Limit-setting and disciplining your child is one of the most important functions you have as a parent. If you do not set effective limits or are inconsistent with your limit-setting that sends a message to your child that you not care very much about them and their welfare. Parents who are seemingly loving and do not do a good job of setting limits for their children, are often seen by their children as too busy to care very deeply. Children need limits in order to feel safe and when the limits are not consistent or clear, children will naturally test them more. Below are ten suggestions on how to discipline with kindness. Read over these suggestions and see if any of them reflect areas where your limit-setting skills are weak.

- 1. Take a deep breath and get centered before saying or doing anything.** Never discipline when you are feeling upset or off center, if you can help it. When you are centered you will be able to think more clearly and the decisions you make will make more sense to everybody involved.
- 2. Engage in brain before mouth.** Think about what you want to say and what would be the kindest way to say it. There are lots of ways to express your thoughts and feelings, but often the first thing that you think of is not necessarily the best thing. If you do happen to utter some unkind words before you engage your brain, you can always go back and apologize to your child and make amends.
- 3. Be specific and ask directly for what you want from your child.** Avoid complaining or using always or never to justify your request. Anger is usually a signal that there is something that you want or need that you don't have. Use your anger at your child to first think about what it is that you want or need from him or her and then ask for it, without whining or blaming. The other important aspect of the conflict you are having with your child is to determine how the child's behavior tangibly effects you. Leaving dishes in the sink where you have to work around them may have more tangible effects on you than your teenager having a dirty room,
- 4. Ask your child if he or she knows what rule was broken.** If consequences were set before the rule was broken, also ask your child to tell you what the consequences were. It is best when the child can tell you what the rule was and what consequences were agreed on ahead of time in case the rule got broken. In this kind of situation, your role is merely to help carry out a consequence that was previously determined. Consequences should be agreed upon ahead of time and the criterion for an effective consequence is that it helps your child to remember and abide by the rule. If there are repeated violations of the rule, this is an indication that the consequence is not strong enough to help your child remember.

5. Let your child tell his or her side of the story. Your job is to listen and reflect back to what you heard and understood. Confirm with child that you heard them correctly without judging or shaming them. This step is crucial if you are going to keep the lines of communication open and find a win-win solution. You need to stay open to how your child views the situation and often provides an opportunity for you to better understand how your child thinks through problems and conflicts and problem solves.

6. Ask your child what he or she would suggest to fix the problem. Consider this solution and agree or make a counter proposal unless your child's suggested solution meets your needs. This negotiation stage is very important to set the stage for a possible win-win solution. By giving your child some say in finding a solution to the problem that he or she may have created, you are teaching your child to assume responsibility for his her actions.

7. Ask your child what he or she will do the next time when faced with this rule. This question asks your child to think through the situation and project that thinking into the future. When children can think about what they would do the next time they are faced with this rule or situation, they are more likely to remember what they need to do to stay on track.

8. Ask your child what he or she thinks should happen if the rule is broken again. This is where you can set consequences ahead of time to cover a future problem like this one. If you child can come up with his or her own consequences that they believe will help them remember the rule the next time, then they are likely to remember and not break the rule.

9. Reassure your child that their behavior caused a problem, not them as a person.

It is sometimes hard for your child to understand that it is their behavior that is in question here, not their worth as a person. A reassuring comment from you may help remind your child of this fact. Letting them know that they are still lovable even though they did something that you reacted to with anger, is very reassuring.

10. Give your child a hug or ask for a hug. When you have completed your discussion and have found a win-win resolution to the problem, it is important to let your child know that you still love them. This makes it possible to prevent any undo relationship fallout as a result of the problem. It is possible to provide limits with love. In fact, limit-setting is one of the most important tasks that parents have to perform and when it is done consistently with live you child will be more willing to cooperate with you and not have to test your limits.

THE EIGHT PRINCIPLES FOR ESTABLISHING A KIND AND CARING HOME

By Regina Rodriguez

1. Be sure you act in kind ways toward each other. If you act in a kind way, chances are you'll be treated with kindness in return. For example, if you smile at another person most times than not, you will receive a smile in return. Your children are great at mirroring your behavior, thus to see them act kindly, you must act in kind ways toward them

2. Make sure you share your feelings with each other. In our society, many people are afraid to express their feelings because they feel or fear that others will view them as irrational or flaky. This can lead to repression and suppression of feelings. Repressing or suppressing your feelings can create problems for you. Unshared feelings will try to surface in any way possible, thus you may have problems with your body or behaviors as a result. Shared feelings will help you create a kind environment because all family members can feel safe in sharing and develop trust with each other.

It is helpful to think of your feelings as a spring. If you push your feelings down and don't share those feelings, you will have to use increasingly more energy to try to suppress those feelings. Eventually, those feelings may explode or spring to the surface when the spring of feelings becomes to unbearable for you to suppress.

3. Practice courtesy and respect toward each other. Courtesy and respect are intertwined in that if you treat people whom you respect with courtesy, you can expect them to treat you the same way. Courtesy is a sign of respect. Moreover, courtesy is a form of kindness. The acts of courtesy — holding a door open for someone, saying "Thank You" — are acts of kindness that show respect for other family members.

4. Encourage each family member to stand up for his or her own ideas. Families should be a safe place where each person has a voice and he or she should be able to stand up for his or her ideas. Being open-minded and listening are ways to establish a kind and caring family. By encouraging family members to stand up for their ideas or beliefs, you are empowering them. This also shows that you care for and trust that family member. You are also stating that the family member that you listen to is important to you and that their voice counts.

