



# Milestones Learning Center Family Minutes

A resource from our family to yours

November 2023

## Teaching Kindness

WORLD Kindness DAY



NOVEMBER 13<sup>th</sup>

November is a time for family and friends, sharing and giving, thankfulness and acts of kindness. This month's edition of MLC Family Minutes is focused on World Kindness Day. This is a tool to help parents in teaching young children both how and why it is important to be kind.

**World Kindness Day**  
**Monday, November 13, 2023**

This is an invitation to help make kindness the norm in your home, school, and workplace.

[https://schoolofkindness.org/  
world-kindness-day](https://schoolofkindness.org/world-kindness-day)

### Be Kind

Being kind is more than a cool screen print on a comfy tee. Being kind is a purposeful act of selflessness, being helpful, supportive, and respectful toward others regardless of their gender, race, age, or religion. Kindness, just like all other human behaviors, is learned and needs to be practiced. As parents we need to nurture it in our children during their formative years.

### How to teach kindness to kids

Kindness starts at home with the way in which family members communicate and listen to one another. Parents role model kindness for their children when they support each other in household tasks and when they engage with other people.

Children are very observant and will use the actions they see and learn from their parents to communicate with their own peers.

### It is not always easy to be kind

It can be hard to be kind to someone who may not have been kind to you. This is a challenging lesson to teach a young child. The idea that we need to be the "better" person and do the right thing; regardless of how someone has treated us in the past. One way to explain to your child about being kind to someone who might not have been kind to them is helping that person learn how to be kind also. It is important to remind ourselves and our children that we treat others the way we hope others will treat us.

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### Focus on the Feeling

Being kind feels good. This is especially important to recognize when teaching young children about being kind. As adults we need to talk to our children about how they feel in all situations. Both good and bad feelings need to be acknowledged in the moment.

When your child is acting in a manner that is kind, be sure to ask them, "How do you feel right now?" This will help them to recognize the personal reward that comes with being kind. Children learn quickly that positive actions get rewards and therefore doing something without the expectation of a reward can be a challenge for some children. By placing an emphasis on how their

actions make them feel will help them see the reward. It is also important to help your child recognize when someone is being kind to them. This too is a feeling that should be recognized.

### Kindness vs. Charity

Being kind does not necessarily mean being generous in material or monetary ways - although this can be an act of kindness as well. Simply volunteering your time, expressing your gratitude, and using good manners are all acts of kindness. Demonstrating thoughtfulness, being aware of those around us, being polite, and offering a smile to a stranger are all ways to be kind consistently.

### Why is it important to teach children to be kind?

Children who develop a good understanding and ability to be kind present with stronger social skills and relationships with others. Children develop a greater sense of belonging and self-worth. Children are found to be happier, have improved health, and less stress. They are also reported to sleep better, have better memory, and a better attention span.

### The 4 Principles of Kindness

**Awareness** - you must be aware of the opportunity to be kind

**Unconditionality** - there needs to

be no expectation of anything in return

**Non-judgment** - it's not our place to judge good or bad of others but rather to just be kind

**Action** - you must act. Being aware and not acting kind is not being kind.

### READ ABOUT IT

There are so many books available to help young children learn about being kind. One book is the *Anonymous Hippopotamus* by Michelle Duffy, a local author and MLC grandmother. This is a delightful, whimsical book that teaches children the importance of being kind to one another through the eyes of 2 friends. It shows that anyone can be kind to anyone and how special and needed these gestures are.

<https://www.amazon.com/Hippopotamus-Michelle-Duffy/>



### References

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