Thank you for taking the time to watch the “Kindness is Contagious” YouTube Kids video playlist.

As parents and caring adults, you can help the children in your lives develop the tools to cultivate kindness and joy. Scientific research shows that there is a correlation between the two, what researchers call a “positive feedback loop” (Aknin, 2012). Cultivating joy within promotes kindness, in turn kind behaviors foster joy.

These activities will help your child practice cultivating kindness and joy while thinking of positive actions they can take to promote kindness among others.

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ACTIVITY 1: My Best Self Kindness Garland

WHY: This activity will help your child to think about kindness and how they can contribute to a kinder world. Your child will create a garland with responses to their reflections about themselves.

MATERIALS: Colored pencils/crayons/markers, index cards, single hole punch, about 60” of yarn or ribbon.

HOW: Ask your child to reflect on the following: What are my best qualities? What qualities can I cultivate to be kinder? How can I contribute to a kinder world? Then ask them to write one quality per card and decorate each card. When they finish, punch a hole in the ends of each card and help them thread them together to make a garland. Help your child hang their garland in their room or any visible part of their home as a visual reminder of their thoughts about kindness.
ACTIVITY 2: Leaders Help Others Feel Included

WHY: This activity will help your child to think about what being a leader means and how being a leader contributes to being a kind person. Helping your child develop leadership skills and think about kids who might be left out at school can help them to be kinder to others.

MATERIALS: None

HOW: Talk with your child about leadership qualities and help them reflect on the ones they possess. Ask: What qualities does a good leader have? What leadership qualities do you have? Then, ask them to name someone in school who seems lonely or who does not seem to have friends. Ask them to think of ways or actions they can take to help that person feel included. Together, make an execution plan and follow up.
ACTIVITY 3: Compliments Rock!

WHY: This activity will help your child to understand how small acts of kindness can make a big impact on someone else's day. Kindness is contagious. Showing kindness to others actually makes us happier and kinder.

MATERIALS: 3 small rocks

HOW: Explain to your child that noticing something positive about someone else and saying it with a compliment is a simple act of kindness that can be practiced anywhere. Ask your child to place 3 small rocks in their pocket and explain that each rock stands for a compliment. Continue by saying that every time they give a compliment to anyone at home that day, they will take a rock out of their pocket and put it in their other pocket. Explain that this is to keep track of their compliments. Once your child has practiced giving 3 compliments at home, encourage them to do this exercise outside the home (extended family, school community, etc.) the following day.
ACTIVITY 1: Focus on The Good Through Gratitude

WHY: In this activity, your child will think about things in their lives they are grateful for. They will reflect on why they are grateful. Practicing gratitude makes us happier. By focusing on the positive things in our lives, we are more likely to have a positive mindset.

MATERIALS: Paper and pencil

HOW: Ask your child to name three things (1 person, 1 activity, and 1 place or thing) that they love or enjoy, give them joy, purpose, or makes them proud. Then, ask them to elaborate on why they chose each one and how each one makes them feel. Ask them to write a gratitude note to the person they named, giving thanks for something specific they did and/or qualities they possess.
ACTIVITY 2: Calming Our Minds with Happy Meditation

WHY: Mindfulness and meditation are useful skills to help us cope with our emotions and to learn to be in the present moment. Mindful people tend to have less anxiety and are generally happier people.

MATERIALS: Plastic water bottle filled with water (label removed) and about .35 oz of chunky/flakes glitter, closed tight.

HOW: Ask your child to sit with you on the floor cross-legged. Explain that the water in the bottle symbolizes our mind and the glitter, our thoughts. Ask them to think of a word that makes them feel happy. Shake the bottle and place it upright, on the floor, in front of your child. Then, ask them to breathe in deeply filling up their tummies like a balloon, smile as they exhale and say their happy word calmly (in their head or out loud). Repeat until all the glitter settles down to the bottom, smile and give each other a hug before getting up.