

Dear Counselling Corner:

We would like some guidance about teaching and encouraging our children to be kinder to each other. Thank you for your ideas.

Mom and Dad who are searching for ideas

Dear Mom and Dad

Your question is a really great one. Kindness is a very important value that helps build a positive and supportive community. Teaching our children to be kind to one another helps them to develop empathy, respect, and social skills that will benefit them throughout their lives. Here are some effective strategies to encourage kindness among our children:

1. Lead by Example

Children often imitate the behavior of adults around them. Parents can model kindness by treating others with respect, showing empathy, and being considerate. Simple acts like saying “please” and “thank you,” offering help, and listening attentively can set a powerful example.

2. Talk about kindness at home

Reading books and stories that highlight themes of kindness and empathy can spark discussions. At home, you could role-play different situations to help children understand different perspectives and how their behaviour impacts others.

3. Create a Kindness Challenge

Introduce a kindness challenge in your home to encourage your children to perform acts of kindness. This could be as simple as helping a family member do something; not complaining about being asked to do chore; or writing a kind note. Recognize and celebrate these acts to reinforce positive behavior!

4. Talk about emotions

Help your children understand and manage their emotions by teaching them to recognize their own feelings. For example, ask: ‘how do you think your sibling felt when you let them play with your toys? How did you feel?’

5. Encourage collaboration and cooperation at home

Get your kids involved in doing teamwork activities. They could be projects in your home, crafts or games for example. Encourage the need to work together to achieve a common

goal. Reflect afterwards and ask them how it felt. Be sure to model how you felt too and try to keep it as positive as you can.

6. Practice Gratitude

Encourage your children to express gratitude regularly. For example, this can be done at dinner time while eating together or through a “gratitude journal” where your children write down things they are thankful for.

8. Address Unkind Behavior Promptly

When unkind behavior occurs, address it immediately and constructively. Help your child understand why the behavior was hurtful and discuss better ways to handle similar situations in the future. Reinforce the importance of kindness and being respectful and kind.

The Counselling Corner is intended to offer some helpful ideas, encouragement, and insight on a variety of topics to support your child's social and emotional learning. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns at hchang@sd43.bc.ca.

Harriette Chang
School Counsellor
Food Security Team Leader