

# LET'S BE AWARE EVERY DAY!



A-B-C-1-2-3 HEALTHY KIDS IN TENNESSEE:  
*LET'S EAT WELL, PLAY, AND  
BE AWARE EVERY DAY*

**AWARENESS ACTIVITY GUIDEBOOK**

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### Awareness Activities:

- **Respect, Compassion, and Treating Others Well**

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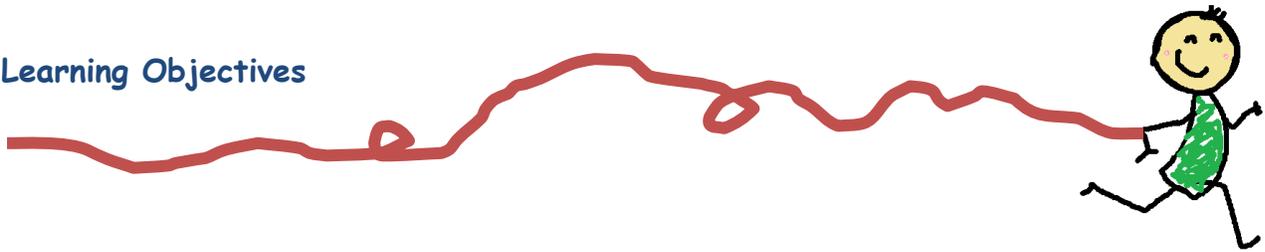
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Wrap up the day's activities with a book that promotes compassion, respect, and treating others well. Ask children questions about the storybook characters and/or act out sections of the book. Discuss the importance of why each is an important trait that children should have at the end of each book. Read a book about smoking and how it isn't healthy, and reinforce concepts learned as part of classroom activities that are also highlighted in the books.



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## Learning Objectives



The Awareness module of the A-B-C-1-2-3 Healthy Kids in Tennessee: Let's Eat Well, Play, and Be Aware Every Day program focuses on three components:

- Being aware of how we treat ourselves and others, through compassion and respect, and treating ourselves and others well
- Awareness of signs and symptoms of childhood cancer (this is for parents only)
- Tobacco use and avoidance of secondhand smoke

By participating in the suggested Awareness activities for A-B-C- 1-2-3 Healthy Kids in Tennessee: Let's Eat Well, Play, and Be Aware Every Day, children will

- learn about compassion and respect, and treating ourselves and others well by listening to *Zink the Zebra: A Special Tale* and participating in selected activities; and
- be able to understand the health risks of cigarettes and secondhand smoke.

By participating in the Awareness activities, parents, caregivers, and childcare teachers and staff will

- explore *Zink the Zebra* activities that can be done with children at home,
- have an increased awareness of childhood cancer and possible signs for which they should be alert, and
- learn about the dangers of tobacco and secondhand smoke.

## About Respect, Compassion, and Treating Ourselves and Others Well

Physical health is only one dimension of being well. Our interpersonal relationships and how we treat ourselves and others is another element of wellness that is crucial to good health. Although childhood cancer is discussed in this Awareness learning module as primarily an issue for parents, caregivers, childcare teachers, and staff, and not children, there are still good opportunities to teach children

other valuable lessons. Children with cancer may see themselves as "different." Children with different eye color or hair may see themselves as "different." Children who like broccoli may see themselves as different than those who don't like broccoli! Using the activities in this kit, while parents learn about the signs and symptoms of childhood cancer, children learn the universal lessons of compassion, respect, and treating ourselves and others well despite whatever differences we all have.

### About Childhood Cancer

One would be hard pressed to find someone who has not been directly or indirectly touched by some form of cancer. Raising awareness of all cancers will help save lives. Childhood cancer is rare<sup>1</sup>. It is not common<sup>2</sup>. All parents and caregivers, however, should know the signs and symptoms of childhood cancer, because it does happen. As a parent or teacher, being aware of possible signs and symptoms can result in a faster diagnosis.

This module includes information that can be shared with parents on the signs and symptoms of childhood cancer. Activities for children in the classroom do not focus on cancer but center around *Zink the Zebra: A Special Tale*, a story written by Kelly Weil when she was eleven years old and undergoing treatment for cancer<sup>3</sup>. The Zink story is not about cancer, and **cancer should not be mentioned in the classroom**. However, Kelly Weil wrote *Zink* because she felt alone and different. *Zink* teaches lessons about respect, compassion, and embracing our differences: universal lessons all children can learn.

