

November 2017

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What We Can Continue to Learn from Fred Rogers



Food for Thought -- and Nourishment



With all the emphasis on food at Thanksgiving, I thought you'd appreciate seeing one of our favorite moments when Fred talked about nourishment. He began with a focus on food, but then he went on to talk about other different kinds of nourishment -- the kind that we all need.

I wonder if you ever thought about your work in that way -- as providing "nourishment" -- and not just through the breakfasts, snacks, and/or lunches.

Whether you work with infants, toddlers or preschoolers, I hope you know that what you offer through your day-to-day care is helping them thrive -- and I hope you feel proud of that.



Here are some ways that your work reminds me of Fred's message on the video:

You're nourishing a sense of trust.

With your constant and consistent care, you're helping children with the most basic thing of all -- trust in the world as a safe place. You're the stepping stone from the family to the outside world. When children don't trust, they tend to shut down -- or fight -- because to them, the world feels like a scary place. When you build their trust and help them feel safe, they are more likely to have an open mind and an open heart.

You're nourishing school readiness.

With your warm relationship and your understanding of children's needs and concerns, you're helping children develop the most essential skills for school -- emotional and social skills. All day long you're helping children develop a sense of:

- “I can do things.” (initiative, competency and confidence);
- “I can find healthy ways to express my anger...frustration...disappointment.” (emotional self-regulation);
- “I can control myself and my body.” (self-control);
- “I can get along with other children.” (sharing, empathy, conflict resolution);
- “I can listen...pay attention...follow directions.” (focus);
- “I can deal with mistakes and keep on trying.” (persistence).

We all know those skills don't develop magically -- they grow out of the day-to-day interactions with you and with the other significant adults in children's lives.

You're nourishing parents.

When you take a moment to tell parents something positive about their child, you're nourishing the parents, too. That's why it's so important to say something kind or thoughtful or fun that you noticed about their child...or to tell them their child made progress that day using words instead of hitting. You help parents feel good about themselves when you help them feel good about their children. And as Fred often said, “Strengthen a parent and you strengthen a child.”

So at this Thanksgiving time, I hope you know that, whether they tell you or not, there are many people who are thankful for the many ways you nourish the children in your care. I know that it takes a lot of physical and emotional energy to be constantly giving, and I hope you will take good care of yourself -- the children need you...the families need you...we all need you!

Thank you for being our neighbor,



Hedda Sharapan

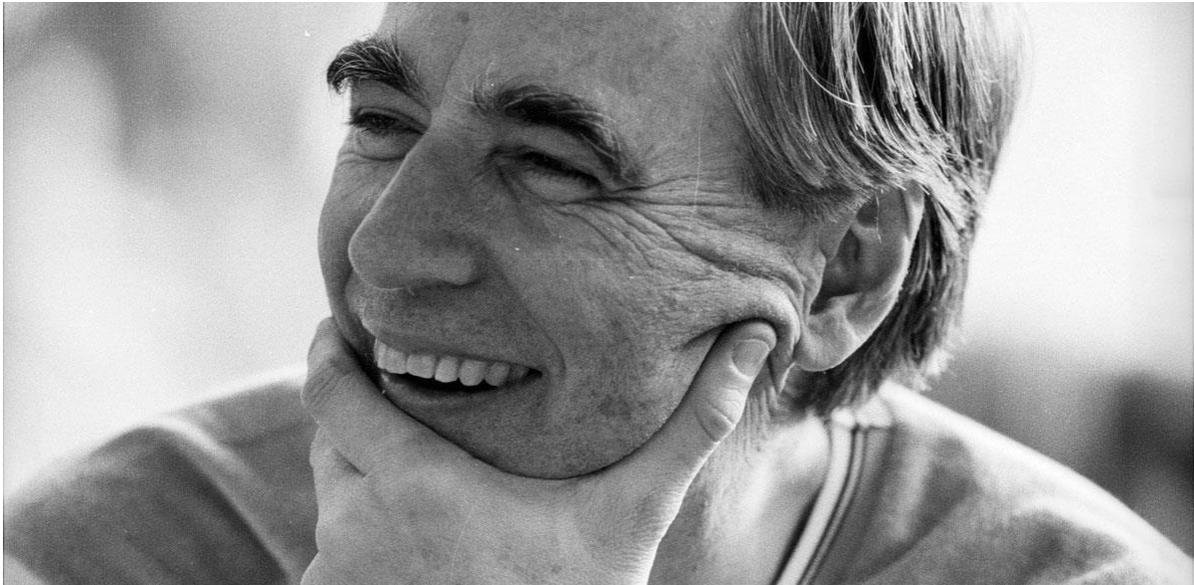
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P.S. Since we're talking about nourishment, I hope you find this newsletter nourishing for your work with the children in your care. I have heard that from many of you over the years, and I thank you for your feedback. I always love to hear from you.

Timeless Wisdom from Fred Rogers



"Those of us who are in this world to educate – to care for – young children have a special calling: a calling which has very little to do with the collection of

expensive possessions, but has a lot to do with the worth inside of heads and hearts. In fact, that's our domain: the heads and hearts of the next generation...the thoughts and feelings of the future."

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