

Let's Talk About It:

Kind Relationships: How Can Parents Support their Children in Caring for Themselves and Others Every Day?



Parent Education Bullying Prevention
Discussion Series | Nov. 1st, 2023

Discussion Agreements

In order for this to be a safe environment to share our thoughts, feelings, and insights, we agree to:

- Share the air space
- Listen thoughtfully and assume positive intent
- Maintain confidentiality if asked to by another parent
- Engage in self-reflection

Who's Here?

Please share your name, ages of your children, and one thing you hope to walk away knowing more about this evening.

What we hope you take away from this evening:

- Knowledge of how to promote safe and positive spaces online
- Strategies for creating in-person spaces for both productive and caring dialogue
- Learn how to promote a positive and caring relationship with others.

Video Introduction



Video Clip Follow Up

- Be vulnerable with your child
- Tell your child what you love about them
- I hit a wall—how do I pivot?
- Schedule time 15 mins twice a week to check-in

Kindness Is a Skill

Kindness has the power to overcome differences and bridge divides.⁵¹ **Just like any other skill, kindness must be taught and continuously developed.** You have the power to start teaching kindness skills at home.

Below are some helpful tips on how to start the process with **younger kids**:



Talk to the child about why it's important to be kind. [Kindness.org's "Kindness Experiment"](#) activity is a great jumping off point for this talk.



Show them that kindness is contagious: Seeing others be kind can inspire your child to be kind, too. See this YouTube Kids [playlist](#) for examples of kids showing kindness.



Teach your child that kindness is a muscle: Our skills to be kind grow the more that we practice them. You could start conversations about this with your child using this [sing-a-long video](#).

Be a Role Model for Your Children

Be aware of how your own attitudes and behaviors, as they can influence the way your child acts. If you show your child that your family prioritizes caring for others, your child will catch on and develop kindness skills faster.⁴⁵

Youth were

3x more likely

to agree than disagree with this statement:
"My parents are prouder if I get good grades in my classes than if I'm a caring community member in class and school."

- Making Caring Common's "[The Children We Mean to Raise Report](#)"



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See It in Real Life

Emma and her daughter, Elly, are playing a game with some friends at the park. Emma sees a child playing alone, watching the other kids play the game from a far. This is a perfect opportunity to show kindness in action!

In front of Elly and the other children, Emma approaches the child and asks, "*Hi there, would you like to join in and play with us? There's plenty of room for everyone to play the game.*" The child gleefully agrees and joins the group. After playing a couple of rounds of the game together, Emma says to the whole group, "*It is so much more fun when everyone can join in on the fun! That's why we invite all friends to join in and don't leave anyone out.*"

Here, Emma showed Elly and the other children the action of kindness, explained the action, and identified why it was kind.

Teach Social-Emotional Skills

Parents play a crucial role in modeling social-emotional skills for their children. Social-emotional skills are important for building and maintaining healthy relationships, regulating our emotions, and connecting with others. They are also a key ingredient for kindness and empathy. Some social-emotional skills that parents can model include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship skills.⁴⁶

- You can learn more about social-emotional skills and how to teach them to children of all ages through resources like the [Grow Kinder Podcast](#).

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Parents can model these skills as well as talk through them with their child. For example, share with your child when something makes you upset and how you cope with your emotions.

"I got really frustrated when you didn't get home at your curfew. But instead of yelling at you or taking that frustration out on you in a negative way, I stepped back and took a couple of deep breaths to manage my emotions and calm down. Now I'm able to come back to our conversation about curfews feeling more balanced."

Conversation Starters

Create a Safe Place to Share

- Make your home a safe space for your child to regularly share their emotions and well-being. It's never too early to create a safe space for your child to come to you with their emotions.
- Consider having weekly check-ins where you can talk about how they've shown kindness to themselves and others.^{46,47}

Conversation Starters

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CONVERSATION STARTERS FOR YOUNGER KIDS^{47,48}

- *"How are things going with your friends?"*
- *"What about yourself do you love/ appreciate the most?"*
- *"What new activities, music, or hobbies do you want to try?"*
- *"What is something cool you talked about or did recently to connect with your friends?"*

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CONVERSATION STARTERS FOR OLDER KIDS^{47,48}

- *"What do you crave/feel distracted by the most about other people's lives?"*
- *"What about yourself do you love/ appreciate the most?"*
- *"What has been taking up most of your mental energy these days?"*
- *"I love you and care about you. Your mental health and wellness are really important to me and I would love to talk more regularly about this."*

Empathy



Empathy: What Is It and Why Is It Important?

