

World Changers in the Classroom™

Preschool Kindness Curriculum

Hello, Parents and Caregivers!

This year your preschooler will embark on a fun journey to become World Changers! *World Changers in the Classroom™* is a kindness curriculum designed to help young learners develop the skills necessary for positive social-emotional development. Throughout the year, we will have special lessons that center around the two concepts of kindness and bravery, creating an important balance that kids need to thrive in school and out in the world. We believe Kindness + Bravery = Resilient Happiness.

The kindness and bravery skills your preschooler will learn this year with *World Changers in the Classroom™* are Empathy, Emotion Regulation, Self-Calming, Conflict Resolution, Resiliency, Acts of Kindness and How to Be a World Changer. It's important to teach these skills to children during their early formative years of 3 - 6 in order to instill positive behaviors before negative behaviors take shape, and give children the tools they need to succeed socially, emotionally and academically.

We teach kindness and bravery because kids who are kind and brave are less likely to bully others, they are more likely to stand up for themselves and others and, therefore, less likely to be a target of bullying. Kids who are kind and brave are more resilient, perform better in school and are more inclined to make good choices during adolescence. Overall, they are happier and healthier and therefore more likely to grow up into happy, healthy adults.

Most importantly, kids who are kind and brave have balance. They are empathetic yet strong, confident yet gentle. They are givers but not doormats. They receive graciously and without entitlement. This is why we believe teaching kindness alone isn't enough. Kindness and bravery together foster healthy emotional, mental, and social development in children.

We encourage you to be part of your child's journey. At the start of each unit, you will receive a parent handout summarizing the concepts with tips you can use at home. Use this information to talk to your child about what they have learned in class and expand on it wherever possible. Ask your child to teach you what they learned (especially the self-calming exercises). Encourage, support, and empower your child to show kindness and bravery outside of the classroom. Together we can help raise a new generation of World Changers who are dedicated to making the world a better place for everyone!

If you would like to learn more about our kindness curriculum, *World Changers in the Classroom™*, and access valuable resources for parents and caregivers, please visit www.foxandtrove.com. You can also learn more at Fox and Trove's instagram and facebook @foxandtrove.

We look forward to spreading kindness with your preschoolers this year!

Unit One

Kindness and Bravery

Skills

Teamwork

Sharing

Recognizing kindness in others

At School:

Today we kicked things off by talking about what it means to be kind and brave: *“Being kind is like being nice with all of your heart. Being brave means doing something that is difficult or scary but we do it anyway and trust that we will be ok.”*

Every lesson within our kindness program will be accompanied by a book. Today we read *The Lion and the Mouse* by Jerry Pinkney. This world-renowned picture book tells the story of Aesop’s fable about how a little mouse’s selfless act of kindness and bravery spurs an unlikely friendship. Encouraging students to recognize kindness and bravery in others is an important skill because this recognition serves as a positive model of behavior that promotes replication in young students. Recognizing kindness in others also helps instill in young learners a sense of gratitude which is an essential component of kindness.

Today we decorated a Kindness and Bravery Jar. The jar will stay in the classroom all year, and whenever the children see a classmate or teacher do something kind or brave, they will toss a colorful puff ball into the jar. The children will watch the jar fill and count the puff balls before winter break and at the end of the school year to see how many acts of kindness and bravery took place in the classroom. This idea is very easy to replicate at home too!

At Home:

- ★ Replace the word nice with kind, where appropriate.
- ★ Encourage your child to sit with someone new at school and emphasize how that is both kind and brave.
- ★ When your child does something they find scary or difficult, commend them on being brave.

Unit Two

Emotion Regulation and Self-Calming

Skills

Self-calming
Fine motor
Mindfulness

Self-control
Gross motor
Focusing attention

Emotion regulation
Listening
Creative thinking

At School:

During this unit of our kindness curriculum, we will learn how to regulate our emotions, self-calm and practice mindfulness. Teaching preschoolers these skills is important because it enables them to respond to stressful situations in a positive, productive, safe way. Your child will learn how to self-calm by practicing three deep breathing exercises and through fun visualization and mindfulness activities. Deep breathing, mindfulness, and visualization help children regulate their emotions, decrease anxiety and feel in control. They enable children to focus, manage stress, make better decisions, handle conflict appropriately and interact with others in a positive way.

