

D1 — Expressing Warmth to Children

1. Values

The first challenge in this sequence of experiences is to demonstrate to others that you are clear about what you like to see children do when they are with you. Your task is to show others what you specifically like to happen for children by collecting examples of the wonderful things you notice during the day. This challenge is to look for small events when children are doing exactly what you like to see children do and immediately writing a note when it happens. You record instances where a child spontaneously does what, in your opinion, is good to do.

The word "spontaneously" is important here. No one has told this child to do this desirable thing; she or he just did it. You see it and make a quick note.

For example, "Marcos and Anthony are painting together."

As you go about your routine, you can see the delights that brought you into working with children in the first place. If you want to have children use their time well, what do you like to see them do? With that in mind, can you find examples of the children doing exactly what they ought to do?

Assignment:

Observe: The task is to watch the actions of the children you are with at 3 different times of the day:

- a) *a free play time indoors where children choose their own activities;*
- b) *a free play time outdoors, where children engage in large muscle play, such as running, jumping, or climbing;*
- c) *an adult-led group time when all the children are gathered together, or a meal time at home.*

Each time you see a child do something you value, make a note of it. The ideal way is to have a piece of paper for each of these three settings. Then you carry with you a pad of small sticky notes. When you see something of merit, you write it on one note. Then you can stick it the page for that time of the day. That way you can see which page needs more examples to gather until all three are filled.

Sort: Before next time we meet, combine all of the notes and then put like ones together in groups that seem the same to you. You sort your collection of admirable actions, from all the times lumped together, into related groupings; then put a name to each group. You are doing the same thing children do when they sort and classify something like seashells: first physically put them into groups and then name what is common about the group, e.g., "These are all spiral ones."

You should end up with categories of child actions that you think are worthy of acknowledgement. That is, you should be able to say, "Here is a category of actions that I really like to see children do." The sticky notes are examples of that idea.

Your created categories with examples constitute the first page of a record you are making of your continuing development through these Modules. This document starts a personal portfolio, which could be valuable to you in the future, especially if you take care to make it pleasing to look at.

This sorted list comes with you to the next session. That is all you have to bring.

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2. Responses of Adults

Now you are ready to study how other adults respond to these physical actions. Responding comes after what the children do; a child acts and then the adult reacts to that. We are studying those adult reactions. With a cooperating adult's permission, we want to record the ways this other person reacts positively or negatively to what the children do. When children do something desirable, what does this adult do immediately afterwards? When children do things that are undesirable, how does the he or she react?

Assignment

Collect: Your task is to find examples of how another adult both supports and corrects, including sounds, body actions, and facial expressions. We want to gather at least 30 examples of ways teachers approve of admirable actions and/or convey disapproval of undesirable ones — 30 total, including both kinds.

One more piece: this handout, *Approval Responses and Disapproval Responses*, lists examples collected by observers in elementary schools. All of these actually happened; they are not made up. As you examine the approval examples, you can see how many different ways there are to convey your positive regard. Some you may be using these positives to the children every day.

Checkmark: As you examine the disapproval examples, you can check to see if you do any of these ways that may be more questionable. Disapproval can be counterproductive to facilitation of others. To become aware of the actions you might no longer want to do, mark each item on the “Disapproval Responses” list that you may have done recently.

The answers to these two questions, the marked Disapproval Responses list, and the 30 examples, become the next pages of your portfolio.

a) *How do the best teachers respond to children?*

b) *How do I want to be?*

All this comes with you to the next session.

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APPROVAL RESPONSES

If you think about it, those people, whom we consider warm and sensitive, have developed a skill in positive expression. Most of us do not intentionally practice being warm and approving, but teachers, who have a central role in supporting others in times of difficulty, have a professional obligation to develop the ways they communicate approval authentically. Considering all the time we spend in front of the mirror on physical appearances, is it not unreasonable to spend time trying on new ways to express genuine feelings of approval. The development of effective positive responses takes practice.

