

Unique YOU

Program Description- I'm special is an evidence-based substance abuse prevention program that helps children realize their specialness. Positive self-esteem is critical to the development of a healthy individual. The importance of a child's self-esteem is reflected in I'm Special through the process of questions, exercises, and session goals. Research and literature in the field of education and child development overwhelmingly demonstrates the connection between self-esteem, academic performance, and the formation of healthy beliefs, living skills and over all basic happiness. Students become more aware of their feelings and learn positive ways to deal with them. They also develop greater sensitivity to others' feelings. Students learn cooperation, teamwork, how to make wise decisions, say "no" and solve problems. This course is offered with the research-based knowledge that children learn more easily and are less likely to use drugs when their self-esteem is high. Classrooms that promote cooperation and communication help children raise their self-esteem. I'm special is designed to make a good classroom better.

Program Requirements-

Time: 8 (45-60 minute) sessions are required, one per week for 8 weeks (preferred program delivery method)

**2 sessions per week is also offered but students must have ample time between sessions for processing*

Grades: 3rd and 4th

Participants: Single class setting including all students

Commitment: Educators would be responsible for creating a classroom community which fosters the development of self-worth and respect for others, through adults modeling their own healthy self-esteem, through effective communication and discipline skills. As well as, through policies which say to children "we think you are important" and providing time for experiential learning. In I'm special parent involvement is a key component. The effectiveness of school-based programs alone, no matter how comprehensive they may be, is diminished when parents are not able to reinforce the content and utilize prevention strategies in the family. Parents are encourage to attend a session when convenient as well as encourage students to talk to their family members at home after each session about the activities they have experienced and to share the worksheets at home. A pre and post test is also required in the first and last sessions. Teachers would need to provide instructors extra time or have the tests done on their own classroom time and handed in to the instructor.

Objective-

The aim of I'm special is to help students become more clear about their own personal needs and develop skills to fulfill them in non-self-destructive and non-socially-destructive ways.