Be sure to ask your child to teach you all three breathing exercises. Your child will love teaching you, and you'll find the exercises help adults calm down as well! If your child needs help, all three exercises can be found on our YouTube channel www.youtube.com/foxandtrove. These techniques can and should be practiced daily as they also help prevent and resolve meltdowns!

The next time your child starts to become upset, ask them which breathing exercise they would like to try (or ask them to show you because you forgot) and do it with them. They will appreciate having the power to decide and doing the exercise together will benefit both of you.

At Home:

- ★ We highly recommend one of the three deep breathing exercises be practiced at the start of each day, after disturbances and when you need your child to calm down.
- ★ Practice the deep breathing exercises with your child. It will benefit you both!
- ★ Praise your child when they stop themselves from reacting to disappointment in destructive ways: "Great job controlling your body and taking a deep Calm Cloud Breath™."
- ★ Ask your child to choose how they would like to calm down: Calm Cloud Breathing™, High Five Breathing, Toy on Tummy Breathing or visualizing their favorite place. Allowing them to choose helps them feel empowered and in control.

Unit Three

Conflict Resolution and Camaraderie

Skills

Conflict resolution

Problem solving

Collaborating

Decision making

Sportsmanship

Bravery

Critical thinking

Cooperative learning

Empathy

At School:

During this unit of our kindness curriculum, your child will learn how to resolve conflicts and build relationships with other children. Being able to resolve conflicts on their own emboldens children by giving them the power to make decisions, be a leader, stand up for themselves respectfully, consider the feelings of others, and collaborate with others to solve a problem.

Camaraderie is an important life skill that goes far beyond sports; it's also about relationship building. Camaraderie fosters confidence, listening skills, the value of teamwork and how to empathize with others; skills students will take with them throughout their school career and into the workplace.

Many times, children are afraid to stand up for themselves because they think it feels mean. Usually, all they need is your permission to do so. We encourage you to tell them: "If someone is unkind to you, it's important you say 'that's not nice' and walk away. If someone keeps being unkind to you, and asking them to stop doesn't work, it's important you tell an adult right away. If someone is unkind to you in a physical way, like if they hit, push or kick you, it's important that you put your hand out and say firmly 'Stop! Do not hit me' and immediately get a teacher or parent. This is called standing up for yourself, and it's the right thing to do." Children who are shy, sweet or gentle are often the ones who are picked on because they are easy targets. These children are afraid to stand up for themselves either because they are shy or because they think they are being mean in return and that's not in their nature. Giving them permission to stand up for themselves is key. We also always encourage children who are being picked on to walk away and walk toward a group of other kids. Children who pick on others, typically gravitate toward children who are by themselves. Bullies are less likely to confront a group of children.

At Home:

- ★ Give your child specific dialogue to use when resolving conflict such as: "Stop! Do not hit me."
- ★ Remind your child to walk away and join another group of students if someone is being unkind to them verbally.
- ★ Model camaraderie by showing good sportsmanship when playing board games and sports with your children. Cheer others on, even when you lose.

Unit Four

Empathy and Inclusion

Skills

Empathy

Bravery

Inclusiveness

Kindness

Patience

Collaborating

Giving

Mindfulness

Compassion

At School:

During this unit of our kindness curriculum, your child will learn about Empathy and Inclusion. Empathy is at the core of healthy social-emotional development and is one of the key elements of emotional intelligence. Empathy helps us relate to others, solve problems and is linked to future achievement. A 2015 national study found statistically compelling associations between social-emotional skills like empathy in kindergarten and young adult outcomes in education, employment, substance use, criminal activity, and mental health¹. Preschool is the perfect time to begin teaching children how to be empathetic.

In addition to future success, teaching empathy to preschoolers has an immediate impact on the classroom and household dynamics. Empathy helps children understand one another which makes conflict resolution more successful. Empathetic kids are less likely to bully others, are better able to manage their emotions and tend to be happier overall.

Empathy also increases the likelihood of inclusion, another essential component of a happy and healthy classroom and household. One of the most devastating types of bullying is relational bullying which involves exclusion, gossip, rumors, silent treatment, threats and withdrawing from a friendship. This type of bullying often begins as early as kindergarten. Relational bullying is destructive because it's typically concealed, often going unnoticed by adults. Teaching our youngest learners in the formative years of 3 - 6 how to be inclusive can stave off future risk of exclusive behavior.