Words

Yes	Fascinating	Commendable	Fine answer	Positively!
Good	Charming	Delightful	Uh-huh	Go ahead
Neat	Yeah!	Brilliant	Satisfactory	Good responses
Nice	All right	Correct	How true!	How beautiful
O.K.	Outstanding work	That's right	Absolutely right	Wonderful job
Great	Of course	Perfect	Keep going	Fantastic
Beautiful work	Tasty	Marvelous	Exciting!	Swell
Pleasant	Delicious	Fabulous	Splendid	Well-mannered
Cool	Of course	Exactly	Nifty	Thinking!
Wonderful	Likeable			

Sentences

I didn't know it could be done that way.	I'm glad you're here.
I'm pleased.	That's a prize of a job.
That's a good job—other children can look up to you.	You make us happy.
Let's watch him do it.	That shows thought.
He accepts responsibility.	We think a lot of you
That was a good choice.	You're tops on our list.
Show this to your parents.	That's good work.
I know how you feel; should we continue?	Remarkably well done.
I'm happy your desk is in order.	You do so well.
Why don't you show the class how you got the answer?	That shows a great deal of work.
That's a good point to bring up.	Yes, I think you should continue.
I agree.	A good way of putting it.
Let's put this somewhere special.	I like the way <u> (name) </u> explained it.
I'd like this in my own house.	That is a feather in your cap.
My, you have a nice attitude.	You are very friendly.
Now you're really trying.	That's an excellent goal.
Keep working hard.	Nice speaking voice.
You've improved.	That's a nice expression.
Your work appears so neat.	It's a pleasure having you as a student.
You're a good person.	That's interesting.
If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.	You make being a teacher very worthwhile.
That is original work.	That's sweet of you.
I appreciate your attention.	Well thought out.
You've been a fine credit to your class.	Show us how.
I commend your outstanding work.	You're doing better.
We are proud to honor your achievement.	You are improving.
That was very kind of you.	You're doing fine.
You catch on very quickly.	You perform very well, <u> (name) </u> .
Obedience makes me happy.	That's very good, <u> (name) </u> .
That deserves my respect.	I'm so proud of you.
You demonstrate fine ability.	I like that.
That is clear thinking.	This is the best yet.
You should be very proud of this.	That's the correct way.
That's clever.	That's very choice.

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Facial Expressions

Looking
Smiling
Winking
Nodding
Grinning
Raising eyebrows
Forming kiss

Widening eyes
Wrinkling nose
Blinking rapidly
Giggling
Whistling
Cheering
Licking lips

Pressing lips affirmatively
Rolling eyes enthusiastically
Slowly closing eyes
Laughing (happy)
Chuckling
Opening eyes

Bodily Expressions

Clapping hands
Raising arms
Shaking fist
Signaling O.K.
Cocking head
Skipping
Rubbing stomach
Thumbs up
Shaking head

Hand/finger to face, eyebrows,
eyes, nose, ears, mouth, cheek,
lips, hair, forehead
Grabbing
Bouncing
Dancing
Stroking motions
Opening hands
Flipping head

Taking a fast breath
Expansive movements of hands
Hugging self
Jumping up and down
Shrugging shoulders
Circling hand through air
(encouragement to continue)

Nearness

Nearness concerns physical proximity and ranges from geographical separation, through noticeable contact, to embracing.

Interacting with class at recess
Eating with children
Sitting on desk near students
Sitting within the student group

Standing alongside
Walking among students
Gently guiding
Pausing-while transferring objects

Touching

Hand on hand
Ruffling hair
Touching head
Patting head
Pinching chin
Touching nose
Patting back

Walking alongside
Combing hair
Tying shoes
Quick squeeze
Dancing
Rubbing back of neck
Gently raising chin

Patting shoulder
Touching arm
Straightening clothes
Leaning over
Touching hurt
Kissing a hurt

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DISAPPROVAL RESPONSES

The following lists are gleaned from actual classroom observations. These are not made up. It is interesting to see if you have used any of these recently. Some you may use without thinking.

Spoken Words

This list includes naggings, sarcasms, bitterness, dishonesties, and other ineffectual teacher responses whose angry delivery generally demonstrates that the teacher, not the student, has the problem.

