

Period 4 - Positivity

Optimism, Joy, Assertiveness, Defense, Fairness, Straightforwardness

The children must be set free from the prison of bad mood, where bad mood, crying and silence is a weapon to get what they want. Instead, they will learn to ask clearly for what they want. Instead of responding in the same way as the children, by nagging or even humiliating them, we teach them how to speak with honesty in a straightforward manner by being good role models.

1. Use positive words and positive sentences.
 - Look for positive words and sentences that shape the attitudes of adults and children. “I am great”, “I can do it”, “I have the courage to...”, “I am choosing to...” and more.
 - Point out the negative words and sentences that make communication negative and replace them with positive sentences.
2. Create plays about positive and negative behaviour.
 - Improvise theatrical plays with the obvious content that negative behaviour leads to negative consequences and that negative behaviour can be easily replaced with positive behaviour that leads to a positive response. It can also be effective for teachers to perform in these plays.
 - Take some negative behaviour that the group has shown and discuss what can be done differently, in what ways the group can improve and why it matters to the group.
 - Read the children’s stories of really negative people, and try to put them in the position of only seeing things in a negative way. Then compare negativity with being positive.
3. Happy songs.
 - Singing brings joy and positivity.
 - Learning a new song on a regular basis is a good opportunity to give attention to what we can do to be happy. Dancing and using signs with the songs brings even more joy.
4. Being optimistic.
 - A simple way to practise being optimistic is to review something the children have done well before starting a new project.
 - Telling a child how the teacher sees her/him doing well in a project also creates positivity for the child. “I really think you can easily finish this task, like you did with what you were doing yesterday”.
 - Telling a story from history – like the story of Alexander Bell, who made no mistakes but he learned from 10,000 good experiences to invent the light bulb. Having a little “mix-up” or even making “mistakes” is simply a part of growing up, and it is good for teachers to keep in mind, as well as for the children to acknowledge.
5. Asking directly for what I want.
 - To be honest and tell someone what you want with courtesy and determination is not an inherent characteristic but a learned behaviour that children can be taught. For the teacher and group to succeed, it is important for the teacher to know how s/he wants communication to be and to always act her/himself that way.
 - Be aware of “tolerance” in communication. This means that instead of the children saying what they want, they put it differently, saying, “I am cold” instead of asking for permission to get a sweater or close the window. This has a really simple answer for the teacher, “And what do you want to do about that?” In this way the child is assuming the responsibility for her/his feelings and well being instead.

- A simple exercise like using whole sentences is a good way to practice directly saying what one wants. A good time for exercise in building sentences is when the children make choices. Instead of just saying “playroom“ they would practice saying “I am going to choose the playroom“.
6. Positivity towards life, “don’t say don’t“.
- By telling the children “they are what they think“ and by training them to use positive words and powerful sentences, we make the children positive and powerful.
 - Instead of telling the child what teachers “don’t” want them to do, teachers should practice telling the children what they do want them to do. The “dont’s” call for negative images in the children’s minds; for example, tell a child “don’t spill the milk“ and the image the child sees is of someone making a “mistake“. So telling a child to pour the milk slowly into the glass gives the child a sense of coping instead. The atmosphere in such a situation is both positive and helpful!
 - The 100 Days Festival of celebrating the 100th school day since the year began has been a great success. During the 100 Days Festival, teachers, children and parents can be participants. The children gather 100 small items from home; nails, screws, beans, pasta... just anything, and bring them to school. At school each child writes ten positive words on colourful paper and cuts out ten smiling faces from newspapers. This big project takes a few days to finish and prepares the ground for the positive period 4.
7. The “hoppsa-sa and tralla-la“ method
- If a child or group is very negative, it is important for the teacher not to participate and just take everything lightly, laughing “I don’t believe my amazing friends are going to choose to be so pissed, hahhhaahha“ – showing some Mary Poppins style! This is much more effective than to tell someone to “stop doing this or that“, thereby sharing in the negativity.
 - To use unconventional methods, to tickle the child, make an agreement that both parties agree on, finding some way out of bad behaviour that everyone is happy with. Don’t be afraid to be a little strange and unusual.
 - Remember, you have to practice being happy, because just like everything else, if you want to be excellent at something, you have to practice.

Period 4 – Compliments and encouragement

Using appropriate compliments that focus on what the child needs to practise is the most effective way to achieve success. Here are some ideas for encouraging the children during the 4th period.

Optimism – “Everything is going in the right direction.“

Joy – “Your joy is contagious!“

Assertiveness – “Great that you took the initiative!“

Straightforwardness – “Just tell me exactly what it is that you want.“



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