5. Act in ways that build trust and love toward each other. Actions do sometimes speak louder than words. When you love someone, you need to show them that you love them otherwise our words don't have any credibility. If you don't do simple acts of love along with your words, you cannot establish trust and love.

6. Give each other a chance to make mistakes without penalty. We all make mistakes, and many times, we are hardest on ourselves. It does not help to have others penalized us for our mistakes. We create our own penalties and many times have our own consequences for the mistakes we make. By providing an environment that lets us make mistakes, one can learn easier and not feel guilty for trying new and different things. With rules and consequences firmly established, children have the choice and can learn through their mistakes. Consequences should not be used to punish a mistake, but to help that person remember the rules he or she temporarily forgot.

7. Help each other to be successful. Helping others is a form of kindness. By helping family members be successful, you are stating that you believe in them and want the best for them. Furthermore, when we become successful we feel good about ourselves. When someone feels good about him/herself, he or she will promote kindness in others.

8. Take joy in and celebrate each family member's successes. Along with helping others be successful, it is beneficial to take time and celebrate your successes. If you cannot take joy in your successes, then the success is meaningless. By celebrating the successes of a family member with him or her, you are showing that you care for that family member and are happy for his/her accomplishments.

THE PARENTS ROLE IN CHILDREN'S PLAY

Play is a powerful component of any child's life. In play they learn how to use their imagination to solve problems, to explore their world, to learn to cooperate with others and how to interpret new events in their life. They also learn to work through their feelings through their play by experimenting with new roles and acting out their feelings.

As a parent, you need to provide guidance in choosing toys for your children that have lots of possibilities. Blocks, dolls and art supplies can provide endless opportunities for creative play. Also remember to buy toys that are age-appropriate. A set of walkie talkies is not appropriate for a two year old, but a set of blocks is.

As a parent, you will need to provide many opportunities for your child to have unstructured play. You can enhance unstructured play by providing many props such as dress up clothes, sand, water, art supplies, etc.

Make sure that you allow enough uninterrupted time to play. Avoid intruding on their play when it is intense. Give your child choices in their play. Let your child choose what toys he or she wants to play with and encourage your child to initiate play when he or she wants to.

Play is wonderful way to teach children cooperation. Encourage cooperation and sharing without placing undue pressure or expectations on very young children. Finally, help your child restrain from aggressive play with others by offering acceptable alternatives such as pounding a pillow or play dough or building at a workbench.

GUIDELINES CONCERNING THE TIME LIMITS TO PARENT/CHILD SEPARATIONS

Research has shown that at different ages there is a limit to the amount of time that children can endure a physical separation from a bonded parent without causing some harm to these children. The harm would include a breakdown of trust, a feeling of abandonment and other emotional problems.

The affect of separations that exceed these limits can be long-lasting and can cause chronic and acute fears of abandonment that can last a lifetime, if not identified and treated. Sometimes these separations occur inadvertently due to birth complications for mother or child or some serious illness to the child or the parent. It is important to treat the affects of any inadvertent separations as soon as possible after they occur to prevent long-term damage. Below is a chart that provides guidelines to parents about the limits to the amount of time they can be physically separated from their children without causing harm.

<u>Age of child</u>	<u>Preferable Limit</u>	<u>Acceptable Limit</u>	<u>Harmful Limit</u>
Under 1 yr.	2 days	7 days	More than 7 days
1 to 2 yrs.	3 days	10 days	More than 10 days
3 to 5 yrs.	1 week	3 weeks	More than 3 weeks
6 to 9 yrs.	2 weeks	4 weeks	More than 4 weeks
10 to 13 yrs.	4 weeks	6 weeks	More than 6 weeks
14 yrs. +	6 weeks	9 weeks	More than 9 weeks

THE KINDNESS CAMPAIGN'S LIST OF 100 WAYS TO PRAISE YOUR CHILD

YOU'RE TERRIFIC
GOOD JOB
I'M PROUD OF YOU
I LOVE YOU
YOU'RE SPECIAL
KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK
AMAZING
WOW
FANTASTIC
YOU'RE THE BEST
WAY TO GO
WHAT WOULD I DO WITHOUT YOU?
YOU ARE THE GREATEST
THANK YOU
PLEASE
I APPRECIATE THE EFFORT
THAT'S GREAT
I LIKE YOU
HAVE A GREAT DAY
YOU'RE WONDERFUL
HOW ARE YOU?
WHAT A GREAT KID I HAVE
SUPER
YOU'RE INCREDIBLE
YOU'RE OUTSTANDING
HOW IS YOUR DAY GOING?
THAT'S NICE
YOU MAKE ME FEEL GOOD
I'M NEVER TOO BUSY FOR YOU
YOU'RE MY FRIEND
I CARE ABOUT YOU
YOU'RE SUCH A GOOD PERSON
I APPRECIATE THAT
YOU'RE THOUGHTFUL
I'M LUCKY TO HAVE YOU
HAVE FUN
TELL ME ALL ABOUT IT
YOU LOOK VERY NICE TODAY
YOU'RE SO HELPFUL

