

ReACT: Positive Family Sayings Lesson Plan

Participants: Students (intermediate to secondary)

Purpose: To build positive student-teacher relationships, connect behavior expectations between school and home/community, and provide effective language for teaching expectations, responding to unwanted behavior, and precorrecting for desired behavior.

Preparation: Make sure you have taught and practiced school-wide behavior expectations.

Time: 20 minutes

Materials needed: positive family sayings worksheet (see p. 3)

Steps:

1. Consider notifying parents/caregivers using email/class newsletter (see p. 4) to invite their participation and engagement in advance of teaching this lesson.
2. State the lesson rationale. Say, *“Today, we are going to be thinking about something called positive family sayings. Positive family sayings are quotes, mottos, or advice that a family member or someone you respect shares repeatedly to encourage your good behavior or guide you in how to do right or act responsibly.”*
3. Share a positive saying from your family when you were growing up (e.g., treat others like you want to be treated) and tell a personal family story about the saying. Provide multiple examples, including a saying from a non-family member to model for students who can’t think of a saying from home. For example: *“In my family growing up, my mother always told me the Golden Rule: Treat others like you would want to be treated. She always told me that when I get into fights with my sister or friends. I can still hear her voice telling me that, and it’s something I try to live by now too. But outside of my family, my soccer coach had this saying, “The harder you work, the luckier you’ll be.”*
4. Introduce the worksheet. Say, *“Now it’s your turn to write down a positive family saying, or just a favorite saying that helps you do the right thing. Use the worksheet to think of one and how it’s been used. If you get stuck, please call me over.”* Provide time for students to complete the sheet. Circulate around the room to help students complete it. Review student sayings, to shape and identify students to share theirs (at the next step). Alternatively, you could pose the questions to the whole class for discussion or share with an elbow partner. If students can’t think of one, you could ask them to share a positive family value, a saying from a respected adult (e.g., coach, community member, pastor), or even a quote from a song or a close friend.

5. Ask some students to share their positive family sayings. Call on students who wrote positive examples on their worksheets. When students share theirs, positively reframe as needed and connect the sayings to the school-wide expectations by identifying (or asking) which expectation it best falls under.
6. Collect the sheets.
7. Surprise students by putting the sayings up around the classroom for them to see when they next come in.

Note on requesting personal information: By asking students to share personal information about their home lives or experiences with caregivers, there is a possibility they may disclose information about their safety or well-being (e.g., sayings referencing physical harm). If a student shares a family saying that raises concerns for you, it is important to address it with the student or consider recruiting additional support (e.g., counselor) to ensure the student is not experiencing any type of reportable abuse or neglect. Alternatively, a student may just need some additional coaching to focus on positive family sayings that would not be perceived by others as pejorative or demeaning.

Following on:

- Refer to the positive family sayings regularly throughout the day for behavior support.
 - Class-wide: use a variety of sayings, with more attention to sayings from families of underrepresented cultures.
 - Individual: use that student's positive family sayings (be sure to use it in an encouraging tone).

Alternatives:

- Use the worksheet as a one-on-one interview activity with students.
- Have students make and decorate their own family sayings posters to put on the walls.

(Adapted from Hammond, Z. 2015. *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain*. Corwin)

SAMPLE POSITIVE FAMILY SAYINGS WORKSHEET

POSITIVE FAMILY SAYINGS

My name: _____

What is a saying, motto, or advice about life that is often said in your family or by someone else you respect to encourage good behavior?

What does it mean in your own words?

Who likes to say it?

When do they say it?

Do you like it?

Which of our school-wide behavior expectations does it go with?

SAMPLE POSITIVE FAMILY SAYINGS INFO TO SEND TO PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

Dear Parents/caregivers:

At [school name], we want to bring our students' experiences from their homes and communities to enhance our school practices and routines.

On [date], we will complete an activity on **Positive Family Sayings**. Positive family sayings are quotes, mottos, or advice that you might use at home to encourage positive behavior or to guide them to do right or act responsibly.

Here are some examples of Positive Family Sayings:

"Treat others like you would want to be treated."

"Never give up on things that make you smile."



It would be great if you could support our upcoming lesson! One way to this would be to think of a positive family saying(s) you say to your child. Next, tell your child the meaning or story behind it. For example, where did it come from, or why does it matter to you?

During the lesson, I will be asking students to share a positive family saying with the rest of the class. We will refer to these sayings during the rest of the school year to help support positive behaviors that draw upon your family's wisdom.

Please let me know if you have any questions about the lesson. I look forward to continuing to learn from you and your student this year!

Thanks!

[Educator's name]