

Race to Kindness Tip Sheet

Jason Lheureux, LPC | Wedgwood Director of Residential Services

Sometimes it can feel like kindness doesn't matter much in today's world—but the truth is, it matters more than we think. A gentle word, calm response, moment of patience, or even a smile can mean everything to a child. *The best part?* Kindness is free and anyone can do it! In fact, when practiced consistently, kindness doesn't just change moments—it can change lives, and even the world around us.

SHOWING KINDNESS MATTERS:

- **Changes the Temperature:** Studies show that showing kindness can lower tension, stress levels, and reduce escalation. Kindness can alter the tone of an interaction, or the energy in the room.
- **Increases Harmony:** Others are more likely to listen and be open to direction and compromise when they are met with kindness. Kindness conveys respect and builds connection.
- **Builds a Relational 'Bank':** Think of treating others with kindness as an investment in the relationship. It puts emotional dollars in the 'bank' that can be drawn from in difficult moments.
- **Interrupts Disruptive Cycles:** When opposition is met with kindness, it can interrupt a chain reaction of dysregulation and alter the outcome of the interaction.
- **Provides Opportunity for Learning:** Kindness shown, especially with youth, role models behavior in real time, gives an opportunity to practice, and builds a skill that can be repeated in the future.

BENEFITS YOU CAN SEE:

- Fewer power struggles
- Shorter periods of escalation
- Improved relationships
- Fosters respectful relationships
- Encourages follow-through
- Decreases emotional burnout

UNEXPECTED BENEFITS:

- **Promotes Boundaries:** Kindness is not the same as weakness. It communicates clear boundaries more effectively than harsh enforcement or punishments.
- **It's Catching:** Kindness shown is more likely to be passed along to others and repeated. Kindness spreads faster than harsh words and can rapidly change an entire system.
- **Good Value:** A 10-second respectful interaction now can outweigh a 30-minute intervention later.

TIPS TO SHOW KINDNESS:

- Pause before responding
- Monitor body language
- Lead with tone and volume
- Say less, listen more
- Use supportive statements
- Check in frequently
- Assume positive intent
- Don't withhold connection