Terrible! Terrible!	Stop
This isn't what <i>I</i> had in mind.	Listen to me
<i>You</i> know that's wrong.	Maddening
Stupid nonsense	That's childish
You'd better try harder	Simple Simon
People never change	No! No!! No!!!
Horrible	Be quiet
Absolutely not!	Raise your hand
Impractical	Useless
Be prompt	That's not clear
Work faster	I dislike that
Try to understand	Don't be silly
Do your homework	That's terrible
Do your best	What is this?
Unclear explanation	Is this something?
Don't you want to do things right?	Quit making messes
It can't be that difficult	Let's through this away
You're too slow	That's not mature
Stop talking	I can't read anything you write
Behave	Haven't you learned how to spell
Pay attention	Grow up
Don't	You're not doing as well as you used to
Wrong	You know what happened the last time you did that
Stupid	You do this over
Be still	You know better than that
Follow directions	Play fair
Think for a change	Don't cause problems
Use some thought	You're never dependable
No, that's not what I said	That wasn't the right thing to do
Would you like to get paddled?	Well we'll never do this again
You don't understand because you don't listen	If you had a brain in your head you wouldn't say that
If I find you chewing gum once more, you'll wear it on your nose	Do it!
Be quiet and sit down	You think you're the only one here
You're gutless	You're bad
That's ridiculous	Poor stupid oaf
Meaningless	Wrong again
Absurd	You're doomed to fail
Bad	You're wrong all the time
Nonsense	You don't know anything
Too vague	You make me sick
Try harder	You're an inadequate person
Unacceptable	Impertinent
That's not right	You're not thinking
	You haven't been paying attention

* Teaching/Discipline: A Positive Approach for Educational Development

Charles H. Madsen, Jr. and Clifford K. Madsen, Allyn and Bacon, 1981.

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Incorrect
Needs improving
Unsatisfactory
Poor
Undesirable
You should be ashamed
Stop that laughing.
I'll have no more talking.
Apologize now.
Sloppy.
Shut up!
I'll show you who's boss.
One more time and you'll get it from me.
Finish it now.
No talking.
I'll slap you silly.
Look for the answer.
Leave her alone.
You march straight to the office.
Keep your eyes on your own paper.
You lack interest.
I'll give you something to cry about.
You couldn't have done worse.
I don't like this.
It's not up to the requirements.
I will not repeat it.
I'm not telling you again.
You're dull.
That's ugly.
You idiot.
You're a laughingstock.
It's hopeless for you.

Non-verbal Expressions:

Shh!
Frowning
Curling lip
Lifting eyebrows
Looking at ceiling
Furrowing eyebrows
Smirking
Lowering eyebrows
Shaking finger or fist
Wrinkling mouth
Squinting eyes
Staring
Wrinkling forehead
Nose in air
Pointing finger
Putting hand behind ear
Grimacing
Sniffing
Tightening jaw
Sticking out tongue
Twisting side of mouth
Cackling

Wipe that silly grin off your face
I guess I shouldn't expect any more from *you*
You're just plain boring
You have a dirty mind
Why are you a fradycat?
You're cheap
Snob.
You're worthless.
You're rude.
Don't be crabby.
You're disgusting.
You little monster.
Don't laugh at me.
Cut it out.
You're dumb.
You're filthy.
You naughty boy.
Mock me and you won't hear the end of it.
You're narrow-minded.
Stand up straight.
Just try that once more.
Anyone else!
Learn that!
You'd better get on the stick.
So you're tardy again!
Speak when you're spoken to.
Smart alec.
You must be confused.
I don't see your point.
You haven't applied yourself.
Your work isn't acceptable.

Puckering lips
Wrinkling nose
Pounding fists on table
Laughing
Shaking head
Turning away
Gritting teeth
Biting lips
Squinting eyebrows
Looking sideways
Closing eyes
Clicking tongue
Pushing mouth to one side
Turning head away
Letting out breath
Raising lips
Hissing
Fingers in front of lips
Nodding head (no)
Showing teeth
Pulling bottom lip
Snickering

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3. Habits

The next task is to study in detail one natural habit. This study takes concentrated effort.

Assignment

Keep a continuous record of the number of times you say “No” and “Don’t” at home and at school, ALL the time between now and the next session, both to adults and to children, counting all day and every day.

Yes, if someone offers you a cup of tea and you say, “No, thank you.” count it.

After days of counting, here are questions to answer about this experience:

What is

- a) the pattern you see in yourself?*
- b) a reaction to the negatives you say?*
- c) your plan to change?*

The counts and your journal entries become the next pages in your portfolio.

All this comes with you to the next session to show others the way you have found to put these investigations together in a portfolio.

