

KIDS ARE GREAT!

Kids *are* great, aren't they? But do all kids know they are great? Without a rock solid sense of self worth, kids do take a beating, literally, and are abused emotionally, verbally, physically, and sexually with disastrous lifelong consequences for their mental and physical health, quality of friendships, relationships, choices for careers and for engaging in high risk behaviors.

Help kids of all ages develop at their very core a positive, healthy sense of self esteem through everyday small gestures that make a big difference: a smile, hug, a little note recognizing an accomplishment, time spent with a child doing something, anything that a child likes to do. You can also work with small groups of kids of any age and in any setting (schools, after school programs, home schools, churches, youth groups) to conduct activities that help kids recognize and celebrate their unique strengths.

Riley Hospital's Kids Are Great program from Riley Community Education and Child Advocacy can be downloaded for free off of the Riley Hospital web site at <http://www.rileyhospital.org/kids1st> click Healthy Children click Healthy Habits, click Kids Are Great

Use or adapt these interactive activities and discussion questions as appropriate for different ages of children and teens to help them explore questions and situations that help shape and support positive development of a child's self esteem.

Here's a sample of one activity from Kids Are Great! –

The Car Wash :Materials - CD of lively, upbeat background music. **Notes:** This fun physical activity is a great way to end a class or session.

Learning objectives

At the close of this activity, each child will be able to:

- Describe how praise from other people can help him feel better about himself.
- Identify at least two different ways he can praise others.
- Recognize that, through praise and encouragement from others, we all become better people.

Activity

Line up the children in two parallel lines quite close together. Then, one child is sent through the wash (between the lines) and everyone touches him or her and offers words of praise, affection, and encouragement.

The pats on the back, hand-shaking, and verbal support produce a sparkling, shiny, happy “car” at the end of the wash.

Discussion questions

- How did this activity make you feel?
- How did it make you feel to praise your classmates?
- Can you give examples of different ways you can praise someone? Do compliments to others always have to be through words?
- What was the nicest compliment you received? Why?
- What are some ways praise and encouragement helps all of us?
- How do you think someone feels who never receives any praise or encouragement?
- Who are some people who give you praise? Who are some people you can encourage? When? How often?

For more information about Strong Families and Healthy Children Programs from Riley Hospital Community Education and Child Advocacy, visit: www.rileyhospital.org/kids1st or call toll-free at 1-888-365-2022.