The materials provided in Section II of this kit, "Power Point Presentations/ Training Materials," provide detailed information on childhood cancer and its signs and symptoms.

### About Tobacco and Secondhand Smoke

Cigarette smoking is the leading preventable cause of death in the U.S.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps more important with the preschool population is the issue of secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke is a concern and has been identified by the Office of the United States Surgeon General as a "serious health hazard." Since the first report in 1986, which marked the first time any major public health agency determined

secondhand smoke to be a cause of death and disease, the Surgeon General has released several reports with compelling findings on tobacco and secondhand smoke.

In a 2006 report, "The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke," Surgeon General Richard Carmona wrote "The scientific evidence is now indisputable: secondhand smoke is not a mere annoyance. It is a serious health hazard that can lead to disease and premature death in children and nonsmoking adults. Smoke-free indoor environments are proven, simple approaches that prevent exposure and harm."<sup>5</sup> The report concludes that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke and that ventilation cannot eliminate the exposure of nonsmokers to secondhand smoke. It was NOT determined that eliminating smoking in indoor spaces fully protects nonsmokers from exposure to secondhand smoke. The 2010 U.S. Surgeon General's Report, "How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease," has compelling findings as well. This report confirms that even occasional exposure to secondhand smoke is harmful and that low levels of exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke leads to a rapid and sharp increase in dysfunction and inflammation of the lining of the blood vessels, conditions which are implicated in heart attacks and stroke.<sup>6</sup>

For preschool children, secondhand smoke exposure is a pressing concern, as the health consequences can be serious. The American Association of Pediatrics (AAP) indicates that children exposed to secondhand smoke have increased risk of asthma, respiratory infections, decreased lung growth and exercise tolerance, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).<sup>7</sup> AAP also notes that smoking by parents or primary caregivers in the home is the primary source of exposure for children below school age, with exposure being worse for younger children since they spend more time close to parents and have still-developing lungs. When parents smoke, medical expenditures are higher and the likelihood that children will become smokers increases. Secondhand smoke disproportionately affects low-income and minority children and families, according to AAP.<sup>7</sup>

For parents and caregivers who smoke, help is available. The Tennessee Tobacco Quitline offers free counseling and support at 1-800-QUIT-NOW.<sup>8</sup> A portion of the "Awareness" take-home materials in this kit are provided by the Tennessee

Tobacco Quitline to support and educate families and caregivers about secondhand smoke and provide resources to help smokers quit.

Educating children about the dangers of secondhand smoke as well as active smoking, which may be a concern as they become adolescents, is essential. Parents, caregivers, and teachers should be educated on this important issue. The materials provided in Section II "Power Point Presentations/Training Materials" of this kit, provide additional information on tobacco and secondhand smoke to educate childcare providers and teachers on these important health concerns.

By using innovative and age-appropriate educational messages and activities that capture the attention of children and parents and that are both easy to understand and are integrated into regular routines through fun, experiential learning opportunities, we can successfully teach children about respect, compassion, and treating ourselves and others well, as well as the dangers of tobacco and secondhand smoke.



### How to Use This Guidebook

The Awareness component of the A-B-C-1-2-3 program is different from the other modules in that activities are not done daily during the 12-week program but are done as part of one week selected by individual childcare providers and teachers. Also, it is the only one of the three modules that has a focus unique to parents—the childhood cancer component. Childcare providers and teachers should choose one week out of the 12-week program in which to implement the activities for this

module and distribute parent and caregiver materials relative to childhood cancer at the end of the week in which this module is completed. Tobacco-related materials may be distributed throughout the program over the 12-week period similar to those in the other modules.

The activities in this portion of the program use a combination of music, math, art, and science to teach children about compassion, respect, and treating ourselves and others well and about the dangers of secondhand smoke and tobacco—in a fun and interactive way.

