



KINDNESS

This month's focus word is KINDNESS. We know that in our work, many students are not in states conducive to learning. By building kindness and nurturing into our work we can help students access these ready states, and facilitate more productive learning experiences. Furthermore, by modeling to our students how they can be kind to themselves and others, we can build school communities that are safe, calm and comfortable for all.

We are living in a time where it can be easy to be swept into negativity. By mindfully incorporating kindness and nurturing into our professional and personal lives we can combat this negativity and build a more positive world. It needn't be complicated, something as small as a warm smile or helping hand can change a person's day.

Think of a time when you were the unexpected recipient of another's kindness. How did it impact you? What are some ways you can build opportunities to give and receive kindness into your day? How can you create these opportunities for your students?

Using GRTL to Foster Kindness and Nurturing

The earliest sequences in GRTL focus on fostering self-to-self connections. We know that if we do not feel safe and connected in our own bodies, it can be very difficult to connect with or be kind to others. Each sequence does incorporate at least one chest or heart opening pose, which can help foster positive social connections between individuals. When choosing poses to focus on with your students, keep in mind that poses towards flexion (bending forward) can be nurturing (self-to-self), while those that open the chest can build connections to the world. These poses can be used outside of GRTL practice to encourage those connections.

In addition to the postures themselves, GRTL offers multiple opportunities to infuse kindness in the classroom. The Circle of Song provides students an opportunity to engage in appropriate back and forth communication, while creating group harmony.

The close of GRTL is wonderful time for staff and students to take a moment to compliment or acknowledge the efforts and achievements they observed during the practice, or the school day.

D75 Facilitator's Corner:

Information pertinent to our D75 Team and reminders for our upcoming facilitator meeting, 11/09/16.

Kindness:

Observe your partner classroom during GRTL. Find a way to NURTURE the classroom team and to show KINDNESS while building their practice.

Choose one strategy to NURTURE yourself this month. Share strategies to infuse KINDNESS in the classroom with your colleagues.

Reminders:

Please send us the completed form identifying Streaming Classes ASAP.

Distribute and collect Parent and Staff Surveys to participating classes. Bring these to our next meeting. (Digital copies of the surveys are available in the Members' "Data and Research" Section of the website.

Observe and document your partner class during GRTL. Complete a Fidelity Checklist and take a short Baseline video

Recognition:

Special thanks to Will Doyle at 233Q, and Lynda Fong, Jamie Mandel and Janey Marano at 307Q for sharing the phenomenal resources they've created to support GRTL at their schools.

Why Kindness and Nurturing Matter at School

During Get Ready to Learn trainings we talk a lot about helping students move from "survival mode" to a state where they are ready to learn. We know that when systems are under too much stress (whether actual or perceived) the brain shifts into survival mode, a reactionary state where learning cannot occur. The Get Ready to Learn program is one way to help students build the coping chemicals needed to move out of survival mode and become ready to learn. Creating a calm, nurturing environment, and healthy, trusted relationships are also ways to help build coping chemicals. As teachers and therapists, we know that when we spend our time managing challenging behaviors, there is little time for learning. By infusing kindness and nurturing into our work with students we create an environment that fosters the development of feelings of safety and trust. If we begin our work with students by building those kinds of relationships and that sense of trust, opportunities for meaningful learning are much more likely to follow.

Kindness Practice

There are an abundance of resources available on-line kindness in the classroom. At our last NYC D75 Facilitator Meeting we heard wonderful strategies that our colleagues have implemented with students at all developmental and cognitive levels across New York City:

- Shout-Out Boards Acknowledging Students and Staff
- Compliment Partners (Using Preferred Communication Methods)
- Buddy Benches and Friendship Tables at lunch and recess
- Random Acts of Kindness Bingo
- "Bucket Filling" Activities

Additional kindness and nurturing resources, including: **Caring for the Caregiver**, the **Ways to Take a Break Resource**, and more are available on our updated website.

If you are a practitioner in NYC's District 75, please consult your facilitator for these resources. If you are an independent Get Ready to Learn practitioner, please contact sara@getreadytolearn.net for more information on accessing these resources.