I KNOW YOU CAN
I'M HAPPY FOR YOU
SENSATIONAL
ALRIGHT
YOU'RE A WINNER
YOU MAKE MY DAY
HOW ABOUT A KISS
YOU MAKE ME HAPPY
'I'M GLAD YOU'RE YOU
THAT'S THE WAY TO DO IT
THAT'S PERFECT
THAT'S RIGHT
GOOD ANSWER
REMARKABLE
YOU'RE UNIQUE
SPECTACULAR
YOU'RE PRECIOUS
MAGNIFICENT
WHAT AN IMAGINATION
WHAT A GOOD LISTENER
I RESPECT YOU
YOU BRIGHTEN MY DAY
MY BUDDY
YOU'RE VERY CREATIVE
EXCEPTIONAL
YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE
YOU'RE FUN TO BE WITH
YOU'RE GROWING UP
NOW YOU'VE GOT IT
PHENOMENAL
YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL
I TRUST YOU
GOOD FOR YOU
LOOKING GOOD
I BELIEVE YOU
THAT'S EXCITING
WELL DONE
I KNEW YOU COULD DO IT
YOU'RE SO BRAVE

EXCELLENT
THAT'S NEAT
YOU'RE A QUICK LEARNER
YOU'RE SMART
YOU'RE SWEET
YOU FIGURED IT OUT
I'VE GOT A BIG HUG FOR YOU
YOU'RE IMPORTANT TO ME
YOU CAN DO ANYTHING
NOTHING CAN STOP YOU NOW
YOU MEAN THE WORLD TO ME
DID YOU DO THIS ALL BY YOURSELF?

WHAT A SUPER STAR
TOTALLY RAD
DYNAMITE
YOU DID YOUR BEST
I KNEW I COULD COUNT ON YOU
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO?
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT?
YOU'RE MY FAVORITE PERSON
YOU DESERVE THE BEST
COOL

SYMPTOMS OF ATTACHMENT DISTURBANCES

Janae B. Weinhold, Ph.D. LPC

Children who grow up in families where they do not become securely attached to their parents have some of the following symptoms. The presence of these symptoms does not necessarily mean that there is an attachment disorder. If you identify some of the symptoms below in your infants, children or yourself, it does mean that you should consult with a counselor who is trained in diagnosing and treating attachment disorders to help determine if an attachment disorder might be causing these symptoms.

Attachment disorders can interfere with a person's ability to create warm, intimate relationships, regardless of their age. They can be caused by physical and emotional abuse, physical or emotional abandonment, and neglect. Early or prolonged separations due to work or illness of the parent or illness of the child can also be a cause of the problem (See Time of Separation Chart). In addition, the lack of a warm, nurturing family environment can contribute to causing these symptoms. Research shows that only about 60% of infants in the U. S. develop a secure attachment. About 25% develop an avoidant attachment, while the other 15% develop an anxious/ambivalent attachment.

In Infants—

- stiffness and rigidity when picked up or held
- inability to make eye contact
- avoidant or withdrawn behavior
- abnormal clinging behavior
- acute shyness

In Children—

- bed wetting
- sleep disturbances
- stuttering & speech delays
- whining
- tantrums
- cruelty to animals, siblings & younger kids
- difficulty making and/or keeping friendships
- chronic lying
- lack of empathy for others
- resistance to physical closeness
- self-mutilating behaviors—inability to feel their own pain
- extremely independent
- know the difference between right and wrong and choose wrong
- make up their own rules to govern their lives
- strangers are attracted to them—they know how to seduce and manipulate people

- addiction to foods, especially sugar
- defiance, fighting, aggressive behaviors with siblings
- setting fires
- attraction to the dark side and are hypnotized by it
- negative drawings: blood, horns, the devil
- has difficulty adjusting to change

In Adults-

- low self-esteem
- difficulty in sustaining intimacy
- multiple broken relationships
- poor self-care habits
- inability to trust
- poor life-management skills
- eating disorders
- uncontrollable raging/violent behaviors
- controlling behaviors
- seek out power struggles
- inflated self-concept, narcissistic
- high motivation to beat the system
- can beat a polygraph test
- no remorse
- can posture perfect behavior to con others, such as bosses, therapists
- nihilist philosophy - a desire to attach to power structures without motive
- threatens suicide, but do not kill themselves
- tend to gravitate toward power positions - often become doctors, lawyers, policemen, politicians

In Parents-

- wishing to stay away longer when out of the house
- wishing someone else would take over when dealing with a child becomes difficult for you
- experiences one child easier to deal with than other
- feeling jealous when a child seems to prefer someone else to them
- feeling like a better mother/father to one child vs. another
- having to ask your child more than once to do things
- having to threaten your child in order to get results
- feeling as though s/he has to give, give, give with nothing coming back
- husband and wife disagree over handling of discipline
- husband/wife contradict each other's actions with children
- overly embarrassed by a child's behavior in front of friends and/or strangers

Family Kindness Activity

Name of Activity: KINDNESS NOTES

Type of Activity: Writing

Age Levels: 6 - Adult

Objectives of Activity: To find creative ways to express your kind thoughts in writing to other family members.

Materials Needed: Pen or pencil and paper or other materials as needed.

Procedures: Surprise family member with a written note of appreciation or thanks. Here are some examples:

- Place a note on your child's pillow (under the bed spread) telling him or her what you like in him or her.
- Include a note in your child's lunch box: "Thanks for helping clean up after dinner last night;" or "I'm really proud of you and how much you are learning in school."
- Tuck kindness notes in a shirt or pants pocket when you fold the laundry.
- Mail cards or letters to your kids or spouse even if they haven't gone anywhere.
- Attach a kindness note to a helium balloon and place it in a clothing closet where your child will find it.
- Make a kindness collage for each family member. Include pictures, cut out sayings or pictures from magazines, write a poem or have all other family members contribute.

Expected Outcomes: More fun and connection among family members.

Evaluation: Ask at family meetings for feedback on the kindness notes.