## **Key Points for Childcare Providers**

### **Childhood Cancer**

- Information specific to childhood cancer is provided to parents and caregivers only; cancer is not discussed in the classroom.
- Childhood cancer is rare, but it does happen.
- Early detection can mean a quicker diagnosis, so it is important for parents and caregivers to be aware of the signs and symptoms of childhood cancer.
- Children can be taught about compassion, respect, and treating ourselves and others well and that we may be different on the outside, but we are all the same on the inside.



### **Tobacco and Secondhand Smoke**

- Secondhand smoke has been called a “serious health hazard” by the United States Surgeon General.
- There is no safe amount of secondhand smoke; even small amounts can be harmful to children.
- The American Association of Pediatrics (AAP) indicates that children exposed to secondhand smoke have increased risk of asthma, respiratory infections, decreased lung growth and exercise tolerance, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

- Smoking by parents or primary caregivers in the home is the primary source of exposure for children below school age. Exposure is worse for younger children since they spend more time close to parents and have still-developing lungs.
- Instead of trying to determine how much secondhand smoke children can handle, it should be avoided at all possible costs.
- Help is available for smokers through the Tennessee Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

## Key Points for Children

### Respect, Compassion, and Treating Ourselves and Others Well

- We all may be different on the outside, but we are the same on the inside.
- We are all more the same than different.
- We all want to feel special.
- We all have different abilities, looks, and feelings that make each one of us very special.
- There are kind things that we can do to help our friends feel better when they are feeling different.
- We can include lots of different people in our everyday lives.
- We should treat ourselves and others well and with compassion and respect.



### Tobacco and Secondhand Smoke

- Cigarettes are made from tobacco plants.
- Tobacco is harmful to lots of different body parts that affect the way we live and breathe and the way the body works.
- Being around cigarette smoke makes it harder for us to breathe.
- Smoke from someone else's cigarette—secondhand smoke—can make us sick.



- We may see people smoking on television, in magazine pictures, and on signs that we see while driving, but smoking is still not good for us.
- Staying away from secondhand smoke at all times will allow us to save ourselves from the harmful side effects that it causes.



It is recommended that each class **choose one week out of the 12-week program** to implement activities focusing on compassion, respect, treating ourselves and others well, and secondhand smoke.

Materials focusing on **childhood cancer** should be distributed at the end of the week, when awareness activities in the classroom are completed.

Take-home materials emphasizing **tobacco and secondhand smoke** may be sent home for parents and caregivers throughout the duration of the twelve-week program.

Childcare providers are encouraged to incorporate discussion and review of the concepts from *Zink the Zebra* and the tobacco and secondhand smoke materials and activities into all classroom activities, in addition to those detailed in this kit.

The information included in the program and related materials are not designed to replace medical advice by a trained health care or dietary professional. Parents and guardians of children with special medical or nutritional needs should work with their health care provider to determine what guidelines they should follow.

# Respect, Compassion, and Treating Others Well

## Classroom Activities



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With the Zink the Zebra program, children can develop a greater awareness that our *differences* are what make us *special*. Concepts introduced include respect, compassion, and acceptance. It is best to complete these activities in the classroom within one week.



Materials include

- a. Zink classroom curriculum for teachers/children, Lessons 1-4, and
- b. Zink take-home activities for parents/children, found in Section VII of this kit, "Take-Home Materials."

## *Zink the Zebra*

The *Zink the Zebra* educational program has been designed as a series of dynamic, age-specific classroom education modules. A team of educators, guidance counselors, psychologists, and social workers has contributed to the development of these modules. Each unit is designed to capture the attention of students with an entertaining and upbeat format tailored to the interests and the developmental skill of its target audience.



The *Zink the Zebra: A Special Tale* storybook is used as a central component of many of the lessons. This story is about a zebra named Zink who looks different from the other zebras because she has spots instead of stripes. But in her heart Zink is just another zebra with all the hopes and hurts, wants and needs, dreams and fears of any other zebra . . . or child.

The preschool unit is designed to sensitize students to the needs of children with differences. This is done through a series of activities that emphasize that we all are special, and therefore we all have differences that make us unique. Through these lessons the students should learn that

- we are all more the same than different;
- we all want to feel special;
- we all have different abilities, looks and feelings that make each one of us very special;
- there are kind things that we can do to help our friends feel better when they are feeling different; and
- we can include lots of different people in our everyday lives.

