



KINDERGARTEN

★ where kindness matters every day ★



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EDUCATORS' GUIDE & STORYTIME ACTIVITIES

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KINDERGARTEN



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Themes: School, Emotions & Feelings, Friendships

About the Book

A classroom comes together to make a kindergarten into a KINDergarten. This story will calm nerves and offer inspiration to new kindergartners and the adults in their lives.

It's the first day of kindergarten, and Leo doesn't feel ready. He is a quiet kid and would prefer to stay home. Over the summer, his new teacher, Ms. Perry, sent a letter asking her students to think about how to show kindness in school. She explained that they would be making a kindness pledge, and each student should think of one way to demonstrate kindness on the first day.

As it turns out, Leo's classmates have lots of ideas about kindness: raising your hand to speak, never leaving anyone out, and apologizing if you hurt someone's feelings. At the end of the first day, several classmates say they noticed Leo returning crayons to the box, holding the door for everyone, and helping a friend who fell. Leo smiles as he realizes he knows a lot about kindness after all.

About the Author and Illustrator



Vera Ahiiya has taught kindergarten and first grade for fifteen years in Austin, Boston, and Brooklyn. Vera's online presence is dedicated to spreading her vast knowledge about and love of diverse

children's books. Vera's unwavering commitment to social justice and diversity is also the focal point of her professional development presentations for other educators. Vera lives in Brooklyn with her husband, Lonnell, and her dog, Mozi. Visit her online at thetututeacher.com or find her on Instagram at [@thetututeacher](https://www.instagram.com/thetututeacher).



Joey Chou is an animation artist and children's book illustrator. He has illustrated the Little Golden Books *I'm a Reindeer*, *I'm a Ballerina*, *I'm a Unicorn*, *I'm a Dragon*, and *I'm a Narwhal*. Visit him online at joeyart.com or find him on Instagram at [@choochoojoeey](https://www.instagram.com/choochoojoeey).



Student Activities

Kindness Rocks!

Use art to calm down, focus, and encourage others! Gather some smooth flat rocks, a paintbrush, and several paint colors. Paint a cheerful design or word onto each rock and nestle them around your community, focusing on places where people could use a tangible marker of support!

Rose, Bud, Thorn

Practice recognizing your feelings by reflecting on and sharing them with friends or family members. Talk about a joyous moment from the day (the rose), something that you are looking forward to (the bud), and an area where you needed help (the thorn). Together, brainstorm how you can help turn your bud into a rose and ask others for advice on dealing with your thorn. Don't forget to celebrate your rose!

The Kindness Effect

Leo started his first day of school very worried and quiet. His classmates made him feel better by sharing how he was kind throughout the day. When we offer kind words to others and let them know how they are appreciated, the result can be amazing! Your comments can turn a frown into a smile or transform a bad day into a great one. Reflect on a time when somebody's kind words or actions lifted your spirits.

Reflection: Can you think of a time somebody was kind to you? What did they do, and how did you feel afterward?



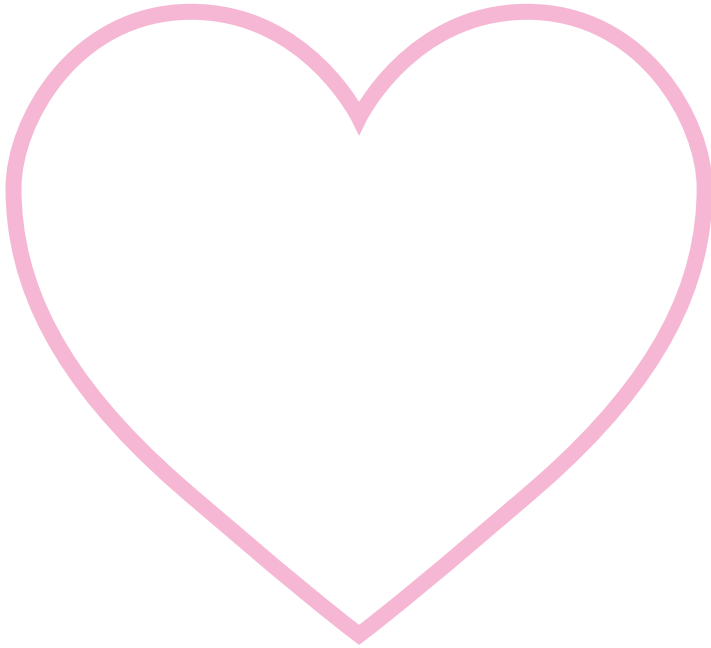


Kindness All Around Us

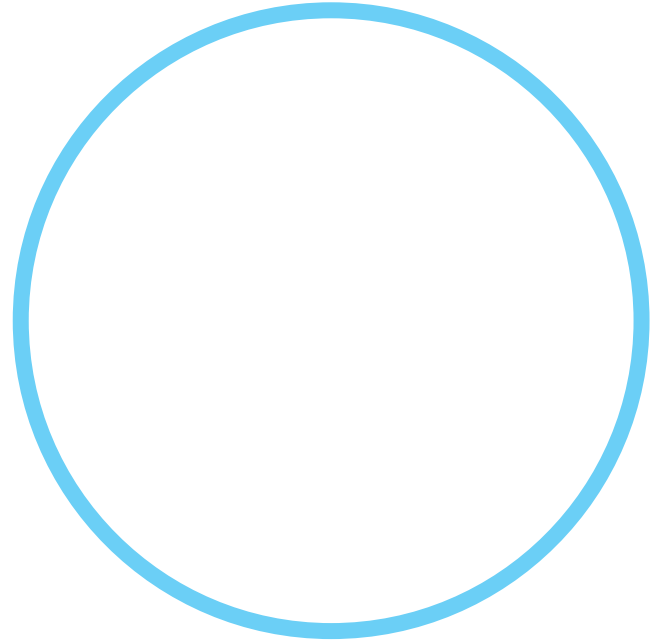
After Ms. Perry's school tour, the class shared ways they saw Leo being kind. Think about how kindness can look, sound, and feel different depending on the situation. Brainstorm ways you can be considerate in various places in your community and add them to the spaces below.



