

Parent Recommendations:

Activity #1 (Juggling/Passing balls individually vs. as a team; using encouraging words)

"Teamwork": Discuss the importance of working with others as a way to complete tasks faster and to be more productive. Help them understand the importance of positive team cohesion and how when team members have positive feelings for each other, they are more productive at the tasks at hand and they develop stronger relationships. Discuss how encouraging team members, and not being critical or calling out others' mistakes, is important for team cohesion. Next, have them reflect on moments a team mate was encouraging/discouraging to them and how it felt. Point out opportunities for encouraging team members in different sporting events or school projects. Model this behavior at home (e.g., affirming your child when they complete a chore that they did a good job and are an important member of their family-team).

Activity #2 (Listing kind and unkind words and applying kind words to classmates)

"Charity": Discuss with your child times they've been treated kindly and unkindly. Ask what it was like for them and how they felt about this. Discuss the importance of kind words when interacting with others and encourage them to use kind words with friends, family, and themselves. Discuss the importance of self-compassion as a way to be charitable to themselves when they feel they are failing in some way. Model these behaviors to your children in your own interpersonal dynamics with friends, family, yourself, and your children. Point out opportunities for your child to be charitable to others.

November 13th and November 20th classroom visits:

Activity #3: Dr. Marcotte began by asking the students to recap lessons from the last class (i.e. charity - the power of kind and unkind words when talking to someone else). The theme of this class was "Emotions." Dr. Marcotte discussed what emotions are and how we can recognize our emotions in our bodies. Next, he discussed how to recognize emotions in others by looking at their faces to see how they feel. He discussed what macro and micro expressions are, and how they are God's way of helping us to show each other how we feel in order to obtain help when in distress or to show that we are pleased with others. Dr. Marcotte then had the class play Emotion Charades using "feeling cards", during which the class was split into 2 teams and each would send 1 team member to the front to act out an emotion without using words - the team that correctly stated the emotion got a point. After each correct answer, the counselor would ask how they knew it was that emotion. Class ended with a discussion of the importance of understanding and communicating our own emotions and being able to recognize them in our bodies, being able to recognize the emotions of others, and then using this information to empathize with other in order to be sensitive and treat them with charity.

"Emotions": Have your child reflect what they feel when they seem overwhelmed or happy by continuously asking about, and showing interest in, their emotional world. Ask: "how do you feel about that?" "How are you feeling today?" Print out a list of emotions from online and have your child pick the one that most closely resembles their feelings. It's important to have them discuss both positive and negative emotions. When parents show that they care about how their child feels, children will be more aware of and open to their emotional experiences and this will ultimately build a stronger connect between parent and child (as well as promote overall mental health!). Use empathy as often as possible to help your child feel heard and known by you, as well as to model to your child how to empathize with others - "Wow, that made you feel very sad" or "That made you happy!" Finally, when your child mentions how others are acting in class (e.g., when someone is nice or mean)

first empathize with how that person makes your child feel, then ask your child what they think that person is feeling in that moment. Guide them to better understand the emotions of others, and then ask "how do you know the other person is feeling that way?" to fully ingrain the exercise.