



What We Can Continue to Learn from Fred Rogers



A Tribute to Fred Rogers -- and You



March 20 would be Fred Rogers' 88th birthday, and I wanted to celebrate his life by sharing with you the tribute video that PBS produced shortly after his death in 2003.

As I listened to the words "Feels Like Home to Me" on the song they chose, I thought about how much we all have learned from Fred about the simple, everyday, ordinary things that make a place "feel like home" -- warm and welcoming, safe and secure.

Fred greeted us every day on *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* in a place that looked like home. In fact, Fred referred to it as his “television house.” But it wasn’t just the rooms and the furniture that made it feel like home. It was a place where there was a predictable routine; where people cared about you “just because you’re you”; where it was okay to be sad or mad or scared; where people helped you deal with those feelings in a constructive way; and where people celebrated the little and big things that you do. And there was something in his eyes....and something in his voice.



When someone turned the spotlight on Fred, he always turned it around and made it shine on others. So as a nod to Fred, I am turning the spotlight back to shine on you. You, too, make a lasting impact on the children and their families because there are things about your care...your eyes and your voice...that make it “feel like home.” And what a wonderful environment for children to grow and learn.

There’s something in your eyes...

- when your eyes have a warm welcoming look that lets each child know “I’m glad you’re here”;
- when your eyes say to a grownup who has a child in your care, “I know

you're doing the best you can";

- when your eyes tell a child, "I'm really interested in what you're doing";
- when your eyes convey empathy as you listen to a child's or parent's concerns;
- when your eyes light up to let a child know you noticed that moment of finding self-control or sharing or helping another child.

There's something in your voice...

- when your voice sounds like it's really fun to sing together (whether or not you can carry a tune);
- when your voice sounds firm, but kind, to help a child stay in control;
- when your voice joins in a delightful laugh with a child;
- when your voice lets children know you love reading to them as you open a book at circle time;
- when your voice is respectful and caring when a child or parent shares a concern;
- when your voice is silent and you don't say anything at all, but really listen when children or their family tell you about something, whether it's a big thing or a little thing.

Thanks for all you do for and behalf of children...and thanks for being our neighbor.



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P.S. I recently learned the sad news that one of our great early childhood leaders

Bev Bos died. Every year at the NAEYC annual conference, her workshop was a place “like home” where I found nurturing and nourishment. With her eyes and her voice, she reminded us about what’s really important in working with children. And I thought of her as I was writing this, especially about the way she talked and sang about greeting every child, every day, with the kind of welcome that says, “I’m glad you’re here.”

Timeless Wisdom from Fred Rogers



"I believe that by the time a child grows up, that child's first teacher and second teacher and all the child's important adults will have become incorporated into that child's development. That's the way it is with all children, and although they might not remember clearly, those of us who were the educators of their early lives will always be a part of who they are. Just like those who meant so much to us when we were children will always be part of who we are."

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