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4. Non-verbal Recognition

One way to offer genuine warm positives is through non-verbal recognition. Three ways are possible: (a) expressions you make with your face, (b) motions you make with your body and (c) sounds you make with your voice.

You can signal your noticing of what you like to see children do with your facial expressions. *Smile. Wink. Look surprised.*

You can signal your noticing of what you like to see children do with your body. *Thrust your arms in the air. Clap. Hug. High-five.* Depending on your culture, there are positive hand signals you can use.

You can signal your noticing of what you like to see children do with sounds you make. Cheer. *Wooooooooooooo! Zupa zupa! Hummmahummmahummah.* Whistle.

This challenge is to play around with these positive responses and see what happens to the children and to you. By using only gestures and sounds we are letting children know we see, care, and find delight in them. We are going to explore the effects of using non-verbal responses to express warmth to children.

Warning! These can be crazy and fun — facial expressions, wild actions, and noises have effects!

Assignment

Devote: You start with an intensive one-day experience. From the time you awaken until the time you fall asleep, you have a challenge before you to nonverbally be positive to others. All positive feelings or thoughts can be conveyed without using words. You can still talk to the others at home, school and the grocery store as you normally do, but not to say positives. Show positives rather than speak them. One day. All that is required is that you try this for one full day, everywhere you go.

We are practicing expressing warmth and interest in the way we smile, wink, laugh, make funny sounds, sign with our hands, and move our bodies. We are enlivening our faces and hands to speak the positive thoughts we feel. High five! We smile at people. We make those gestures that say, “Hey! I value that. I value you!”

Continue: Then for the rest of the days before the next session, you attend to expressing warmth more often with non-verbal expressions, using this way to support and recognize what you value as often as you can.

You are looking at what happens to yourself (how you keep at it or lapse into old habits and your own mood) and, of course, what influence this has upon the children. You cannot tell if something works for you and your children unless you try it intensively and for long enough to really get it going.

Here are the questions to answer in your portfolio.

- a) *What was the effect of your non-verbal signals and vocal sounds on the other people, including the children?*
- b) *What was the effect on you?*

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5. Descriptions

Now we investigate the effects of a second way to respond: descriptions. This is talking factually, removing all judgements and opinions from our speech. Here we convey recognition in a factual descriptive statement that indicates specifics about what we value.

Some people say they feel like being a sports broadcaster who is describing what he or she sees to a radio audience. You literally describe what your eyes and ears perceive as noteworthy without inserting judgements, such as "good" or "I like the way..." Only the facts are stated.

"Four kids have come to our circle."
"The cap is now back on the pen."
"You found a solution."
"You have been climbing the whole time."
"Mark, Leticia, and Kimiko are ready."
"Your hands are washed now."
"Each of us has a napkin."

This investigation uses descriptions to express our attentiveness to children. Note that each description, when done well, is *factual*, said *after* a child did something, and *about something valued*, something we want to encourage.

Assignment

Check: The task is to use descriptions to respond to children when you want to support what they do with your attention and interest. It can be tricky. We can help each other do this well if all of us write examples of 6 descriptions we used, like the examples above, without any opinions of any kind, and bring them to the next session.

IMPORTANT: This will not work unless statements are (a) objective, like in the examples, (b) used as responses to what children do rather than prompting them to act and (c) used to respond to desirable actions, not negative ones.

As before, you have one intensive day assignment when you use as many as you can with the children all day long. The challenge is to avoid making judgements and focus on stating only the observable facts, without inserting any opinion, good or bad, when something you value happens.

No records are necessary beyond writing down those 6 examples.

Continue: For the rest of the time, you continue to use them as often as you can. As before, you can't tell if something works for you and the children unless you try it intensively for long enough to get it going. You are learning to use objective, detached, factual words, and the children are learning to adjust to hearing this way of talking.

Here are the questions to answer in your portfolio.

- a) *What was the effect of your descriptions on the individual child?*
- b) *What were the reactions of other children who heard you?*

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6. Distribution

This task investigates how thoroughly your positives reach all the children. Which children in your group get positives from you? Do they all get the same amount?

Assignment

Count: The task is to keep a record of the number of times you respond to children in the ways we have been exploring — non-verbal/vocal and descriptive statements (*no judgements or opinions, such as when you praise, as in “good job”*) — keeping track of each child you are with for ten days.

Chart: You can record this on a chart with all the children’s names and dates. Posted in a handy place, you can mark that day's box for each child you express warmth to.