Kindness Family Activity

Name of Activity: SMALL ACTS OF KINDNESS ARE A BIG DEAL
IN THIS FAMILY

Type of Activity: Family Communication & Interaction

Age Levels: 2 - Adult

Objectives of Activity: To structure time and activities with family members that will build strong relationships and make small acts of kindness a big deal to them.

Materials Needed: Depends on the activity

Procedures: The idea is to structure quality time around small activities that don't cost anything (or very little). Below are some ideas:

- Play in the park or back yard with your child. Let them direct the activity and you follow the directions.
- Plan a picnic that contains your child's favorite foods. Bring along games to play or a ball or Frisbee.
- Cook a meal with your child. Allow them to share in the meal preparation.
- Read a book to your child (or with your child if they can read it themselves) and talk about what the story meant to each of you.
- Take your family to the library or a museum to learn together about new things.
- Hold regular family meetings to keep the relationships strong and clear. Everyone reports on their successes for the week and receives accolades from family members.

Expected Outcomes: More harmony and cooperation and closer family relationships.

Evaluation: Ask family members to report highlights of the week at family meetings. See how many involve time and activities with other family members.

Family Kindness Activity

Name of Activity: DOING SOMETHING KIND — WITHOUT BEING ASKED

Type of Activity: Recognition

Age Levels: 2-Adult

Objectives of Activity: To build good will in family members by surprising them with an act of kindness without being asked.

Materials Needed: None

Procedures: Look for opportunities to surprise a family member by doing something for them without being asked. You might just clean-up the dishes in the sink to help your busy mother or your spouse and not even mention it. In addition, you may complete the household chore and leave a note saying, "I really appreciate what you do for me and I wanted to do something for you today," or "Congratulations, the Ironing Fairy was here to do your ironing."

Expected Outcomes: Improved good will and increased spontaneous acts of kindness in the family.

Evaluation: This kind of spontaneous act should become contagious and happen more frequently, done by more family members.

Family Kindness Activity

Name of Activity: DISCIPLINE WITH KINDNESS

Type of Activity: Ten steps to kind disciplining

Age Levels: 2-18

Objectives of Activity: To help parents remember to be kind while setting limits, enforcing consequences and/or disciplining their children.

Materials Needed: None

Procedures: Follow any or all of the following ten steps:

1. Take a deep breath and get centered before saying or doing anything.
2. Engage in brain before mouth. Think about what you want to say and what would be the kindest way to say it.
3. Be specific and ask directly for what you want from your child. Avoid complaining or using always or never to justify your request.
4. Ask the child if he or she knows what rule was broken. If consequences were set before the rule was broken, ask the child to tell you what the consequences are.
5. Let your child tell his or her side of the story and reflect back what you heard and understood. Confirm with your child that you hear it correctly.
6. Ask your child what he or she would suggest to fix the problem. Consider this solution and agree or make a counter proposal.
7. Ask your child what he or she will do the next time when faced with this rule.
8. Ask your child what he or she thinks should happen if the rule is broken again.
9. Be sure to reassure your child that it is his or her behavior that caused a problem for you and not them as a person.
10. Give your child a hug or ask for a hug when you have completed your discussion.

Expected Outcomes: Less limit-testing and a reduced need to discipline.

Evaluation: You can measure success by the number of times your child follows the rules you have established with them. Be sure to notice the times they do follow the rules and thank them.

Family Kindness Activity

Name of Activity: TEACHING CHILDREN TO MAKE A HEARTFELT CONNECTION

Type of Activity: Parent-child Communication

Age Levels: 2-18

Objectives of Activity: To teach your children how to connect with heartfelt feelings of love, kindness and appreciation towards others.

Materials Needed: None.

Procedures: 1. Find a quiet place (holding younger children on your lap) & guide them through the process listed under "Making a Heartfelt Connection."
2. Ask the children to close their eyes (young children may only be able to do this for a short time). With practice, they can increase the length of time.
3. Ask the children to send love from their heart to other family members or to friends.
4. Practice this process regularly with your children. It is a quality time activity that can lead to deeper levels of communication with your children.

Expected Outcomes: Children will use this process to help them find solutions to problems with family members and friends. Regular use can help your children balance their nervous energy, lower their blood pressure, improve heart rhythms and overall health.

Evaluation: Notice when your children use this process to solve their own problems or connect with friends and family members.

Family Kindness Activity

Name of Activity: MAKING A HEARTFELT CONNECTION

Type of Activity: Intrapersonal Communication

Age Levels: Adults

Objectives of Activity: To make connection with heartfelt feelings toward your children.

Materials Needed: None.

Procedures:

1. Find a quiet place where you can relax for about 5-10 minutes. Close your eyes. Focus on the feelings of love, kindness or appreciate coming from your heart.
2. Recall a pleasant experience you had with each of your children; when you were feeling love or appreciation toward them. Connect with these feelings in your heart.
3. Send these feelings to each of your children now. Picture each one in your mind's eye and send love to that child.
4. Spend several minutes sending love to your children. You may think about what you love about each child and then send him or her the love that is in your heart.
5. Repeat this procedure on a regular basis.
6. Do this process before you discipline your child or before talking them about important issues or concerns.

Expected Outcomes: Increases love and respect for our children. Regular use of this activity can help balance negative emotions, lower blood pressure, improve heart problems and have positive effects on overall health.

Evaluation: You will notice that the quality of your communication with your children improves.

Family Kindness Activity

Name of Activity: A HEARTFELT FOCUS

Type of Activity: Parent Child Communication

Age Levels: 3-10, Adults

Objectives of Activity: To help children experience heartfelt feelings and to learn connect with the power and strength of their own heart.

Materials Needed:

1. Tape or CD player.
2. Music of your choice that is fun and upbeat but yet relaxing. Don't pick music that is too slow or too fast.

