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## KINDNESS FOR ALL: A Curriculum for Pre-K students

These lessons provide a framework for developing a positive and engaged classroom through simple but impactful practices.

### Understanding Our Feelings .....Page 5

Students share how they are feeling. Then, they sing a song to help expand their vocabulary for identifying feelings. While discussing real-world scenarios, students think about how they would feel in those situations. Then, they learn some strategies for managing their feelings in healthy ways. Finally, students make “feeling” pictures to illustrate an example of when they have felt a certain emotion.

### Respecting All People.....Page 16

Students learn about the similarities and differences between themselves and their classmates through an interactive game. Short narratives about people with diverse backgrounds and life experiences will be read aloud. Then, students are asked to draw a picture to share something that is special about themselves.

### Animals Have Feelings Too .....Page 24

Students learn about the feelings that our animal companions have and how to understand dog and cat body language. Then, they practice how to safely approach an animal companion. They make sculptures of dogs and cats out of clay and show the animals expressing certain feelings. Students also discuss the circumstances under which an animal might express each of these different emotions.



### Animal Needs .....Page 38

Students learn about some of the basic needs of dogs and cats. They compare and contrast the needs of animal companions to the needs of people and discuss how someone might feel if they did not have their needs met. Then, they apply what they learned by making a cat toy that meets an important animal need.

### Respecting Animal Neighbors .....Page 55

Students discover why it is important to protect the natural world and to respect the animals with whom we share our environment. Students also talk about how litter can harm animals, and they practice cleaning up their neighborhood by picking up trash around their classroom and learning about which items can be recycled. Finally, students sing a song about caring for our planet.

### What Kindness Looks Like .....Page 63

Students play a game to review what they have learned throughout the *Kindness for All* unit. Then, they are presented with various situations and they have to decide whether or not someone demonstrated kindness in the situation. Finally, students work together to create a kindness collage.

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Students investigate different kinds of behaviors by looking at pictures and organizing them into one of two categories: “Helpful Behaviors” or “Not Helpful Behaviors.” Then, they are presented with various scenarios so that they can think about how someone can show kindness in each situation. They role-play these scenarios and practice acting with kindness. Finally, students work together to create a kindness chain that will serve as a reminder of their commitment to act with kindness.

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# Introduction

While we often expect children to treat others with kindness, knowing how to put their kindness into action is not necessarily something that comes easy to them. It can be challenging to take the needs and feelings of others into consideration when it is in conflict with our own wants and desires. We as educators must help children learn about and practice living kindly. Consider professional athletes: no matter how talented they are, they still need to think about how they can improve their game and practice their craft so that they can perform at their best. Likewise, we become kinder the more we think deeply about kindness and practice putting it into action.



**Kindness for All is a seven-lesson curriculum, designed for three-to-five-year-olds, that aims to inspire children to act with kindness toward all living beings and the natural world.**

When children are between the ages of three-to-five, they are moving from complete dependence on their parents to their first steps toward self-sufficiency. They are also developing their prosocial skills and an awareness of their personal identity. This stage of development is an exciting time when young children begin to form relationships with their peers through play, imagination, and discovery. It is critical that during this time children learn how to relate to others—both people and animals—in respectful and harmonious ways. It is also an opportunity to nurture and respect their own identity awareness by fostering their appreciation for themselves and for the similarities and differences they share with others.

This curriculum aims to build on the natural stage of development that three-to-five-year-olds are experiencing. It provides them with an opportunity to increase their emotional vocabulary so that they have the words they need to express their feelings, and it helps them learn simple strategies for managing their feelings in healthy ways. Additionally, the lessons are designed to encourage children to think about the feelings and needs of people and animals; to circumvent bias and assumptions before these concepts are fully formed; to appreciate wildlife and the natural world; and to demonstrate the value of kind and helpful behaviors.

The lessons are multimodal and engage children in learning through fun, interactive, thoughtful content that encourages

them to think about their attitudes and behaviors toward animals, people, and the natural world. Together, these lessons address the five social and emotional learning competencies developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL): self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. By developing these competencies, children will strengthen their prosocial skills.

While this curriculum was developed as an entire unit that builds upon each lesson, the lessons can also be taught individually, either as they are or with simple modifications. By implementing this curriculum, you will be playing a vital role in young children's lives, helping them to value kindness while you nurture it within them—which ultimately leads toward the creation of a more compassionate, equitable, and restored world for all.

The development of this guide was made possible through a collaboration between Humane Education Advocates Reaching Teachers (HEART), Social Compassion, and Volunteers of America Los Angeles. HEART is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) public charity whose mission is to develop a generation of compassionate youth who create positive change for animals, people, and the natural world. As an award-winning full-service humane education provider in New York City, Chicago, and Indianapolis, HEART conducts student programs in-school and out-of-school, offers professional development programs for teachers both nationally and internationally, develops educational resources, and advocates for the implementation and expansion of humane education.

Social Compassion is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization focused on instilling greater compassion throughout society by promoting the protection of all animals and the environment. They achieve this goal through humane education programs, public service announcements, rapid response media campaigns, and support for spay and neuter programs. Volunteers of America Los Angeles (VOALA) is a nonprofit human services organization founded in 1896. VOALA has been transforming the lives of America's most vulnerable, including children and families from underserved communities; at-risk youth; veterans; individuals and families struggling with homelessness; men and women returning from prison; and people challenged with addictions and substance use. Their early education Head Start programs help ensure a smooth transition to kindergarten and beyond.

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