



Children acting out situations at the Forum Theatre space



Cue cards with scenarios to act out



Working on self-reflection booklets

KINDNESS PROJECT



CARPE DIEM @ HILLTOP EXPLORED THEATRE AS A MEDIUM TO FOSTER EMPATHY AND PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS IN CHILDREN.

Learning to get along with others is a life skill that children need to learn. At Carpe Diem @ Hilltop, teacher Nuaimah Binte Mohamed Sani and her colleagues noticed that children often did not know how to resolve conflicts or would say mean things that hurt their peers.

She decided there was a need for children to learn to recognise inappropriate behaviour, use polite and kind words, and build empathy and negotiation skills. To do this, she led a Practitioner Inquiry (PI) project that guided children towards using constructive dialogue through a dramatic medium called Forum Theatre.

ACTING IT OUT

Forum Theatre provides a platform for children to think about solutions, act them out, and practise their responses using positive words when presented with a social situation.

Teachers encouraged children to take turns to voice out what they would do in a given social situation, by prompting them with questions like: "What do you do when someone

does not share?" or "What do you do when someone takes something from you?" Positive vocabulary word cards, such as "Excuse me", "I like it", "Thank you" and "You're welcome", were provided when children needed help.

REINFORCING THE MESSAGE

The teachers used storybooks, visual aids and reflection booklets, where children could write down their thoughts, to reinforce what they had learnt from the role-play sessions.

Storybooks on moral values, such as "Be Polite and Kind" and "Know and Follow Rules", were read to the children during morning and evening assemblies. The Singapore Kindness Movement's "5 Magic Words" Kindness Cubbies posters, showing phrases such as "Say 'excuse me' before interrupting others" and "Say 'please' when asking for help", were displayed around the centre as visual reminders.

Teachers also made it a point to praise children during their

interactions to reinforce positive behaviour. Ms Nuaimah adds that as children model what they see, it is important for teachers and parents to be thoughtful and kind in their interactions, too.

THE POWER OF POSITIVITY

At the end of the PI project, teachers observed that the children became more mindful of their actions and words. They would talk things out nicely and play together in a positive manner, using polite language such as "Please, may I play this toy with you?"

Mr Soo Kang Wei, father of Zheng Hur, a K2 student who participated in the PI project, is delighted. "He has now started to share and play with his younger sister. He usually did not before," says Mr Soo. "The project has helped to develop my child's empathy and problem-solving skills. I am sure that these social skills will prepare him well for his life journey." ●



Keen to investigate challenges and explore enhanced strategies in your classroom/centre through the Practitioner Inquiry Grant? Visit www.ecda.gov.sg/Educators/Pages/PI-Grant.aspx for details.