Empathy is a concerned response to another person's feelings. It involves thinking, feeling, and even a physical reaction that our bodies have to other people when we relate to how they feel. According to [Making Caring Common](#), a key component of practicing kindness and empathy with others is **showing patience, generosity, and a willingness to hear someone else's perspective.**⁴⁹

Parents can model and show their child that being too quick to judge others can limit our ability to be kind and empathetic. Giving someone the benefit of the doubt and asking questions to gain a better understanding of someone else's perspective can help lead to productive conversations, instead of potentially, unwanted bullying.

They're always listening.

It's important to monitor the language you are using in front of your child. Rather than calling people hurtful or negative names when you are upset, consider asking why someone might be thinking or acting in a certain way that bothers you.

Empathy

How Can You Build Empathy at Home?

Like kindness, **empathy is a “muscle” that children (and adults) can exercise.**

→ Practical Ways to Build Empathy

According to research from Making Caring Common, **family routines** help support the building blocks for strong **“empathy muscles.”** Here are some examples of routines you can incorporate into your child’s and your lives:⁵⁰

- As they head out the door, give your child a compliment and remind them to give a compliment to somebody else during the day.
- Have a few homeless care kits in the car on hand for anyone you encounter who might need some food and cheer. Talk to your child about the importance of lending a hand to those in need.
- Choose a simple, fun project that establishes a kindness routine. Some examples include decorating a box to sponsor a food shelf that you fill throughout the month, creating a giving jar to teach charitable giving, and decorating kindness cards to give out randomly.

Inclusion, Allyship, & Upstanding

How to Cultivate Inclusion, Allyship, and Upstanding

What Are Intentional Inclusion and Allyship?

- **Allyship**, or being an **ally**, is showing compassion and support for someone or communities who might be a target of bias and/or bullying.
- When you accept, value, and include someone who is different from you, that is called **intentional inclusion**.

How Can You Promote Intentional Inclusion and Allyship at Home?

Promote allyship and intentional inclusion at home by showing your child what it looks like in action. Below are some examples of allyship and intentional inclusion in action:

FOR YOUNGER KIDS

- Not judging others and showing empathy for them. For example, if you see someone who is eating alone at lunch, invite them to eat with you and your friends.
- You and your child can learn about the steps to inclusion by playing this [Inclusion Tiles](#) game, designed by The Special Olympics, together. When playing, you can talk about the different inclusive journeys you might take.

FOR OLDER KIDS

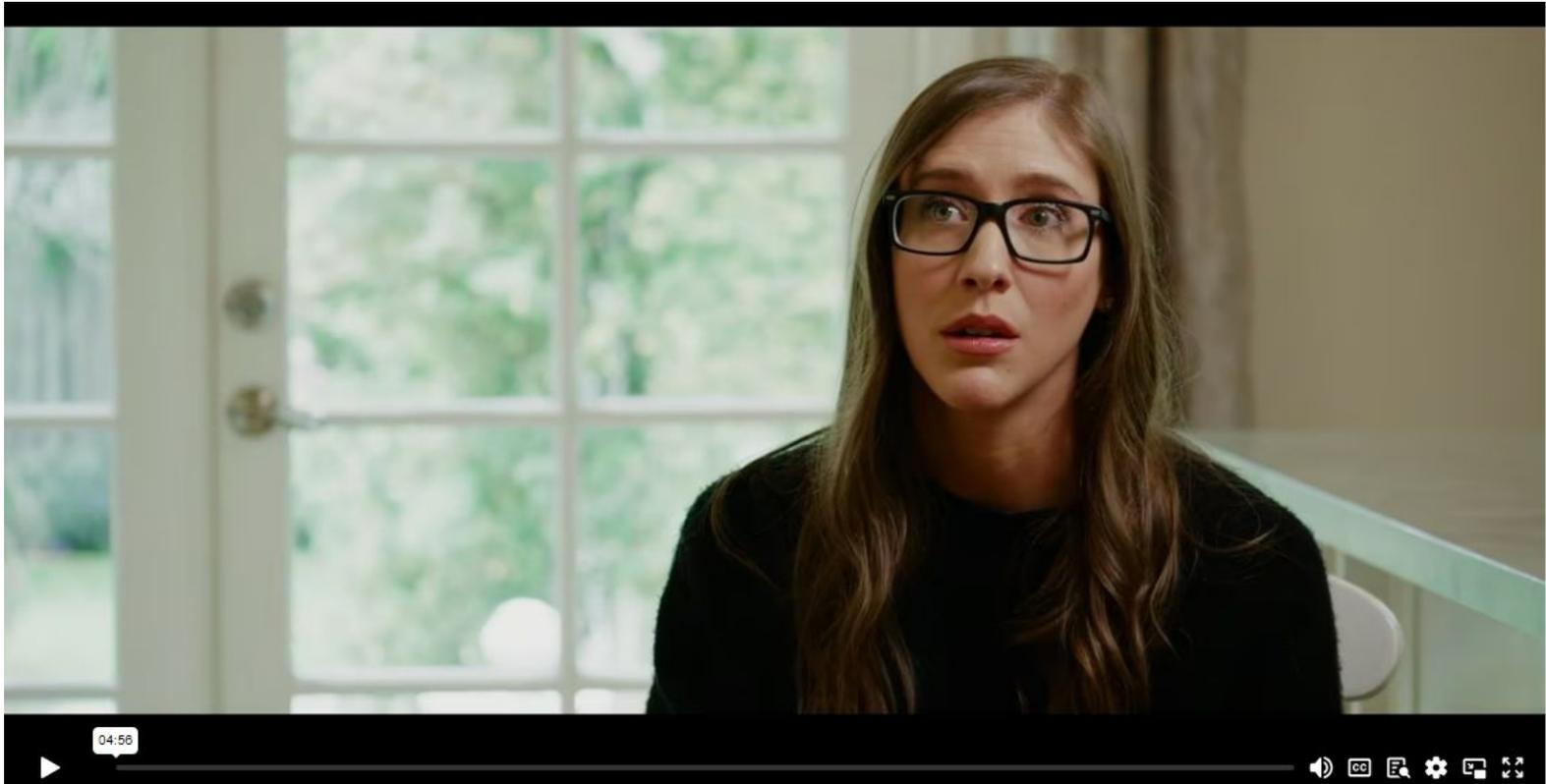
- Participate in larger acts of kindness, such as volunteering for local causes in your community.
- Not engaging with a mean social-media post, or standing up for someone in a comment section.
- Support people who are targets for bias and/or bullying, like standing up for someone who is being bullied on the bus or at school.

