



PRINT AND GO

member of the class: giving compliments and saying nice things

Group activities, large and small, provide great opportunities for introducing and teaching social skills in the Head Start classroom. Specifically teaching all children in the classroom how to compliment peers or “say nice things” in a variety of ways may increase the social opportunities for children with and without special needs. Giving compliments is often a great way to join into ongoing play, to maintain a play interaction and to motivate peers to persist in a difficult task.

MATERIALS:

- Saying Nice Things Print and Go cards
- Materials for demonstration (e.g. puzzles)

SETTING IT UP:

- Before the activity, gather the materials planned for the demonstration (e.g. puzzles) and place them near the teacher
- Place the Print and Go cards near the teacher
- Plan ahead to include target children as part of the activity (should be a mix of children with and without disabilities acting as the initiators and the responders)
- Make notes on the back of each card to remind yourself of how you will individualize the activity (e.g. which child you will choose, materials you will use, specific examples in your classroom, etc.)
- Plan to first introduce one card at a time. This will give children focused practice on successful use of each strategy. Depending on your kids, you may choose to space out the introduction of new cards by a day or even a week.

OPENING THE ACTIVITY:

Today we are talking about giving compliments or saying nice things to friends. Does anyone know what a compliment is? Call on a few different kids to share their ideas. Validate their comments and expand on the definition of a compliment. That's right, a compliment is doing or saying something to a friend that makes them feel good. Saying nice things make people feel good, feel happy and feel proud. Isn't it fun to play with someone when they say nice things to you? Who can show us or tell us something nice you can say to a friend? Call on a few different kids to share their ideas. Validate their comments and relate them to your target card(s) for the day or hold up one of the cards and have the kids guess how the child in the picture is giving a compliment to her friend. Following the introduction of each card, reference the back for more ideas.

CLOSING THE ACTIVITY:

After the demonstration, help children generalize this idea by asking some questions. *Today we practiced saying nice things to someone who was doing a puzzle. When are some other times we could say nice things to friends? Call on a few friends and supplement their ideas as needed. Remind children that you and the rest of the teachers will be watching today for kids saying nice things or giving compliments by demonstrating the target skill (giving a high five, giving a thumbs up, giving a gentle hug, saying something nice to a friend).*



IDEAS FOR REINFORCING THE ACTIVITY:

- Hang up the target card(s) or Print and Go photographs at the front of room (or print several and place them around the room) to visually remind kids of the variety of compliments they can give friends
- Throughout the day take opportunities to coach children through using the target compliment(s) (e.g. "Wow Mary, look at the tower Nima built! She's worked hard on that, what nice thing can you say to make her feel proud of that tower?")
- Use behavior specific praise as you see children using the strategies (e.g. "You gave Hiyab a thumbs up when she chose the book you like at circle. That was a great compliment and look how happy you made her feel!")
- Make a classroom announcement when you notice a child giving a compliment to another (e.g. "Micah gave Kayla a high five when she finished the puzzle. What a great compliment!")
- Periodically review this group activity throughout the year. Children will likely become more independent in sharing their real life examples of giving compliments or saying nice things to others
- Make a classroom chart to track compliments. Have kids draw a smiley face or place a sticker on the chart each time they give a compliment. See how many compliments the classroom can give in a day or a week