Procedures:

1. Ask everyone to sit facing each other (for three or more sit in a circle). Tell the children that you are going to help them understand the power of their heartfelt feelings.
2. Ask them to imagine that there is a door in their heart that they can open or close. Ask them to put their hand on their heart and pretend they are breathing through their heart (feeling their chest more when they inhale and exhale).
3. Tell them that each time they breathe in to imagine the door to their heart opening a little wider to let love and sunshine into their heart. Tell them that each time they breathe out to send their love and sunshine to someone they care about, perhaps a sibling or their mom and dad. Demonstrate this for the children.
4. When everyone is quiet, play the music and practice this for 2-4 minutes. Adjust the length to the age of the children.
5. Ask everybody to share their experiences at the end.

Expected Outcomes: More awareness of the presence of love in their heart and develop increased skill in connecting with these feelings.

Evaluation: Feedback from the children about how they were able to use this tool during their day. Check with them periodically with these feelings.

Family Kindness Activity

Name of Activity: TIME OUT FOR KINDNESS

Type of Activity: Stress Reduction

Age Levels: Adults

Objectives of Activity: To help adults release stress, frustration, anger so they can regain composure and make kinder and more compassionate responses to your children.

Materials Needed: None.

Procedures:

1. Share feelings you are having and consciously take time out from the feelings.
2. Shift your focus away from any stressful thoughts racing through your mind and focus on your heart. Focus your breathing in your heart. Take five or six slow, deep breaths from your heart.
3. Remember a fun or peaceful time you had recently. Reexperience this positive time.
4. In this more relaxed state, ask yourself what would be a kind and compassionate response to the situation or person. Think about a response that will convey kindness and compassion.
5. Listen to the answer and then act accordingly.

Expected Outcomes: With repeated use, you can expect that your responses will help alleviate the stress you are feeling and will help convey kindness and compassion toward others.

Evaluation: Feedback from other family members indicating the positive or negative impact of your responses. You can ask for feedback from other family members.

Family Kindness Activity

Name of Activity: KINDNESS HUGS

Type of Activity: Parent-child bonding

Age Levels: 2-24 months

- Objectives of Activity:
1. To teach infants and young children to connect their feelings of love with physical touch and affection.
 2. To help supply hugs to infants and young children, so they bond and attach to their parents as love objects.

Materials Needed: None.

Procedures:

1. Always remember to give kindness hugs when your baby is happy or sad.
Hold your baby close to your heart giving them a hug.
2. When you hug your baby say, "I love you" to them.
3. Wait for a response from the child such as a smile or a laugh and then mirror it back to them (smiling and laughing with them).
4. Repeat this as many times as seems appropriate for the age of your child.
5. As babies get older and can talk they may ask for a "kindness hug."
6. You can also bring in a stuffed animal like a teddy bear and teach your child to give the bear a "kindness hug."

Expected Outcomes: Your child will become more bonded to you and feel secure and safe with you.

Evaluation: As children learn this, notice how many more times they ask for hugs when they need it.

Family Kindness Activity

Name of Activity: THE KINDNESS BALL

Type of Activity: Parent-child movement/communication

Age Levels: 1-4

Objectives of Activity:

1. To teach young children how to send and receive love and kindness.
2. To help young children return to feeling good or centered after they have been cranky or upset about something.

Materials Needed: A Nerf Ball or a ball with 4-5" in diameter

Procedures:

1. Child and parent or adult sit about six feet apart on the floor. Both, the child and adult spread their legs apart so that the ball can easily be caught when it is rolled back and forth. Adjust the distance to the age of the child.
2. The adult or parent instructs the child on how to play the game. You must say, "I am going to roll the ball to you and when I do that I am going to send love and kindness to you. When you roll it back you are sending love and kindness to me."
3. Before rolling the ball, hold it to your heart and breathe in and out filling the ball with love and kindness. As you roll the ball say, "Here comes the ball filled with love and kindness."
4. Ask them if they felt love and kindness when they caught the ball.
5. You can also send love and kindness to other relatives or friends or to neighbors or classmates.

Expected Outcomes: This simple game teaches children about reciprocal relationships where there is an equal give and take.

Evaluation: Your child demonstrates that they have learned to accept equal give and take as the natural state of relationship.

Family Kindness Activity

Name of Activity: THE KINDNESS BEAN BAG

Type of Activity: Parent-Children art/play/communication

Age Levels: 2-8

Objectives of Activity:

1. Teaches children eye-hand coordination.
2. Teaches children to feel and send love and kindness to others.

Materials Needed:

1. A 2-3' large sheet of poster paper.
2. Crayons, paints, or magic markers.
3. Paper, pencils and masking tape.
4. Several small heart shaped bean bags filled with beans or rice.

Procedures:

1. Cut the poster paper into the shape of a heart at least 20" high and across. Draw two concentric hearts inside the larger heart. Write the number 5 in the outer heart, 10 in the middle heart and 20 in the center heart.
2. Tell the child to hold the bean bag next to their heart and imagine filling their bean bag with love and kindness and then toss the bean bag on the heart target on the floor. Place the bean bag about 3 or more feet away on the floor.
3. Ask them to think about someone they love and then take turns tossing their bean bags at the target. You can tally the kindness points each child makes and relate it to the love that they each sent to people they love.
4. The older the child, the farther away you have them stand.
5. End the game by having the children put their hand on their heart then move their hand and arm toward another child, imagining that you are sending love and kindness to them.

Expected Outcomes: Children will learn to be kind and loving toward each other.

