

Creating Heart Agreements

Excerpts from: Building Community, by Diane Venzera

Preschool Heart Agreement

Prepare Ahead

Gather the Mr. Potato Head pieces or find photos of eyes, ears, lips, hands and feet.

Action

- Let the children know that together we will be creating our Heart Agreement.
- Begin by asking them if they go to school and if so what rules do they have to follow when they are there. Also ask them about the rules they have to follow at home.
- Ask them what happens when we don't follow the rules. Share with them that the rules are there to keep us all safe.
- Once they have talked about their understanding of rules, hold up the eyes and invite them to talk about what kind of rule do we need for our eyes: *Example - We use our eyes to look for the good in others.*
- Ask then about the rules for each body part:
 - Ears: *(We use our ears to listen to instructions and to listen to others when they are sharing.)*
 - Lips/Mouth: *(We say kind words to each other, We take turns talking, etc...)*
 - Hands: *(We keep our hands to ourselves, We use gentle touch, etc...)*
 - Feet: *(We use walking feet; We keep our feet to ourselves, etc...)*
- Young children think in pictures so use language that describes what you want to see happening. For example, say, "Use walking feet," rather than saying, "Don't run."
- Once you and the children have selected a rule for each body part, mount the body parts and the rules on the foam core board and invite everyone to sign their name or make their mark on it, signifying that everyone understands the agreements.
- Place the board in the room where it can be easily seen and refer to it during circle time each week or whenever needed.



Heart Agreement – Children & Teens (Teens most likely will not need all of the explanation)

Action

- Let the students know that together we will be creating our Heart Agreement.
- Share that Heart Agreements are the rules that we follow in our classrooms. They are the things we do that help us to create a fun learning environment.
- Some other reasons for a Heart Agreement are:
 - To show respect for one another
 - To make learning possible
 - To create a safe place
 - To help people feel welcome
- What are some other reasons to have Heart Agreements?
- Now, we know why we have Heart Agreements, so what are the actual agreements we want to have in this classroom? *(If they are not sure what to answer, prompt them with the following questions.)*
 - What are some things we do that show respect for others?
 - How do you want to be treated?
 - What actions show friendship toward others?
 - How can we help everyone feel welcome?
- Invite them to create short statements positive statements that reflect the desired behavior.
- They might include:
 - We keep our hands to ourselves.
 - One person talks at a time.
 - Leave toys on the shelf until class is over.
 - Look for the good in others.
 - Work things our peacefully.
 - Use kind words.
 - Clean up together.
 - Have fun.
- Once they have come up with their agreements, invite them to use the poster board and other supplies to create their sign. Invite all to sign it and refer to it during circle time each week or whenever needed.