

13 - Kindness Helps

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Purpose: The purpose of the transcripts is to provide readers and listeners with a written version of each episode of the UAGC Center for Early Childhood Education's Early Childhood Chatter Podcast so they can follow along with the audio content. www.uagc.edu/ece-center/chatter-podcast

Audience: Current Active & Enrolled Students

Episode Transcript

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: Welcome to Early Childhood Chatter with Dr. Shipley and Dr. Heald. We will upload a new episode every other week on Wednesdays.

Dr. Stephanie Heald Speaker: Twice a month, we will come to you with a 10-minute professional development inspiration that you can quickly listen to for new ideas to use today.

Don't forget to subscribe to this podcast to get notifications about future episodes. Today we are here with Candy Davis, a kindergarten teacher and mom of four kiddos ranging from 5 to 14 years old. She is certified in early childhood and elementary education and has recently earned her master's degree in curriculum and instruction with an emphasis in educational technology.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: We're so excited to have Candy here today because her topic is so relevant, and I have had the pleasure of actually having her in class when I was at Northwestern Oklahoma State University and she was one of my students and she has inspired me ever since and so that's why I reached out to her. So, Candy, thank you so much for being here today.

Candy Davis Speaker: Of course.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: Candy's here to talk to us about kindness and how being kind can't hurt anything, and I agree so much. So, thank you for being here again and I just want to know why is this topic near and dear to your heart right now?

Candy Davis Speaker: Yeah, definitely. So my kids and I just recently last year moved to a new community.

It was kind of scary. It's scary for kids, you always think that, but it's also scary for adults too. Whenever you're used to something, you move somewhere new, and you just don't know if you're going to fit in.

You don't know how things are going to go. You don't know if you're going to like it, and this community was so welcoming and so kind. I mean, I had people anonymously drop sweatshirts off on our front porch or people just inviting us to different activities or just, you know, just smiling and walking up and introducing themselves because, you know, when you're new, especially we moved to kind of a smaller community, most people know who you are, but you don't know who most people are.

So just people coming up and introducing themselves and saying, hey, this is who I am. It's nice to have you here. We had so many people do that and it really helped the transition, especially with my kids because I was mostly worried about them, just how are they going to handle all of this change and just having, there were even kids that came up to mine and, you know, 13 is an awkward age as a boy, especially to move and I had kids coming up to my teenage son saying, hey, this is my name.

You're going to be in my class, and it was just a huge relief and helped the transition tremendously.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: I love to hear that. So how do you teach kindness in your classroom community?

Candy Davis Speaker: Oh yes, definitely.

So obviously I teach kindergarten and kids aren't perfect just like adults aren't perfect and so I'll see, you know, every once in a while you'll have a kid hit another kid or they'll say, hey, give me that paper and I always just try to stop and you just keep a calm voice and just say, hey, I'm not sure that's how we talk to our friends. How should we talk to our friends and whenever we see them or whenever that happens, that probably didn't make you feel very good, but what's a better way to say that? And I think just staying calm and talking to them like you would want to be talked to is huge, I think.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: So how have you seen that kindness has changed during this pandemic or this time of uncertainty or has it changed?

Candy Davis Speaker: Oh, I think it has or I mean, I think I noticed it more at the very beginning because there was just like there was so much fear and panic in the world and I think there kind of still is a little, but just not as much at least for me at the very beginning because like you said, it was a very uncertain time and teachers were being asked to do all of these things that they hadn't ever done before.

Like my partner teacher, she's taught for 37 years, and she's never had to do anything like this before and so she's just in a different generation. She didn't grow up with the technology and I think it was probably very intimidating for her. So there were times whenever it was overwhelming for everyone, but I think the biggest key in that moment in my mind was just to make sure that I stayed kind because everyone was frustrated, everyone was scared, no one knew what was going on and to see people not knowing what to do, I always tried to make myself available just like, hey, you can always contact me.

