




Middle School **Kindness** Challenge

FOSTERING KINDNESS IN AMERICA'S MIDDLE SCHOOLS

What is the Middle School Kindness Challenge?

The Middle School Kindness Challenge is an **easy and no cost way to foster kindness and improve school climate** in the critical middle school years. Open to schools with any combination of grades 4-8, the Challenge offers **best-in-class resources**, free of charge, to teach and foster kindness over a four-week period of the school's choosing. Teachers and other participating school staff will receive ongoing access to outstanding kindness-building lesson plans following the successful completion of the Challenge. By teaching kids how to practice kindness, be more empathetic, and manage their emotions and actions, they become better equipped to navigate our complex world.

Offered through an easy-to-use online platform, the Challenge can be successfully completed by any school in three steps:

-  1. Accept the Challenge and sign-up teachers and staff to participate.
-  2. Teachers and staff complete a kindness reflection exercise and then teach 4 best-in-class kindness building lessons drawn from leading content providers.
-  3. Create a Kindness Ritual to make kindness routine at your school.

The Benefits

Middle schools where teachers and school staff **intentionally** and **systematically** teach and foster kindness are **more effective** at helping students succeed, both in school and in life. Because we know this, the Middle School Kindness Challenge offers an engaging, exciting, and readily doable opportunity to:



Improve School Climate



Reduce Suspensions



Foster Social & Emotional Development



Greg Dohmann
Principal, D.C.
Public Schools

"The Kindness Challenge allowed our students – and staff! – to reflect on how their smallest actions can have a positive impact on the world around them. It strengthened our collective sense of empathy and made us a closer, more supportive school community."



Sharon Contreras
Superintendent of Schools, Guilford County, NC

"This year, most middle schools in my district participated in the Middle School Kindness Challenge. We are seeing improvements in school climate and the feedback from my middle schools has been incredibly positive. Guilford County Schools' educators share that the lessons and activities are engaging, and the interactive technology is user-friendly. Parents have also been very pleased with the Kindness Challenge and we have received uplifting media coverage. Given the challenges facing our middle schools and the fact that the Middle School Kindness Challenge is high quality and free of charge, I recommend taking advantage of this excellent resource."

Middle School **Kindness** Challenge

Kindness Activities

We have curated 33 activities from leading content providers into four pathways for teachers and school staff to teach.

➔ Developing Positive Mindsets

This pathway focuses on self-management and self-care strategies that equip students with ways to monitor their own feelings, setting them up to be kind to others. Activities include practicing gratitude, goal setting, and positive framing of situations.

➔ Strengthening Peer Relationships

This pathway focuses on building constructive interactions among students for a positive classroom and school culture. It includes activities that help students develop empathy for their classmates, listen actively, and resolve conflicts with each other.

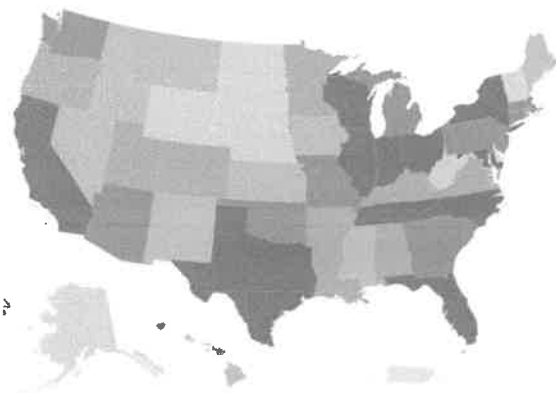
➔ Fostering Empathy

This pathway goes beyond individual student relationships to tackle larger issues and trends such as stereotypes and bullying based on identity. It includes activities such as shared identity and fostering civic discourse.

➔ Promoting Cyber-Kindness

This pathway includes activities for students to develop a more positive social media presence and the habits of heart and mind to be kind online. Students will learn practical skills to help them engage with social media and online applications, including video games, responsibly.

Join your colleagues from across the country:



**1340 SCHOOLS REGISTERED IN
50 STATES + DC WITH
12,677 EDUCATORS PARTICIPATING**

The next cycle begins on AUGUST 1, 2018!

To learn more about the Middle School Kindness Challenge and to register today, visit
www.MiddleSchoolKindnessChallenge.org

A HISTORIC COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE FOLLOWING PARTNERS:



WHAT IS THE MIDDLE SCHOOL KINDNESS CHALLENGE?

The Middle School Kindness Challenge is an easy and free way to make kindness commonplace and improve school climate and student learning in the critical middle school years. Open to schools with any combination of **grades 4-8**, the Challenge offers best-in-class kindness activities to teach and foster kindness over a four-week period of the school's choosing. By teaching kids how to practice kindness, be more empathetic, and manage their emotions and actions, they become better equipped to navigate our complex world, at school, at home, and online.

