

Want to Raise Kind Kids?

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EXPLAIN THE SCIENCE OF
KINDNESS

Did you know that by raising KIND kids we're also raising HAPPY adults? Research shows kids get a **happiness boost** from sharing with others. Behind that warm, fuzzy feeling is neurochemistry.

Kindness stimulates the production of feel-good chemicals like serotonin, oxytocin, and dopamine.

So why don't we explain THIS to kids?

When we talk to children about the science of kindness they get intrigued. You can say something simple like; "Hey, did you know your kindness is like a **superpower**? When you're being kind to someone, you positively impact many people -- the person who receives the kindness, anyone who witnesses your kind act, and even yourself! Cool, right?"

How to Explain the Science of Kindness to Kids

Start by asking children, "Why is it important to be kind to others?"

Many children will struggle to give a concrete response to this question. They know that being kind is the right thing to do, but they probably don't understand why it's so important.

Your explanation of the benefits of kindness will depend on the age of the children.

Children of All Ages

1. Explain the benefits of kindness are experienced by the person who receives the kindness, the person who offers kindness, and anyone who witnesses the kind act. Studies have shown that the effect in the brain is the same for all parties.
2. Explain that everyone who feels the benefits of the kind act will be inspired to "**pay it forward**" by being kind themselves. So, just one kind act can spread to many people. Demonstrate this effect by lining up and knocking down dominoes, causing a chain reaction. Alternatively, have children drop pebbles or other items into a container of water, then observe how the water is affected by the object.
3. Discuss examples from the movies that showcase characters who are kind. Check out our list of top **30 friendship and kindness movies for families**.
4. Go through our popular **5-Day Friendship Challenge**! It's included in our much-loved **Challenges Kit** and can help kids develop empathy and nurture positive relationships.

Save



Younger Children

To younger children, say that kindness makes people healthier, happier, and more relaxed. You can explain kindness as a **superpower** that helps others and changes the world for the better.

Be sure to check out our list of [kindness books and activities](#). You will find many great book titles and ideas to help children embrace the concept of being kind to themselves, others, and our planet.

Older Children

Discuss the chemicals released when we see, experience, or witness acts of kindness:

- Serotonin increases happiness and helps with appetite, sleep, and memory.
- Endorphins trigger positive feelings and are natural painkillers. They help people feel relaxed and full of energy.
- Oxytocin reduces blood pressure and protects the heart. It produces a feeling of love and satisfaction that helps people build trust and form bonds.

You can mention a “**giver’s high**” to older children. A “**giver’s high**” is comparable to the “runner’s high.” When people give charitable donations, for example, they experience the same endorphin rush that runners get. Research shows that it’s not the size of the donation that matters, but the act of giving itself.

Next Steps

Simply hearing about the benefits of kindness might not be enough to inspire your child to perform kind acts, but it will lay an important foundation in their brain.

Once you’ve explained the benefits, be sure to **model** kind words and deeds yourself. Acknowledge and celebrate when you notice children being kind.

Practicing Random Acts of Kindness is a wonderful way to put what you’ve learned about kindness into action. Encourage children to practice random acts of kindness or have a random acts of kindness challenge. Remind them that when they’re kind to someone, that person is likely to be kind to someone else, and so on.

Some ideas include:

- Holding open the door for someone
- Giving compliments
- Smiling at others (Smiles are contagious too!)
- Doing a chore or other task for someone without telling them
- Leaving happy notes around your school or home
- Picking up litter
- Writing a thank you note for someone who isn’t thanked often enough
- Talking to someone new at school
- Sending a card to a military service member
- Planting something

As your children or students develop the habit of kindness, their kindness will spread everywhere they go. We can create a kinder, happier, and healthier world for our children to live, learn, and grow—one kind act at a time.

Article from Ashley Cullins - BigLife Journal.