Evaluation: Noticing how many times your children act in loving and kind ways toward each other after they play this game.

Family Kindness Activity

Name of Activity: KINDNESS BUBBLES

Type of Activity: Parent-child play/communication

Age Levels: 4-8

Objectives of Activity:

1. To teach children what love and kindness feels like while they play.
2. To remind children to be kind and loving as they play with others.

Materials Needed: Bubble blowing liquid with a bubble blowing wand for each player (or use straws or empty thread spools).

Procedures:

1. Demonstrate to the children how to blow bubbles and have them practice.
2. Ask the children to play a game with you as they continue to blow bubbles. Tell them to pretend that they are filling each bubble with loving kindness and as the bubbles float away, ask them who or what is receiving their loving kindness (other people, flowers, trees, insects, the world).

Expected Outcomes: The children begin to understand how to send loving kindness to others and into the world.

Evaluation: Observe children in their play to see if they act in kind and loving ways toward each other.

Family Kindness Activity

Name of Activity: FAMILY KINDNESS AWARDS

Type of Activity: Recognition

Age Levels: 2-Adult

Objectives of Activity: To promote acts of kindness in the family by creating a regular, systematic, recognition process.

Materials Needed: Paper & pen to make family kindness tally sheet plus post-it notes.

Procedures:

1. Post a family kindness tally sheet on the refrigerator or in some visible high traffic area of your house.
2. Each time someone does an act of kindness for someone else in the family the post it on the tally sheet.
3. After certain number of family acts of kindness are posted, they can be "cashed in" for a special family even like going out for dinner or going to a movie together.
4. Maybe a special reward is given to the family member who contributed the most acts of kindness each week. Be careful not to make this a competitive process. Family cooperation should be stressed.

Expected Outcomes:

1. More acts of kindness among family members.
2. More recognition for the kind givers in the family.
3. Increased good will in the family.

Evaluation: You can see if this is working if there is a significant increase in the number of acts of kindness that are tallied and an increase in positive interactions among family members.

Submitted by: Mike, Sherry, Yvonne, and Grant Lee

Family Kindness Activity

Name of Activity: KINDNESS MOBILES

Type of Activity: Art

Age Levels: 3-Adult

Objectives of the Activity: 1) to teach family members about balance and
2) to create a permanent object that can serve as a reminder about kindness.

Materials Needed: Different colored construction paper, white paper, scissors, glue, paste or scotch tape, marking pens or crayons, 7" dowels (3 per person), thread or string, cup hooks or screws for hanging the mobiles.

Procedures:

1. Write out kindness messages that you want to put on the mobile.
2. Cut out designs from colored construction paper to be hung on the mobile.
3. Write or draw word or pictures on the mobile shapes.
4. Use thread or string to attach two of mobile shapes to the main dowel and the other mobile shapes to each of the other two dowels.
5. Attach a length of thread or string to the main dowel to attach it to the ceiling hook.
6. Attach the two dowels to the main dowel.
7. Slide the threads or strings along the dowels until they balance.
8. Hang the mobile in a place where you and other family members will see it.

Expected Outcomes: More recognition of expressions of kindness represented on the mobiles.

Evaluation: Ask everyone to report on how the mobiles have affected family life.

Family Kindness Activity

Name of Activity: THE TALKING STICK

Type of Activity: Communication

Age Levels: 2-Adult

Objectives of the Activity: Each family member is instructed to make their own talking stick and decorate it. Usually it is made of wood and is round like a stick. You can use a smooth wooden rod or a broom handle. The stick should be 18" to 24" long. Use markers to decorate or attach feathers or objects to the stick.

- Procedures:**
1. Use the talking stick at all family meetings. The person who is holding the stick is permitted to speak. It is passed around so everyone has a turn to speak. Use a different family members' talking stick for each meeting.
 2. When a person is holding the talking stick, he or she is urged to speak his or her truth.
 3. If there is a conflict to resolve, the stick is passed back and forth until those involved come up with a resolution that they all can agree on.

Expected Outcomes: More orderly communication in family meetings and increased cooperation and listening.

Evaluation: Ask family members to evaluate the effects of the talking stick after each family meeting.

Family Kindness Activity

Name of Activity: KINDNESS IS COOL, DUDE

Type of Activity: Communications

Age Levels: 10-18

Objectives of the Activity: 1 to broaden the meaning of “cool” to include being kind to others.

- Procedures:
1. At a family meeting, pass out paper and pencils.
 2. Ask each family member to list what they think “appearing cool” is like and what “being cool” is like. Ask them to list specific behaviors or attitudes. Have them draw a line down the middle with one side “appearing cool” and the other “being cool.”
 3. After everyone has made a list, write them on the board or flip chart so everyone can see them.
 4. Each family member then talks about why he or she wrote what they did.
 5. Discuss where there is agreement and where there is not on the lists. You can change words where there is a disagreement until you have a consensus list.
 6. When a family member is cool rather than appearing cool, greet them with the statement, “You are cool, dude.”

Expected Outcomes: A clearer understanding of the behaviors and attitudes that mean “being cool” as opposed to “appearing cool.”

Evaluation: Count the number of times family members say, “You are cool, dude.”

Family Kindness Activity

Name of the Activity: THE KINDNESS BALANCE SHEET

Type of Activity: Communication

Age Levels: 12-19

Objectives of the Activity: 1. To keep dialogue open between parents and teens.
2. To foster frank and honest communication between parents and teens.

Materials Needed: Paper and pencils or pens.