At Home:

- ★ Model empathy daily by showing compassion and kindness toward others.
- ★ Keep adult conversations with your spouse and friends that may involve unkind language away from little ears.
- ★ Encourage your children to consider the feelings of others: “Why do you think Miles cried when you took his toy? How do you think that made him feel?” What can you say to Miles to help him feel better? Thank you for being a good friend and sharing toys. That was very kind of you!”

[1] Damon E. Jones, Mark Greenberg, and Max Crowley, *Early Social-Emotional Functioning and Public Health: The Relationship Between Kindergarten Social Competence and Future Wellness* (American Journal of Public Health, 2015), 2283-2290.

Unit Five

Bravery and Resilience

Skills

Bravery

Resiliency

Inclusion

Critical thinking

Kindness

Empathy

At School:

During this unit of our kindness curriculum, your child will learn about Bravery and Resilience. To develop the whole child, we need to foster empathy along with courage. When we teach children to be brave, we teach them to speak up and to use their voice honestly and respectfully.

Despite our efforts as parents and teachers, we can not prevent every difficult, stressful or disappointing situation for our children. We can, however, teach them how to be resilient by giving them the coping skills to manage their emotions and move on from setbacks. When children experience difficult situations, it gives them the opportunity not only to bounce back, but to bounce forward; to take what they have learned, reflect, and apply that knowledge in the future

Teaching bravery and resilience without also teaching kindness and empathy will backfire. Which is stronger, a bowling ball or a basketball? The basketball, in our opinion, is far stronger because it has resilient skin, can bounce and does not destroy what is in its path. If you throw a bowling ball against a wall, the ball will likely bust through the wall, fall to the ground and lay motionless in its own destruction. If you throw a basketball against that same wall, the ball will bounce off the wall and move on, leaving both itself and the wall intact. We don't want children to be so tough that they only care about their own feelings and can't develop healthy relationships with others. That is not strength. We want basketballs, kids who are strong and resilient but also kind and giving. Kids who genuinely care about others but also have the ability to establish boundaries and care for themselves as well. This is why we wholeheartedly believe in the balance of kindness and bravery.

At Home:

- ★ Give your kids specific dialogue to use when something doesn't go their way: Playdate was cancelled? "I'm disappointed but it's ok, maybe we can go to the park instead." Your child spilled water and ruined her drawing? "That's frustrating, but I can draw another picture and make it even better!" We also like to teach fun catch phrases like "We're cool, we're chill!" to use when things don't go as planned.
- ★ When your child is struggling but you need them to be brave, remember the three deep breathing exercises and favorite place visualization.

Unit Six

Acts of Kindness and Being a World Changer

Skills

Empathy

Activism

Problem solving

Bravery

Charity

Fine motor

Kindness

Creative thinking

At School:

Teaching our preschoolers about acts of kindness fosters empathy and encourages children to think and see beyond themselves. It is important to give early learners the opportunities and encouragement to practice acts of kindness regularly, so kindness becomes innate; part of who they are, part of what they do. Our aim is to create a culture of kindness in school, at home, in the local community, and throughout the world. Can you imagine how different the world would look if we taught every young student how to be kind and brave and an activist for peaceful, positive social change?

Acts of kindness and being a World Changer go hand in hand. In fact, inspiring children to be World Changers is at the heart of everything we do at Fox and Trove, and it's the reason we wrote this kindness curriculum for preschools. Teaching young children how to be World Changers empowers them, builds their confidence and shows them their worth and that their opinions are important. This final unit of the year will inspire your child to discover a passion, be a peaceful activist and an agent for positive social change. We think you'll be inspired by your little World Changer, in the process!

At Home:

- ★ Talk with your child about people in need and the importance of helping others.
- ★ Ask your child to help you pack up clothes and canned goods to take to a homeless shelter.
- ★ Encourage your child to choose two toys each season to donate to kids in need.
- ★ Make a piece of art with your child to send to a children's hospital.
- ★ Model kindness by holding doors for others and letting cars go ahead of you while driving.
- ★ Model self-control by biting your tongue when other drivers make you feel . . . frustrated ;)
- ★ Foster peaceful activism by exposing your child to age-appropriate social causes like protecting endangered animals, recycling, caring for the elderly and those less fortunate.
- ★ Promote gender equality with your boys and girls in an age-appropriate way: "Girls can like the color blue." "Boys can take ballet." "Girls can play soccer." "Boys can wear pink." "Girls and boys can do anything!"
- ★ Check out www.foxandtrove.com and @foxandtrove on instagram and facebook for more ideas!