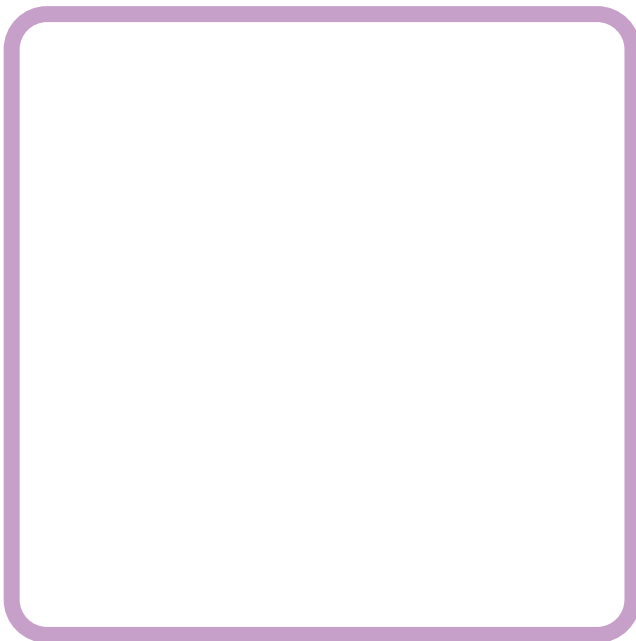
At home



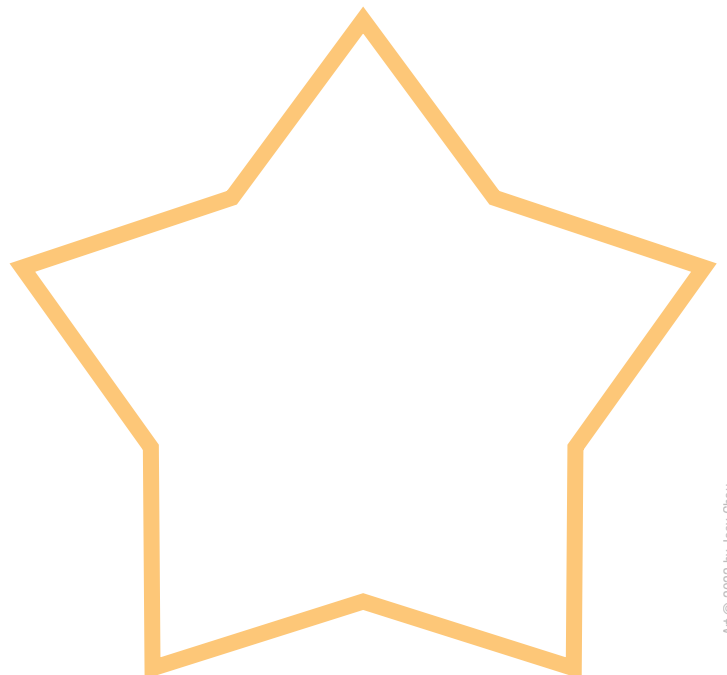
At the store



In your neighborhood



At school



Pay It Forward: Appreciation Postcard

Write a kind note and send it to someone to let them know how much they are appreciated!

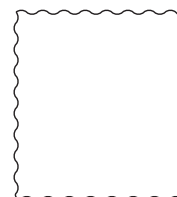


Dear _____

Thank you for being kind to me when you
did/said _____

It made me feel _____

From _____



Ideas for Teachers

Greetings and Goodbyes

Ms. Perry builds relationships with her students by greeting each child with smiles, fist bumps, and high fives. Recognizing students individually can help them feel valued. In addition, giving them choices about greetings allows them to establish personal boundaries. Try offering children different greeting options such as a wave, an elbow bump, a handshake, or a hug.

Kind Self-Talk

In the endnotes, author Vera Ahiyya tells readers that “kindness starts with being good to yourself.” Encourage students to regulate their emotions with gentleness. When you hear comments like “I’m not good at this!” or “I can’t do this,” remind them that they can change their language and mindset to be kind to themselves. Encouraging self-talk like “I can ask for help!,” “I can work hard to improve,” and “I can learn from my mistakes” will help children avoid self-defeating attitudes and develop a growth mindset.

Kindness Toward All People

Use the kindness pledge poster from the book to discuss examples of kindness. Encourage your students to share their own examples! Remind them that being considerate is not necessarily about being polite or happy (though those are important qualities!). It is about helping and respecting oneself and others. Kindness honors people’s differences, experiences, and histories; it may look like calling out bias or injustice, listening carefully to others, or helping others use their voices. Remind children that all people are deserving of kindness.

Identifying Emotions

Teaching children skills such as self-awareness, emotion identification, and social awareness can encourage healthy social and emotional growth. Emotion-identifying activities can help children understand their feelings and what they need. Create a station with laminated pictures or labels of emotions such as happy, sad, worried, and silly. Label clothespins with student names and have children clip them to the emotion they feel as they enter the classroom—follow up with students to validate their feelings.



This Educators’ Guide was prepared by Joanne Yi, PhD. Joanne is a former elementary teacher and an adjunct assistant professor of curriculum and instruction at Indiana University. She researches diversity and inclusion issues in children’s literature.



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