



I'm Thumbbody

is a self-esteem program for second grade students. The idea behind the program is that children are so special that they have their own fingerprints which are different from everyone else's. Themes include respect for self, respect for others, responsibility for behavior, and knowledge of sources of safe help. These concepts also important for bully prevention.

A trained volunteer introduces the idea of uniqueness and describes the concept of good mental health. The children listen as the volunteer reads a poem about the value of differences. An interactive activity called the "clothes game" follows. The presenter shows the children 'dirty' laundry in the form of five small felt garments with negative statements written on them. After discussing them, the children participate in 'washing' the clothes and hang the clothes to dry on an old-fashioned clothesline. The presenter and class discuss the five positive thoughts that replace the negative ones. Students are encouraged to recognize their individual differences and abilities and realize that they have the power to change negative thoughts into positive ones.

At the conclusion of the clothesline game, children sometimes watch a short video/DVD entitled "Everybody's Different" that documents elementary schoolchildren engaged in school activities who share their feelings about their similarities, differences, and abilities. The children are taught to recognize the positive value of their differences. If the DVD is not used, children learn that it's good to have full 'buckets' and that they can fill their own buckets or those of others with kindness, encouragement, smiles, and positive thoughts. If time remains, the presenter explains that it's good to be a bucket filler instead of a bucket dipper based on the book, Have you Filled a Bucket Today? by Carol Roth.

Each student receives a bookmark with a copy of the *Thumbbody* poem, a *Thumbbody* sticker to wear proudly, and a *Thumbbody* pledge card to encourage respect for others and self-control. Children also take home Tips for Parents containing ideas about ways to improve communication and develop responsibility in children. Classroom teachers receive an activity packet with ideas to reinforce the main points of the program. Also, the presenter leaves an "I'm Thumbbody" poster to be hung in the classroom as an ongoing reminder of the program's theme. The children are also taught that a "thumbs up" not only means that a job was well-done, but also it is a reminder that they are *Thumbbody* special.

If you would like additional information about the program, please contact the Mental Health Association of Southeast Florida at 954 746-2055, extension 104.