Procedures: 1. Decide how often you want to do the Kindness Balance Sheet. It is most effective if it is done every day.
2. Hand out a sheet of paper to each family member.
3. Have them write "Kindness Balance Sheet" at the top of the paper and draw a horizontal line down the middle. Label the left column "filling" and the right column "draining."
4. Ask each person to list in the "filling" column the positive events, comments by others, feelings, interactions that have filled their day with life energy.
5. Then ask each person to list in the "draining" column the negative events, feelings, comments by others, interactions that have drained them of life energy.
6. After completing both columns, write down a conclusion about your day. Was it more filling or more draining?
7. Discuss together what each person might do to make his or her life more positive and full of life energy.

Expected Outcomes: 1. More current and frank communication among family members.
2. More awareness of what fills or drains our life energy.
3. More compassion and understanding among family members.

Evaluation: Determine whether the number of "filling" or positive events increases and the number of negative or "draining" events decreases.

Family Kindness Activity

Name of the Activity: KINDNESS TIME

Type of Activity: Bonding

Age Levels: 2-18

Objectives of the Activity: 1. To plan short periods of time each day where parent and child bond and reinforce the good thoughts and feelings they have toward each other.

Materials Needed: None.

Procedures: 1. Together decide on a convenient Kindness Time to meet each day. If you have several children, schedule separate times with each child. Post this time on the refrigerator or bulletin board as a reminder.

2. Agree to listen without interruption to each other.

3. During Kindness Time do whatever you want that builds on or enhances the bonding or connection between the two of you.

Some ideas include:

- Take turns talking about the highlights of your day.
- Share qualities that you appreciate about each other.
- Listen with compassion to each other and mirror back the words and feelings.
- Each shares five things the or she appreciates about himself or herself.
- Give each other a long hug or hold each other.

Expected Outcomes: Closer bonding; fewer incidents where family members act out to get attention.

Evaluation: Monitor the number of incidents where family members act out to get attention before and after you start doing Kindness Time. Or monitor what happens when you "forget" to do Kindness Time.

Family Kindness Activity

Name of Activity: WHO YOU ARE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Type of Activity: Recognition

Age Levels: All Ages

Objective(s) of Activity: 1. To recognize the unique value and importance of each family member.
2. to create an acknowledgment ceremony for families.

Materials Needed: Blue ribbons with gold letters or other materials to make badges or ribbons for each family member.

Procedures: 1. Read the enclosed essay "Who You Are Makes A Difference" to the whole family.
2. One at a time, each family member is asked to stand in front of the other family members and receive feedback.
3. Each family member tells this person how and why he/she makes a difference to that person.
4. Then this person is presented with a blue ribbon to symbolize their importance in the family.
5. Someone writes down what is said to each family member and if possible it is videotaped so that family members can view it later, if they need to or want to. The written feedback is typed on the computer or written out neatly and presented to each family member to go with the blue ribbon.

Expected Outcomes: More positive interactions between and among family members.

Evaluation: Ask each family member to talk about how it felt and what it meant to them to be recognized by other family members.

Family Kindness Activity

Name of Activity: TURNING UNKINDNESS INTO KINDNESS IN YOUR FAMILY

Type of Activity: Writing Family Appreciations

Age Levels: Adults and one or more children

Objectives of the Activity: 1) To help family members feel more appreciated,
2) To feel more secure and
3) To teach family members how to express their appreciation to each other.

Materials Needed: Paper, note cards or construction paper. Pens, pencils, crayons or colored markers.

Procedures: 1. Organize a family meeting where you focus on increasing the amount of kindness and appreciation that is expressed in the family. Start by talking about how cynical people can get. Ask your kids if they know what it means to be cynical. Ask for or give examples. Talk about how kindness and appreciation can prevent people from getting cynical

2. Ask each family member to write a list of the people, events and things that they appreciate about members of the family. Ask them to list at least five items. You may have to help the younger children to write their lists.
3. Ask each family members to share one item from their list. Talk about creative ways that this person can share the appreciation with the family member who is listed in this item. Everyone can offer suggestions and creative ideas.
4. Ask each person to make a list of the things that others appreciate about them
5. Ask each family member to post their two lists in their bedroom to remind them of who and what they appreciate in this family and how others in the family appreciate them.

Expected Outcomes: More spontaneous expressions of kindness and appreciation among family members.

Evaluation: Ask family members if they are feeling more appreciated as the result of doing this activity.

Family Kindness Activity

Name of Activity: I ADMIRE YOU, BECAUSE

Type of Activity: Written Communications

Age Levels: Adults and at least one or more children age 2 and above.

Objectives of the Activity: 1. To increase the direct expression of admiration and kindness among family members.

Materials Needed: Paper or note cards. Pencils, pens, crayons or magic markers.

- Procedures:
1. At a family meeting, ask each family member to list or draw five things that they admire about another family member. Select one family member to focus on and repeat this process until all family members had a turn to receive feedback from the other family members. Depending on the number of family members, you may want to do this over several meetings and not try to go through the process with everyone in one meeting. To make sure that everyone is included start by picking the youngest, the oldest or use some random process of selection.
 2. Ask each person to share their list of admired qualities of the selected person and to say why they admired them for that quality. Discuss how it feel to be admired for having that quality by someone in the family. Identify qualities that were surprising to the recipient and those that were not.
 3. Post the completed lists in a central place, like the refrigerator or a family bulletin board.
 4. Make a composite list and give to each family member so they can post it in their room or keep it with them while they are away from the family at school or elsewhere.

Expected Outcomes: Increased self-esteem and increased spontaneous expressions of admiration among family members.

Evaluation: Ask each family member how they felt when they received this feedback and what effects it has had on them.