	10/3	10/4	10/5	10/6	10/7	10/10	10/11	10/12	10/13	10/14
Emiko	√√√	√	√√√√	√√√	√√√√					
Carlos	√	√√√√	√							
Mark			√	√√						
Deshawn	√	√√			√√√√					
Zemzem										
Emily	√√√√	√√√√	√	√√√√	√					
Etc...										

If you work with only one or two children, this chart will be more useful if you include the adults you have contact with. The goal here is self-awareness of how you distribute your attention with a variety of people. Even though you may not catch every single positive, you can create a visual display at least of the times you were able to mark. This will be a reasonable approximation of how your positive attention is distributed. By the end of each week you will be able to tell who gets the most and who gets the least.

The empty boxes are most interesting.

The chart goes into your portfolio, as well as the answers to these questions:

- What pattern do you see?*
- What are the reasons for that pattern?*
- What do you plan to do?*

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7. Project

In order to complete this module successfully each participant demonstrates the ability to attend to emerging desirable actions in ways that benefit one child or a group of children. The aim is to show that you can strengthen or establish something new by using positive responses you know you can now employ successfully. You prove not only that you understand but also that you can achieve a result.

Assignment

Plan: The first challenge is to decide upon something that you think is important for a child or children's development. Over the next several weeks, you will respond positively with non-verbal recognition or descriptions to support the steps children take along the way to a goal you want to build. The project involves catching the children doing well at what you would like them to do and recording what gradually develops.

Document: The recording is essential. We keep records of what we do and what happens to the children or child. First, we start with a way to show the current not-so-good situation and continue over the next few weeks to show the changes that emerge. The best way to show this is in photographs, but audio recordings and video recordings are wonderful, too. Of course, the fundamental record is in your daily notes and factual descriptions of what the child does.

Your task is to be able to demonstrate that change has occurred. The first essential is to make sure you can show how it was in the beginning, so the immediate need is for photographs of the problem, as it currently exists.

Keep Notes: It is essential to keep a daily log of what happens to you and the child in this project. This is a place to record what you try, what you question, what discussions you have with others, and how your efforts change over time. These entries enable you to reflect upon the day-by-day story of this project so you can discover the pathway in which we learn.

Day-by-day is important. Each day is new. The small changes in each day become the story you want to be able to tell in photographs as you go along.

Represent: People's lives are changed by this project, as they are in all the projects in *Connecting to Children Modules*. Of course, this community of participants here today cares what happens in your project. Beyond that, we know the child cares, the child's family cares, and you know others who would care, too. These audiences would like to see what you have done. The challenge is to put this story in a form that you could share with them.

Share: To complete the module you must communicate a story of successfully expressing warmth to influence the life of a young child. You are telling a story with a **beginning**, characters and setting, **middle**, problems and struggles to overcome, and an **end**, resolution and reflection. In some way that works for you — a poster, a book, a newsletter article, a letter, a video program, or other ways — you show others what positives can do.

The Project of Understanding is a central to building your portfolio.

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8. Expression of Understanding

The project you just completed is part one of a Performance of Understanding, a way to challenge learners to take the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they have gained and demonstrate the ability to act flexibly and appropriately in a new and at least somewhat uncertain situation. The goal is to document the ability to perform as intended in the very context where it is applied, not in an exam or artificial test. As you saw today, this open process expects each person will do it differently.

You showed us in your Project that you could make a difference to a child. In this final step the challenge is to convey your deep understanding of what you have done in an Expression of Understanding.

Assignment

Your task is to communicate the deep significance of the work you have done here as we investigated and discussed expressing warmth to children. This is a work of personal expression for an audience of other participants here and, if appropriate, for parents or others to see.

Express Yourself: Through the work you have done, you have attained both an understanding and an ability to positively influence the development of children. Who you are now is the possibility of continuous, positive, enhancing responses that grow children into happy, confident, capable human beings. This is a major achievement.

You can create a poem, dance, story, letter, chart, song, or any other expression you find that enables you to convey your understanding of how positive reactions to children have an impact on their unfolding growth over time. The challenge is to convey your understanding of what it means to be a genuinely warm, positive, responsive person to children. You can use any expressive medium you choose to convey, in your unique way, your understanding of how warm positives benefit every child.