

Healthy Body, Happy Me 2022

Friendship Friday



Friendship Friday

Getting things right from the start means ensuring that the essential building blocks are in place to support all areas of children's lives. Early years practitioners work hard to ensure children's social and emotional needs are met within settings through the support and scaffolding that they provide. This support is provided through daily interactions, modelled behaviours and carefully planned and delivered activities. When done well and with purpose, these activities can teach children some of the key skills they need to begin to understand their own emotions, recognise the impact their actions have on others and be valued members of society.

When we feel as though we belong, we have increased feelings of happiness and our overall well-being is better. Friendships are a great way to gain this feeling of belonging, but it requires children to have an understanding of their own emotions and the feelings of those around them. In addition to having some understanding of their own emotions, there are other central skills that help children to build friendships. These skills are turn-taking, sharing, listening, conflict resolution, cooperation and collaboration. The activities for today's Healthy Body Happy Me will support children to develop these skills, feel empowered and have a strong sense of well-being.



Friends forever

Early years practitioners play a central role in nurturing the necessary skills that children need to be able to build good relationships with others and spread kindness to those around them.

Activity 1 Making a mural

The sense of touch helps children to feel connected and increases their feeling of attachment. Early attachments are the foundation for positive relationships and interactions with others. Babies gain a sense of safety, belonging and love through engaging in sensory experiences and being able to explore the different materials around them. Older children can build relationships with their peers by creating something together and being part of a group project.

This activity supports children of all ages to come together to create something, explore and have lots of fun. The great thing about a mural is that it can be kept as a talking point and a reminder to children of what they can achieve when they come together as a team.

Making a mural

Activity outline

- Using the tape, fasten the sheet to the floor (or wall for older children)
- Set up the paint, brushes and rollers
- For babies and younger children, pour the paint into flat trays that they can easily get their hands and feet into
- Explain to the children that you are going to work as a group to create a lovely mural and that they are all going to paint their own ideas onto the sheet. There is no theme or topic for the mural
- Give children time to create the mural. This activity may take place over a few days and be left for children to re-visit as they wish
- For younger children, take off their shoes and socks and allow them to explore the paints using their hands and feet. Model making handprints on the sheet and talk to children about the feel of the paint on their hands
- Talk to children about their creations and encourage them to talk to one another about what they have painted
- Once finished, hang the mural on a wall as a reminder of their lovely creation.

Extension ideas

This activity can be extended by introducing different mark-making media to children to create different results. Consider using a long roll of paper instead of fabric for the mural.



Resources

- Brushes, rollers, sponges of all different sizes (older children can choose their preferred mark-making media)
- String or fastening to display the mural
- Large piece of fabric such as an old bedsheet
- Paint trays
- Paints
- Tape.



Learning opportunities include:

- Using different types of media to make marks and assigning meaning to these
- Exploring their own ideas and creating artwork to communicate these
- Teamwork and cooperation skills
- Developing a sense of belonging
- Exploring paint and texture
- Fine and gross motor skills
- Sensory exploration.

Activity 2 Team challenges

Cooperation and working together is a great way to build children's self-esteem and also support developing friendships. Joint challenges support collaboration and show children that when they work together they can achieve so much more and have fun along the way!

The team challenges activity can be an ongoing game that helps children to focus on working together to achieve their goals and also supports children's engagement and focus during activities.

Team challenges

Activity outline

- Introduce the team challenges jar to the group of children
- Explain to the children that in the jar there are different tasks and challenges that they can complete at any time
- Agree where the jar will be kept
- Children can access the jar themselves at any time or there may be times where children are not engaged in their play or need to move from one activity to another. At these times, practitioners can give a team challenge from the jar
- Support children with their challenge but try not to intervene too much. The point of this is to raise children's self-esteem and also their ability to resolve conflicts and disagreements with each other. Language such as, 'that looks tricky, but I know you can find a way to sort this together', can really help children to pull together to come up with solutions
- After the challenge, talk to the children about how they carried out their challenge. Adults can nurture friendships by describing what the teams did well and what skills they showed. For example, 'Jim and John, your team challenge was to collect all of the wellies and line them up. I noticed you helped each other to lift them inside and then worked together to put them in pairs. That's good cooperation and team work!'



Resources

- Different coloured paper for different types of challenges
- Ideas for team challenges – see next page for our suggestions
- Paper with challenges written on them
- Resources to support each challenge
- Team challenges jar.



Learning opportunities include:

- Teamwork and cooperation skills
- The learning opportunities are vast depending on the types of activities you put into your team jar
- Developing a sense of belonging
- Communication and language skills.



Activity 2 Continued...

Jar challenge ideas:

- Build the tallest tower using the blocks in the construction area
- Use the lego to build a vehicle of your choice (remember you have to work together to build one model)
- Choose an adult in the room and work together to paint or draw a picture of them
- Using the wipe boards and pens, carry out a survey to find out which colour eyes is the most popular in the group
- Complete a jigsaw puzzle together
- Collect as many things as you can find in five minutes starting with the letter "a"
- Collect as many blue things as you can find in five minutes
- Using the paper cups, work together to build a paper cup tower. Try to use all the cups
- Using the basket of sticks, can you make as many different shapes as possible?
- Build a den that you can both (or all) fit into
- Build the longest dominoes chain you can and then choose a friend to gently knock the first one down.



Timber!



Ideas for different ages

For younger children, the tasks can be as simple as playing a game of ball. Model rolling the ball to one another and then position the children so they are able to pass the ball to each other too.

