



## Complimenting Friends: Facilitator Guide

Group activities, large and small, offer great opportunities for introducing and teaching social skills in the Head Start classroom. Teaching all children in the classroom how to compliment peers or “say nice things” in many ways can increase social opportunities for children with and without special needs. Giving compliments is a great way for children to join ongoing play, maintain a play interaction, and motivate their peers to keep trying when a task is hard.

### Materials

- Complimenting visual supports from the **Complimenting Friends Teaching Activity**.
- Set of toys for peer demonstration (blocks, puzzles, etc.)

### Setting it up

- Before the activity, gather the materials needed for the demonstration (e.g., puzzles).
- Place the complimenting visual supports nearby.
- Plan ahead to include target children as part of the activity (consider a mix of children with and without disabilities acting as the initiators and the responders).
- As a reminder, make notes on the back of each complimenting visual about how you will individualize the activity (e.g., which child you will choose, materials you will use, specific examples in your classroom, etc.).
- Plan to introduce one visual support at a time. This will give children focused time and practice to successfully learn each strategy. Depending on your kids, you may choose to space out the introduction of new cards by a day or two, or even a week.

### Opening the activity

You can say:

- Today we are talking about giving compliments or saying nice things to friends. Does anyone know what a compliment is?
- Call on a few different kids to share their ideas. Validate their comments and expand on the definition of a compliment.

You can say:

- “That’s right, a compliment is doing or saying something to a friend that makes them feel good. Saying nice things makes people feel good, feel happy, and feel proud. Isn’t it fun to play with someone when they say nice things to you? Who can show us or tell us something nice you can say to a friend?”
- Call on a few different kids to share their ideas. Validate their comments and relate them to your target visual(s) for the day, or hold up one of the complimenting visuals and have the children guess what the child is doing to compliment a friend. Following the introduction of each card, reference the back for more ideas.



### Closing the activity

After the demonstration, help children generalize this idea by asking some reflection questions:

- Example: Today we practiced saying nice things to someone who was doing a puzzle. When are some other times we could say nice things to friends?
- Call on a few friends and expand on their ideas as needed. Remind children that you and the rest of the educators will be watching throughout the day and noticing when they give compliments by showing the examples from the visual(s) that were discussed in the activity (i.e., giving a high five, giving a thumbs up, giving a gentle hug, saying something nice to a friend). Try using the same strategies from this group activity to compliment children who are trying to learn a new skill!

### Ideas for reinforcing the activity

You can say:

- Hang up the target visual support card(s) at the front of room (or print several and place them around the room) to visually remind children of the ways they can give friends compliments.
- Throughout the day, take opportunities to coach children through using the target compliment(s) (e.g., “Wow, Mary, look at the tower Nima built! She’s worked hard on that, what can you say to compliment her for what she did?”).
- Use behavior-specific praise as you see children using the strategies (e.g., “You gave Hiyab a thumbs up when she chose the book you like at circle. That was a nice compliment, and look how happy she feels!”).
- Make a classroom announcement when you notice a child giving a compliment to another (e.g., “Micah gave Kayla a high five when she finished the puzzle. What a nice compliment!”).
- Periodically review this group activity throughout the year. Children will likely become more independent in sharing their real-life examples of giving compliments or saying nice things to others.
- Make a classroom chart to track compliments. Have kids draw a smiley face or place a sticker on the chart each time they give a compliment. See how many compliments the classroom can give in a day or a week.