Are you having trouble? How are you getting along with that? Because I felt like if I had the knowledge to do something, then why keep that knowledge to myself because the people that we're trying to help are the kids and if we can work together and help each other, that's going to benefit the kids eventually. And so just being kind to our co-workers also and then the parents as well because the parents were just as scared and frustrated and everything else is, I mean, everyone was basically in the same boat and if you say, you know, if you go at it kind of rigidly and say, this is what you have to get done and this is the way it has to be and you're doing this wrong, you're going to get a way different response than you say, hey, I noticed that maybe you're struggling with this. Is there something I can do to help? Here's my contact information.

Get a hold of me. I would love to help you with all of this. So, I think that just the way you approach the situation makes all the difference in the results.

I think you're going to be more successful if you do that.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: I totally agree with you and I think families sometimes are overwhelmed just like teachers and just like everyone is in the world today. So, have you had to deal with any families that you've had to role model this kindness for or is your community kind of backing what you're doing?

Candy David Speaker: You know, I can't think of anyone that was just straight-up mean.

You know, I think people have been pretty open and caring about things. A lot of people have been really encouraging like, hey, I noticed that you did this in your lesson, and you did really well I feel like. We really liked this or, you know, they'd say, oh, well, this one took us forever and I'd say, oh, man, well, what went wrong? You know, what's going wrong? Can you tell me what the message was or what was happening? So, I think I don't think maybe it was just the people that were involved, but I think maybe all of us approaching the situation the way that we did and being kind to one another helped what you were talking about.

Like, I just don't think there were really a lot of rigid, mean circumstances because of the way we were all approaching it.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: I agree. And the way we approach anything in our classroom is so important and with our parents.

So, as we come to the end of your session, what are three takeaways that you want your listeners to know?

Candy Davis Speaker: Yes. So, the first thing is that kindness creates confidence in your students. So, if I'm teaching a lesson and I'm getting frustrated because they're not getting it and I'm like, oh, no, this is the way you do it.

And my voice is getting harsher. Five-year-olds and six-year-olds and probably any age is just kind of going to shut down. They're not, it's just like in the real world. If you have a boss that says you're doing this wrong, you're doing this wrong, you're doing this wrong, and there's no positive reinforcement, you're probably going to get burnout. So, by talking to my kids like, oh, wow, very good.

I know, you know, you kind of struggled with this. We're going to work on that. But you sure did get that letter S sound, and it sounded so good.

You can see the physical response on their face. You can see their little faces light up and you can see them stand up a little bit taller because you just built them up a little bit. And a little bit of confidence is what might help them blend all those sounds together instead of just being able to do that beginning sound.

And then kindness creates community within your co-workers. And I think that's so important because if we walk around as co-workers just glaring at each other all the time and golly, life is so rough and so hard, it is a miserable place to be. You just walk around and maybe just smile at somebody.

And if you notice like someone's scarf or something, you know, man, I really like your scarf. You look great today. And you can see the same thing on an adult's face that you can see on a child's face when you tell them they made the letter S sound.

You can see their face light up and oh, thanks. You know, just building each other up is going to make your workplace just a more enjoyable place to be. And who wants to be in a miserable place whenever they're working? It's much more fun just to have fun with each other and smile at each other and build each other up.

And then the last thing is kindness crashes combat with parents. And sometimes like I was talking about earlier with distance learning, it can be so frustrating because there's so many unknowns and no one's sure what they're supposed to be doing. And if we are kind to the parents that are trying so hard, because everyone is trying, if we can be kind to those parents, you're going to build that relationship and crush those combative attitudes and responses.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: That's awesome. I think all three of those are perfect and spot on. So what I want you to leave our listeners with one challenge today.

Candy Davis Speaker: Yeah, I think smile more often. When you see someone walking across the street or walking in the store, don't just glare. Even if you're having a rough day, just smile because they're smiling back at you is going to build you up too.

It just spreads. Just smile at people more often.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: Yes, smiles are contagious.

And Candy, thank you so much for all of this. This information has been great because it's something that we need to remember all the time, but especially during this time of uncertainty. So, we appreciate you for being here and we would like everyone to subscribe to get future podcasts and we will be back in a week.