Offered through an **easy-to-use online platform**, the Challenge can be successfully completed by any school in three steps:

1. Accept the Challenge and sign-up teachers and staff to participate.
2. Teachers and staff complete a kindness reflection exercise and then teach 4 best-in-class kindness building lessons drawn from leading content providers.
3. Create a Kindness Ritual to make kindness routine at your school.

THE BENEFITS

Middle schools where teachers and school staff **intentionally** and **systematically** teach and foster kindness are more effective at helping students succeed, both in school and in life.

Because we know this, the Middle School Kindness Challenge offers an engaging, exciting, and readily doable opportunity to:

- Improve school climate
- Reduce suspensions
- Foster Social & Emotional development

KINDNESS ACTIVITIES

The Challenge includes **33 expertly-crafted kindness activities** from leading content providers for teachers and school staff to select from and teach. During the Challenge, participating school staff are asked to teach four (4) out of the 33 activities of their choosing. The activities, ranging from 5-minute to whole class period lessons, fall into four categories:

1. **Developing Positive Mindsets:** These activities focus on self-management and self-care strategies that equip students with ways to monitor their own feelings, setting them up to be kind to others. Activities include practicing gratitude, goal setting, and positive framing of situations.
2. **Strengthening Peer Relationships:** These activities focus on building constructive interactions among students for a positive classroom and school culture. It includes activities that help students develop empathy for their classmates, listen actively, and resolve conflicts with each other.
3. **Fostering Empathy:** These activities go beyond individual student relationships to tackle larger issues and trends such as stereotypes and bullying based on identity. It includes activities such as shared identity and fostering civic discourse.
4. **Promoting Cyber-Kindness:** These activities focus on getting students to develop a more positive social media presence and the habits of heart and mind to be kind online. Students will learn practical skills to help them engage with social media and online applications, including video games, responsibly.

KINDNESS WORKS

Kindness, like other skills, needs to be taught, reinforced, and celebrated.

Kind schools are more effective at helping students succeed, both in school and in life. At schools where educators intentionally teach, foster, and celebrate kindness, students feel a greater sense of safety, support, and acceptance.

KINDNESS MUST BE TAUGHT

Kindness is about more than being nice to someone else. In fact, kindness is a learned skill that needs to be taught and regularly practiced.

The Middle School Kindness Challenge provides access to research-based curriculum and resources, free of charge, to those who want to incorporate kindness into the school day and make kindness a practical, commonplace skill. The Challenge can be an exciting and engaging

opportunity for your school. It is designed to complement and add value to what schools are already doing. It's flexible, customizable, and fun!

EVERY SCHOOL CAN TEACH KINDNESS

As with academic subjects, there's no mystery to teaching, fostering, and celebrating kindness. For the Middle School Kindness Challenge, leading education organizations, distinguished teachers, and acclaimed researchers are providing the most effective research-based tools and resources to help you improve your school climate and reduce unnecessary suspensions.

Participating teachers and schools can also earn special recognition on [GreatSchools.org](https://www.GreatSchools.org) and gain access to discounted services from leading national education support organizations.

TAKE THE FIRST STEP: ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE

Whether you're just starting the journey to intentionally create a kind school where all students feel safe and supported, or you are well down the road, the Middle School Kindness Challenge can help. We have an opportunity to ensure every child goes to a school that is welcoming, patient, and accepting.

The Middle School Kindness Challenge aims to make kindness commonplace in America's middle schools. Join us and make a positive difference for our kids and our nation.

"At our school, the Middle School Kindness Challenge offered an opportunity to reinforce and extend our current initiatives to create a true, community school in a district and neighborhood surrounded by economic inequality, violence, and negative messages."

John Cunningham, Kindness Captain, Waltersville School, Bridgeport, CT

RECENT FINDINGS

Teaching, fostering, and celebrating kindness in schools improves students' sense of well-being, and success in school and life.

“Kindness is an important human strength that influences subjective well-being... We suggest that kindness can cause happiness... Happy people scored higher on their motivation to perform, and their recognition and enactment of kind behaviors.” (Otake, Shimai, et al, 2006)

“Students who performed kind acts experienced significantly bigger increases in peer acceptance, [which] is related to a variety of important academic and social outcomes, including reduced likelihood of being bullied.” (Layous , Nelson, Oberle, et al, 2012)

“Students learn best when they are in environments in which they feel safe, supported, challenged, and accepted... [They] are more likely to engage in the curriculum, achieve academically, and develop positive relationships; students are less likely to exhibit problem behaviors; and teacher turnover is lower and teacher satisfaction is higher.” (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2016)

“SEL (social-emotional learning) programs yielded significant positive effects on... students' behavioral adjustment in the form of increased prosocial behaviors and reduced conduct and internalizing problems, and improved academic performance on achievement tests and grades.”(Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, et al, 2011)