

## SIMPLY POSITIVE & POSITIVELY SIMPLE

By Carol McCloud

As our team travels around the country meeting wonderful people and introducing bucket filling, we are often asked to share ideas that work best for teaching bucket filling. Our answer usually includes, "Keep it simple and keep it positive."

**Keep it Simple.** I don't know a teacher or parent who wants more work to do. While teaching children how to fill buckets with appreciation or compliments is an important lesson, you can do this without a lot of extra work. Rather than spending hours making sure that each student gets as many bucketfilling notes as the other students or creating a competition or a popularity contest, I would suggest that you teach a simple lesson on how to give compliments. You could draw a large bucket on a sheet of paper, have your students write their names on their buckets and pass them around for their classmates to add a compliment.



**Keep it Positive.** I like the idea of a classroom bucket to recognize bucket filling. Add a pom-pom to the classroom bucket for each act of bucket filling. Even the front office, lunch room, etc. can have a bucket for recognizing acts of kindness and good manners. This works well and gives positive, immediate, concrete recognition.

I have heard that, in some instances, teacher take pom-poms out of their classroom bucket when any bucket dipping occurs. This could send a confusing message because that pom-pom represented a bucketfilling act that is now cancelled. An act of kindness can never be taken away. While I would address the poor choice or negative behavior, I would not recommend removing a pom-pom from the class bucket.

**Simply Positive.** One of the most simple and effective programs that I've personally seen at a bucketfilling school was at Hollis elementary in Braintree, Massachusetts. Principal Tim McDonald purchased buckets and pom-poms for his staff. A pom-pom is added to a classroom bucket each time a staff person or student witnesses bucket filling.

At the school's monthly assembly, a student from each classroom pours their classroom bucket pom-poms into a large container, which represents the school-wide bucket. Hollis Elementary uses a 5' tall x 10" diameter clear cylinder which is mounted on a square base. A measurement for each month is recorded on the cylinder. The competition is positive, simple, and fun. Each month the students and teachers eagerly wait to learn whether their school has done more acts of kindness than a prior month.

It has all the elements of a successful program. It's fun. It's simple. It's positive. It's positively contagious. ***It's working.***

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