



MAKE YOUR DAY

A SCHOOL-WIDE CITIZENSHIP PROGRAM THAT ALLOWS
TEACHERS TO TEACH AND ALLOWS STUDENTS TO LEARN

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Earl's Corner

Supporting Paraprofessionals in Make Your Day

Make Your Day would not exist were it not for the contributions of several paraprofessionals twenty-five years ago. Most of our paraprofessionals are underpaid and undertitled. It was important in my classroom that my kids saw all adults in the same light. We were careful not to undermine each other's authority. This required trust and communication.

Schools utilizing the program through the years have found that the highest degree of success has come when all adults on campus buy into and utilize both the philosophy and language of Make Your Day. Teachers own the structure of their classroom and paraprofessionals should, likewise, own their structure for the areas they supervise. This requires that those paraprofessionals are instrumental in creating that structure. It is the obligation of the teachers and the administration to see to it that their paraprofessionals receive full training in Make Your Day. If issues arise that involve a paraprofessional and students, it is best to err on the side of the paraprofessional. A teacher who might disagree with the decision of a paraprofessional should meet privately with that individual and not appear to take issue in front of the student. If we treat the paraprofessionals as professionals, we will achieve a higher level of understanding and compliance.

When paraprofessionals assist teachers in a classroom it is important to establish that the paraprofessional and teacher have equal credibility. Students should view any responsible adult in the classroom as an authority. Paraprofessionals should have representation on school-wide committees as an equal. Paraprofessionals who struggle with Make Your Day should be offered support and training. The unique

perspective that the paraprofessionals offer may represent the greatest **adult** view of the system. Many of these individuals live in the community and are parents of some of our kids. They can be the supportive, informational conduit with the parent community.

The physical safety of our students should be our number one concern. Students who don't feel physically safe are not likely to perform well academically. The paraprofessionals generally oversee that domain. Students who do not feel physically safe are not likely to feel emotionally safe, either. Thus, the paraprofessionals impact all aspects of Make Your Day.

In April, I will present a list of characteristics that appear in Make Your Day discipline models and a different set of characteristics that exist when citizenship is the focus.

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Concerns: Demonstrating positive citizenship through both concerns and compliments

An Approach Shared by Mrs. Rohr at Keithley Middle School

Here is something we do during concerns that is really working well. I think it fits into the citizenship philosophy of the program very nicely.

Instead of saying "get ready for concerns"
I say "get ready for "concerns and compliments."

Students have the option of verbalizing a compliment in the same manner as a concern, except there is no response or points awarded. For example, "Julie you helped my learning by checking my spelling. Thank you, I appreciate that."

Points are not awarded and there is a limit of one compliment per student.

Students are not allowed to repeatedly compliment their friends. I have not had a problem with this at all, and students look forward to doing things for each other more, in order to get a compliment, and, they like listening to a compliment. Also, the negativity of concerns is now balanced better with the addition of compliments. I get about one compliment per class period about every other day or so.

A couple of things to think about if you incorporate this...

Thank you for sharing your tip about incorporating compliments into concerns. Many students do need instruction in complimenting others and it's important to provide instruction and practice for them daily. Philosophically, here are some ideas we should all think about if we use this approach.

The importance of reminding students that compliments and concerns are both intended to be a positive experience cannot be understated. Compliments should be spontaneous. If, however, a focus is needed because compliments don't appear spontaneously this approach helps students learn the skill of giving and accepting compliments. Concerns are a vehicle for helping each other meet one's personal best and compliments are a vehicle for validating the efforts that have been made on each other's behalf.

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From the Students' Point of View

Fifth grade students at Indian Bend Elementary School in Arizona were asked for input on the "School-Home Communication" (I Didn't Make My Day) form. Many students avoid being entirely honest with their points because they are afraid of the consequences at home when they don't make their day once in a while. The students understand that consequences at home are a result of their parents wanting them to learn how to become responsible adults, but feel they might benefit more from ideas and

discussion about how to solve the issues. The following are a couple of suggestions from this group of 5th graders in order to help their parents understand that it's simply a communication that their child needs help with some little problems before they become big problems.

- ♦ Add an informational line at the bottom that states "This does not go on your child's permanent record."
- ♦ In order to make it less official looking, use a paper color that catches parents' attention (such as purple or pink), but doesn't indicate that not making one's day is not as serious as step 4s or suspensions.

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Substitute Tip

Honey Levin, a substitute for Paradise Valley School District in Arizona, has developed the following strategy for students who have concerns. As you know, even substitutes trained in MYD usually do points without concerns. This leaves many students feeling frustrated. Ms. Levin explains to students that she is unable to do concerns because she doesn't know the students well enough to do this part of MYD. If students have a concern that cannot wait or will interfere with their ability to focus she will facilitate privately a concern between the two students at a later time. It will not effect points, but it allows students to address concerns with each other.

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Bullying Prevention & Make Your Day

Make Your Day provides a schoolwide, consistent approach that dovetails with bullying prevention curricula. Effective anti-bullying programs need a schoolwide approach, common language, opportunities to practice effective skills, and a series of consequences that address bullying behaviors. Make Your Day provides these components, but it is critical that the staff addresses bullying as a specific issue teaching students skills such as what constitutes bullying, how to let adults know that bullying is occurring and specific vocabulary related to bullying. Many

teachers already address bullying through the opportunities provided during points and concerns. For those teachers who are unfamiliar with how to address bullying or already have a very full plate, there are many research-based curricula that provide training and materials that specifically address bullying prevention.

Schools in the greater Phoenix area have an opportunity to receive free bully prevention training through a grant funded by The Greater Phoenix Child Abuse Prevention Council. (2711 E. Roosevelt, Phoenix, AZ 85008) Contact Lynne Marion at 480 664-8952 for further information and scheduling.

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