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7 Steps to Teach Giving Compliments

by Summer Stanley

Like many other social skills, giving genuine compliments is a strength that can be taught and improved upon. Often, children and even adults feel uncomfortable about giving and receiving compliments; but with practice, it begins to come more naturally.

There are many ways to teach this important skill to elementary-age children. Perhaps one of the most effective is “interactive modeling,” a seven-step process often used by educators to teach a variety of skills, routines, and procedures.

The process, as described by ResponsiveClassroom.org, goes like this:

1. Explain what a compliment is and what it does, focusing more on behaviors/accomplishments rather than appearances.
2. Demonstrate giving a compliment to a student volunteer.
3. Ask students what they noticed when the compliment was being given (friendly facial expressions, calling the student by name, complimenting a specific behavior).
4. Help students brainstorm a situation where a compliment could be given. Consider role-playing the scenario.
5. Again, ask what students noticed.
6. Give students an opportunity to practice giving compliments a few days later, giving them time to practice and prepare. They can give compliments to each other, or choose a fictional character to compliment.
7. Observe this activity and offer feedback.



Educational trainer and former school psychologist Laura Driscoll recommends compliments that are “true, specific, and positive.” Driscoll offers several fun activities for teaching the importance of giving and receiving compliments at SocialEmotionalWorkshop.com.

According to PositiveDiscipline.com, “Studies show taking time to compliment students improves student motivation and learning. Students learn to encourage each other and show appreciation for how someone helped them.”

Resources:

“Helping Students Give Effective Compliments,” accessed Feb. 17, 2020, from <https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/helping-students-give-effective-compliments/>

“What is Interactive Modeling?” accessed Feb. 27, 2020, from <https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/what-interactive-modeling/>

“Teach Students to Give and Receive Compliments,” accessed Feb. 17, 2020, from <https://www.positivediscipline.com/articles/teach-students-give-and-receive-compliments>

“Teaching Compliments to Build Empathy,” accessed Feb. 17, 2020, from <https://www.socialemotionalworkshop.com/2019/01/teaching-compliments/>

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