Family Kindness Activity

Name of Activity: BEING KIND AND APPRECIATIVE TOWARD YOUR-SELF

Type of Activity: Writing Exercise

Age Levels: 3 to Adult

Objectives of the Activity: 1. To help family members to build a healthy outlook about themselves.
2. To help family members focus their attention on the things they like about themselves.

Materials Needed: Pencils, pens, crayons or magic markers. Paper, a scrapbook or material such as a 3 hole punch and colored string to make a scrapbook.

Procedures: 1. Ask each family member to take time at the end of their day to write or draw at least one thing that they appreciated about themselves that day on a sheet of paper.

2. Collect your week of appreciations and put them in a scrapbook or make a scrapbook to hold your daily appreciation sheets. Even when you have had a bad day, make a sincere effort to record an appreciation of yourself.

3. At a weekly family meeting, ask each person to share their appreciation sheets with the other family members.

4. Encourage family members to do this every day they can and to keep their scrapbook going. Weekly reviews help family members sustain this activity. It can become a cherish record for family members that can help support them on bad days.

Expected Outcomes: Family members will develop more kind and appreciative feelings toward themselves.

Evaluation: The scrapbook become a record of how this is working. You would expect to see deeper and more meaningful appreciations beginning to show up. Another way is to periodically total the number of self-appreciations that appear in the scrapbooks.

Family Activity Activity

Name of Activity: KINDNESS CIRCLE

Type of Activity: Family Communication

Objectives of the Activity: 1. To help family member's share the kindness and positive feelings they have toward each other.
2. To improve the self-esteem of family members.

Age Levels: 6- Adult

Materials Needed: Paper and pencils or note cards.

Procedures: 1. At a family meeting ask everyone to sit in a circle. One of the adults states the purpose of the activity which is to give each family member an opportunity to sit in the center of the circle and hear the other family members describe positive qualities they see in them.

2. One family member at a time sits in the middle of the circle and receives and positive messages sent by the other family members. It is best to set a time limit for each person so everyone has equal time in the middle of the circle (5-10 minutes maximum).
3. It is helpful to give some examples of qualities that might trigger positive responses. These could include communication skills, relationship skills, attitudes toward school or work, the ability to have fun or to be kind.
4. The receiver is instructed to sit quietly with his or her eyes closed while getting the positive feedback. Go around the family circle and ask each person to share at least one or more qualities. It is important to encourage sharing deeper qualities than hair or clothing.
5. Ask someone to record the comments so they can give them to each person to post.
6. Continue with the process until everyone has had a turn. Then, if time permits, debrief the experience. What was it like to be in the center? Did anyone hear comment that they didn't expect? Was it easier to give or receive?

Expected Outcomes: Increased positive feeling toward each other in the family.

Evaluation: Notice if there is an increase in spontaneous kind or positive comments among family members.

Kindness Family Activity

Name of Activity: FROM THE KINDNESS OF MY HEART

Type of Activity: Family Communication

Age levels; 7-Adult

Objectives of the Activity: 1. To help family members gain a deeper respect for the words of kindness that can come from their heart.
2. To encourage spontaneous expressions of heartfelt kindness toward family members.

Materials Needed: 1. Paper, pencils, marking pens, scissors
2. A box or container
3. A timer or watch with a second hand.
4. A chalkboard or whiteboard with chalk or markers

Procedures: 1. Cut up small pieces of paper and write a topic on each piece of paper. Choose topics that will encourage family members to dwell on the kindness of their heart (see list of suggested topics below). Cut at least twice as many topics as there are family members.
2. Fold and place the topics in a container. At a family meeting ask each family member to draw a topic from the container.
3. After each family member draws a topic, each member has one minute to relate what he or she knows or feels about the topic.
4. After each family member has had a turn, discuss the topic that were chosen as a family. In this way other family members can add his or her ideas about the topics.

Topic Examples:

- Things I like or appreciate about _____ (someone they know).
- Things I like and appreciate about myself.
- When is a good time to send kindness to others?
- How do you help a brother, sister or friend who is feeling bad?
- How can we make family meetings more fun?
- My most favorite family activities.
- What I like best about my family.

Expected Outcomes: More spontaneous expressions of kindness spoken directly to family members.

Evaluation: Ask family members how they felt about the activity. Ask them if it helped them to express the kindness of their heart.

Written in an easy to understand language and an easy to use format, this book brings the highly successful principles and practices of the *Kindness Campaign* to families. In addition to providing many practical tips on how to develop a positive approach to parenting, the book includes 25 practical activities you can use to help you create a kinder, more civil, and loving family environment.

"Dr. Weinhold has created a family friendly activity guide that will help parents and other caregivers develop kind acts in an increasingly hostile and unkind world. This activity guide outlines the necessary skills that each of us need to know in order to teach and reinforce kindness to our children. In addition, the kindness activities are fun and easy to incorporate into the busy lifestyles of most parents."

Randall L. DePry, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Special Education
University of Colorado at Colorado Springs

"We all want to spend quality time with our children and build loving family relationships, but lack the know-how to do it. This guide presents easy to use, practical suggestions for creating "quality time in your family. Find the activities your family likes best. The difference they will make in your lives now add the foundation they will build for your children's future may well be the best gift you ever give."

William J. Hornbostel
Attorney & Counselor

"As the parents of a two-year-old, our joyful days are full of direct challenges to our authority and to what we think of as common sense and safety. 'Raising Kind Kids' suggests kind ways to set boundaries and protect our little guy. Lo and behold, kindness leads to more joy and fewer nos!"

Patricia and Henry Reitwiesner