

25 Ways to Show Kids You Care About Them

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You can spend hours trying to teach kids right from wrong and filling their heads with knowledge, but at the end of the day they just want to know you care about them. Of course, simply telling them that you care about them isn't good enough. As we often tell kids, "Actions speak louder than words."

We've gathered up a list of simple ways to show kids you care about them. Use them regularly and you may begin to find that the kids you interact with on a daily basis are happier and more likely to follow your guidance, all because they know that you care.

1. Keep Your Word

Kids pay attention to what you say. If you make a promise, keep it. If you're not sure you'll be able to keep a promise, then say, "I'll try my best, but I can't guarantee it."

2. Be Honest

Kids value your opinion and nothing lets them down like learning that you've lied to them. Little white lies, like "Wow! That's a great painting," are fine. Bigger lies that they could discover, "Like, I'd love to go to your game, but I have to stay late and grade papers," are not.

3. Encourage Their Dreams

Even if their dream is to become a giraffe, encourage it. "I bet you'll be the best giraffe there is!" Kids need to be encouraged to dream and think creatively.

4. Write Them Notes of Encouragement

Little notes like “Keep up the good work” or “Great job on your presentation” will help motivate kids and show them that you notice them. You don’t have to give notes for everything they do. A little encouragement once a week or so will go a long way.

5. Compliment Them

Randomly take some time to pay them a compliment, even if it’s just something as small as, “I really like your sweater today.” This also helps kids know you notice them.

6. Tell Them You’re Proud of Them

If you’ve ever told a preschooler or elementary-aged child you’re proud of them, you probably saw a positive reaction. Kids have a desire to make grown-ups proud and hearing that they have done so gives them a wonderful feeling.

7. Catch Them Doing Something Good

As parents and teachers, we often catch kids doing something bad. However, we should work harder to catch them doing something good, and then point it out. For example, “I noticed you helped Kayla pick up the crayons she spilled. Thanks for being so helpful.”

8. Don’t Point Out Every Mistake

Kids don’t always recognize that pointing out their mistakes is a way of showing you care. Instead they think, “I can never do anything right.” When you see little mistakes, let them go. Chances are the kids recognize them and are working on fixing them themselves.

9. Say Yes Frequently

Just like kids don’t like it when you point out their mistakes, they don’t like to hear the word no. Even though your no may be justified, saying no too many times can give kids a negative feeling. Some experts suggest trying to say yes two or three times for every no.

10. Give Them a Hug

Or a pat on the back, a high five, or a handshake. If you’re a teacher, you might have to be careful about touching students, but there’s nothing wrong with a simple high five or a handshake to say, “Job well done.” A simple pat on the back can say, “I know you’re struggling and I’m here for you.”

11. Cheer Them Up When They’re Having a Bad Day

Usually when a kid is having a bad day, you can tell. While a hug or pat on the back can help, sometimes you just need to lighten the mood. Tell a joke. Point out something silly. Make a crazy face. Sometimes that’s enough to help kids redirect and forget about their bad mood for a moment.

12. Be Silly with Them

Kids love to sing silly songs, make silly faces, and enjoy other silly actions. Next time you're singing that crazy song or reading a silly book, take time to make zany noises or motions. Kids need to know you're not so stuffy and that you're willing to let your guard down with them.

13. Smile at Them

Let kids know you're happy to see them by giving them a smile. In the classroom, greet them with a smile in the morning and send them off with a smile in the afternoon. Whenever they catch your eye, smile to show you care.

14. Be Approachable

If you always have a frown on your face or constantly tell your kids that it's not a good time, they're going to stop coming to you. Let them know they're important by making some time for them when they come to you. If you truly are busy and it's a bad time, say something like, "I want to hear this. Give me five minutes to finish it and then I'm all ears."

15. Talk to Them

Of course you talk to kids every day, but do you take time to just let them talk? Take a few minutes to let kids tell you something interesting or share what's on their mind. Respond to them appropriately, but let them do the majority of the talking.

16. Play with Them

Making Barbie talk or rolling toy cars around of the floor may not be your idea of fun, but you should still take time to enjoy these activities with kids. Just five or ten minutes of play lets kids know you want to spend time with them.

17. Take an Interest in Their Interests

One of the best ways to let kids know you care is to take an interest in something they're interested in. If they have a favorite TV show, learn the theme song and the names of the characters. If they have a favorite sport, know some of the rules of the game. Kids will be impressed when you can spout off some of this knowledge on the fly.

18. Ask for Their Input

Kids have opinions and love to be given the opportunity to express them. If you have a decision to make involving your home or classroom, give kids some input. This lets them know that their opinions matter.

19. Let Them Help You

Many hands make light work, but when those hands are little, they can often make work take a lot longer. However, giving kids little tasks to do makes them feel important, so find ways they can help.

20. Be Patient

The simplest tasks, such as zipping a coat or putting on a pair of shoes, can take forever with kids. Instead of constantly saying, “Hurry up” or showing other signs of impatience, stay calm and give them the time they need.

21. Make Them Feel Safe

Feeling safe is really important to kids. If you’re a teacher, you may have kids that have unstable home environments, so school has to be a safe place for them. Make kids feel safe by establishing rules, creating a cozy environment, and controlling your emotions when they’re around.

22. Stand Up for Them

Kids need adults to advocate for them. Let them know that you’re always in their corner by standing up for them when they’re wronged and by helping them fight their battles. However, don’t come to their defense so often that they don’t learn how to handle problems themselves.

23. Show Up to Their Events

If kids participate in extracurricular activities or have a special event scheduled, take the time to show up. Nothing says “I care about you” more than having their teacher or parents show up to an event they’ve been preparing for. Showing up says that you care enough to give up some of your time for them.

24. Display Their Work

If kids draw you a picture or make you a gift, display it proudly. You can also put a picture of the child in a special place. Let them know that they and their work are worthy of being on display.

25. Remember Their Birthdays

Birthdays are a big deal for kids. Even if all you do is say, “Happy Birthday,” acknowledging their special day will show them you care. Even better, give them a special sticker, birthday hat, or a small birthday treat.

Whether you’re a parent, teacher, or work with children in another way, you should take time to show them that you care. Do you have other ways to show kids you care? If so, share them with us so we can use them on the kids in our lives!