Games such as 'Row your boat' and 'Horse, Horse, my, my,' where children are paired with an adult or each other, all help to support children's early collaboration skills.

Extension ideas

You could extend this further by asking children to think of new team challenges for the jar. They may also like to come up with some team challenges for the adults in the setting. Taking photos of these team challenges and displaying them can allow children to see examples of times where they have worked together towards a common goal.



Activity 3 Acts of kindness

When we do things for others, we feel better about ourselves and also build an understanding about how our actions impact on other people. When children feel good about themselves, they gain a stronger sense of self-esteem which can support them through the challenges of life. The acts of kindness activity is a good way to nurture a sense of belonging and also to spread a little joy to others.

Acts of kindness

Activity outline

- Introduce the acts of kindness day to the group
- Talk about what kindness is
- Ask children to think of examples of kind things people do for them
- Talk to the children about how that made them feel. Describe the feelings they may have felt and use your own examples to support this
- With the children, decide on some acts of kindness that you are going to try and do as a group. They can each choose what their kind acts will be and then carry them out
- Write them down on post-it notes and display them
- Carry out the acts with the children throughout the day/week
- Share these ideas with parents and carers
- Capture the deeds of the week using photos, pictures, videos and share them with families.

Ideas for acts of kindness

- Prepare snack for a friend
- Smile at everyone you see today
- Hold the door open for someone
- Draw a picture for someone you love
- Sing a song for someone in the group
- Build a model for someone from lego
- Help a friend with something they find tricky.



Resources

- Act of kindness ideas
- Photos of the deeds
- Resources for the deeds.



Learning opportunities include:

- Developing an understanding of the feelings of others and the effects our actions have on those around us
- Communication and language skills
- Teamwork and cooperation skills
- Developing a sense of belonging.

Extension ideas

This could be extended further by lengthening the amount of time children carry this out. If it is something the children enjoy and feel able to continue, consider having a group act of kindness per week that they may carry out in the setting or in their community. These could be things like: setting the table at home for a family meal, helping to put the washing away or playing with their younger sibling. Share these ideas with parents and carers and also ask them to let you know when their child carries out an act of kindness so that you can celebrate this in your setting.





Activity 4 Funny faces

Teaching children about their emotions is an important part of providing social and emotional support in their young lives. However, feelings can be so abstract which can make them hard for children to understand. When we give children concrete and physical materials to support learning about abstract concepts, children can gain a better understanding of what they are learning.

The funny faces activity will support children to understand some of the non-verbal communication that people can use to let us know how they are feeling. As well as this expanding children's understanding of emotions, this activity also supports their fine motor skills and gives them opportunities to develop their mark-making skills.

Learning opportunities include:

- Understanding that facial expressions can communicate feelings
- Communication and language skills
- Developing an understanding of different emotions
- Developing a sense of belonging.



Funny faces

Activity outline

- Introduce the resources to the children
- Explain that the stones are blank faces and you are going to draw different faces using the pens
- Model drawing a smiley face and ask the children what they think the face is showing, such as happy, sad etc
- Ask children questions such as: 'How do you know that it's a cross face?'
- Children can use the warm soapy water and scrubbing brushes to clean the stones and the towel to dry the faces before starting again
- For children with an understanding of happy and sad, try to extend the activity to other emotions, such as surprised, scared and worried. Extend children's vocabulary by introducing other words that may describe emotions
- Talk to children about some of the things that make them feel a certain way. Helping them to identify the things that make them feel happy can also help them with when they feel sad.



Resources

- Mini scrubbing brushes, like nail brushes
- Jug/bowl of warm soapy water
- Stone and large flat pebbles
- Marker pens
- Tuff spot
- Towels.



Activity 4 Continued...

Extension ideas

Introduce mirrors to this activity to extend children's learning further. Talk to children about their own facial expressions and ask them to look at their faces in the mirror when they pull a happy, sad or cross face. This may also be a good opportunity with older children to talk about some of the physical feelings that come with their emotions. For example: when I feel worried I can get a tickly feeling in my tummy and my heart can beat hard in my chest. When children can identify some of the physical features of their emotions, they are more able to recognise when they feel a certain way. This is an important skill along with learning helpful strategies for when emotions start to feel overwhelming.



Exploring our emotions



Ideas for different ages



For younger children, this activity can be done with playdough rather than stones and pens. Practitioners and older babies can mould facial features, such as smiley and sad mouths, to demonstrate the different features to children. They can also model certain expressions to children and use vocabulary such as 'happy, sad and cross,' to introduce some of the different feelings to them.



Further resources, links and stories:

'Have you filled a bucket today?' by Carol McCloud

'This is Our House' by Michael Rosen

'The Lion Inside' by Rachel Bright

Power of kindness calendar (Red Cross)

<https://bit.ly/3HTWNeF>



Helping others



Teamwork

National Day Nurseries Association

At NDNA, we don't just provide nursery membership, lobby government and offer training, we are dedicated to making a difference. We are a charity that believes in quality and sustainability so we put our members' businesses at the very heart of ours. We enhance, support, nurture, cherish and challenge.

Every year we run an annual Healthy Body, Happy Me campaign to encourage better health and happiness by giving nurseries FREE resources for play, learning and fun.

Get involved with our 2022 campaign and help keep your children happy and healthy.

Important: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies. Children should always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials should always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.



National Day Nurseries Association

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