

Compliments

Importance

Research shows that children learn best and show higher motivation within the context of positive relationships, which are cultivated by a structure that engages students in complimenting each other. Compliments help improve group cohesion as well as improving individual self-image. Positive relationships among students supported by peer compliments minimize the need for discipline and classroom management, which leaves more time for teaching and learning.

What is key to remember is that just because a student receives compliments does not mean they are not also disciplined when they exhibit inappropriate behaviors. Likewise, a student who exhibits inappropriate behaviors is not excluded from receiving compliments. Compliments are meant to project and reinforce a positive self-image, especially for students who exhibit behaviors consistent with a negative self-image.

Process and Options

Before going through a compliment process for the first time, briefly discuss what compliments are and the impact they have.

Example discussion:

For our sharing, we will be giving each other compliments. But before we do that, who can tell us what a compliment is? Elicit responses. Summarize: A compliment is a nice thing we say to someone to make them feel good. Pay attention to the positive things you appreciate about them. Are they a good listener? Do they make you laugh? Are they friendly and helpful to others? What is something they are really good at? Elicit responses for examples of compliments. How do we feel when we get a compliment? Elicit responses.

When we get a compliment, we feel proud, happy, appreciated, and important. Sometimes, we might also feel shy or embarrassed because we aren't used to receiving compliments, but remember that compliments are meant to help us feel valued and cared about.

Next, use the compliment poster to review the four different types of compliments: 1) the way someone looks 2) what they have 3) what they do 4) who they are. Explain each type of compliment to students and give them an example of each type. Then have students come up with examples of each kind and discuss their example compliments to make sure they are kind, sincere, and valuable. (Note: At the beginning of this process students will usually say more surface level compliments about what someone looks like or what they have. With more discussion, push students toward giving compliments that are deeper and more about what someone does and/or who they are.)

Compliments #1

- Names of all students are placed in a "Have not had a turn" container.
- A student is selected at random to receive compliments. Their name is written on a compliment sheet.
- The teacher shares a compliment for the student. The compliment is written on the sheet.
- The student chooses two peers to share a compliment. The compliments are written on the sheet.
- The student gives a self-compliment. The compliment is written on the sheet.
- The student is given the compliment sheet and encouraged to get compliments from their family.

Compliments #2

- Names of all students are placed in a "Have not had a turn" container.
- A student is selected at random to receive compliments. The student writes their name on a paper bag or envelope.
- Teacher and all students write a compliment and put them inside the student's bag/envelope.
- The teacher picks two compliments from the bag/envelope to read (teacher can screen the compliments).
- The teacher gives the bag/envelope of compliments to the student. (If necessary, hold onto the compliments until the next day so they can be screened for appropriateness.)