Allyship

6 ways to be an ally when you witness bullying or harassment ³⁵

- 1 Support people who are targets for bias and/or bullying, whether you know them or not
- 2 Don't participate (e.g., laugh or stare at targets)
- 3 Tell the person who is showing unkind behaviors to stop
- 4 Inform a trusted adult
- 5 Get to know people instead of judging them
- 6 Be an ally online—all the rules above apply to being an ally in person and digitally

Video Clip: A Path Forward



Video Clip Follow Up Discussion

What are simple daily acts that you talk with your children about that they can do to make someone's day better?

What are ways to encourage your child to promote a healthy and positive relationship with themselves on a daily basis?

Scenario Discussion

Ethan, a 15-year-old student, loves music and art. Ever since he was in middle school and saw his favorite artist Imagine Dragons perform, he has wanted to become a great musician. For his 16th birthday, his parents bought Ethan a Fender acoustic guitar. Since then, Ethan has been practicing nonstop every day after school and has quickly learned how to play and read music. Ethan feels confident enough to play in front of his family and a few friends, who have been encouraging him to play at the school's talent show coming up in a few weeks. Ethan agrees despite being unsure about what other classmates will think of him. The following day, Ethan registers for the talent show and tells a few of his friends that he plans on posting a video on YouTube of him practicing the song he will play. Ethan also wanted to share the video online to see if he would get some positive feedback, to ideally raise his confidence to play in front of his classmates. He records himself playing in a four-minute video and uploads it to YouTube, excited to receive feedback. The following day at school, Ethan tells his friends that the YouTube video has been posted and that they should check it out. Later that day, Ethan eagerly checks his video and sees that there are hundreds of comments. As he begins reading the comments, tears begin to well up in his eyes. Comments like "You suck" and "AAHHH MY EARS!" And "You have no talent" are just a few of the many that are posted. Comments were also posted that had nothing to do with Ethan's guitar playing and singing. Some comments read "Nobody at school likes you" and "You're fugly as heck". Ethan removed the video, vowed to never play guitar again and dropped out of the talent show.

Questions: If you were Ethan's friend, what would you do? What should the school do? Should the talent show go on? What can Ethan's family do that would actually be helpful? Does YouTube has certain responsibilities to protect Ethan from these comments? How and why? How can we encourage other students to not say anything if they don't have something nice to say?

Final Thoughts

What were your biggest takeaways from our discussion this evening?

Join Us for Future Parent Ed Sessions!

Wednesday, Nov. 29th – *Early College Credit Information Night*

Location: SCN High School Auditorium

Time: 6:30pm–7:30pm

Wednesday, Dec. 6th – *Calming the Storm: Supporting Your Child When They're Feeling Anxious*

Location: Haines Center

- **Morning Session Time:** 10:30am
- **Evening Session Time:** 6:00pm

Wednesday, Dec. 13th – *Screenagers Next Chapter Film Screening & Dialogue*

Location: Haines Center

Time: 6:00pm–7:30pm

Tuesday, Dec. 19th – *How Do I Know? A Parent's Guide to Detecting Vaping, Alcohol and Drug Use*

Location: TBA

Time: 6:30pm–8:30pm

Thank You



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