Please accept our sincere gratitude for your commitment to teach children about understanding, respect, compassion, and acceptance. Because of your dedication, many children will grow up with the knowledge that being different is not only okay but also is what makes all of us so special.

*The Zink the Zebra Foundation Inc., Health Education Center of Wisconsin, Education Committee*

## Lesson 1

## Meeting Zink the Zebra

### Overview

This lesson is intended to familiarize children with the characters of the story and the theme behind the story: being different or special yet being accepted for who you are. The story, *Zink the Zebra: A Special Tale*, is about a zebra with spots instead of stripes. The story explores the feelings Zink has about being different and how she learns to embrace her uniqueness as part of who she is. The teacher uses *Zink the Zebra: A Special Tale* to help young children see that each one of us is unique in some special way. This lesson is designed to be a fun and animated introduction to the *Zink the Zebra* preschool program.



### Objectives

The children should

- become aware of the *Zink the Zebra* characters and their differences,
- relate how the characters are similar and different from one another,
- celebrate that differences are what make each of us special, and
- learn the "I Am Special" song.

### Materials

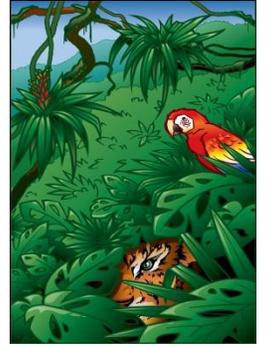
*Zink the Zebra: A Special Tale* Storybook (electronic copy provided)

Toy Zebra with Spots (if available)

Toy Zebra with Stripes (if available)

"I Am Special" song (provided)

## Activities



1. Introduce the characters of the *Zink the Zebra: A Special Tale* storybook in a puppet show or a play format following the story in the book. Using characters or the puppets is a safe and comfortable way to introduce the topic of differences to this age group.
2. Engage the children in the activities of either the play or puppet show. They will share their knowledge of support and caring through their interactions as the program develops. You may want to create stick puppets using pictures of animals that you paste on wood sticks.
3. Use pictures from the *Zink* story to help the children identify how the two zebras are the same and how they are different. Ask the children to note similarities and differences. For example: both zebras have four legs, two eyes, and a tail. Also, one zebra has spots, while the other zebra has stripes.
4. Initiate discussion about being different and the same.
  - The teacher will emphasize that being different is neither good nor bad, just different. *We are all special.*
  - What would it be like if every person were exactly the same? How would we tell each other apart if we all had the exact same face?
  - It is great that we are all different! The teacher will emphasize that this makes each of us a special person.
  - Use examples such as hair color, gender, and clothing type to demonstrate same versus different concepts.
  - Discuss feelings, wishes, joys, and dreams that make us the same and different.
5. Learn the "I Am Special" song. This song is to help celebrate that we are each special individuals.

The Lessons to Be Learned from *Zink the Zebra*:

1. We are all more the same than different.
2. We all want to feel special.
3. We all have different abilities, looks, and feelings that make each one of us very special.
4. There are kind things that we can do to help our friends feel better when they are feeling different.
5. We can include lots of different people in our everyday lives.

Song: *I Am Special*

*I am special*

*I am special*

*If you look*

*You will see*

*Someone very special*

*Someone very special*

*Look at me*

*Look at me*



*Sing to the tune of "Are You Sleeping, Brother John?"*

## Lesson 2 Kindness Comes from Within

### Overview

This session will focus on how being kind and helpful to one another emphasizes the sameness in all of us. The children will learn that by being supportive and kind to one another they are being accepting. During this lesson, it is important to encourage the children to speak kindly and with respect to one another as we work on sharing, asking, and giving to each other.

### Objectives

The children will recognize

- how to ask for what they need,
- how to support each other through sharing, and
- how to share.



### Materials:

*Zink* beanbag toy (if available; a regular stuffed zebra will also work)

The "Please" poster (please make a sign by writing "please" on a piece of card stock)

The "Thank You" poster (please prepare a sign by writing "thank you" on a piece of card stock)

The "You're Welcome" poster (please prepare a sign by writing "you're welcome" on a piece of card stock)

### Activities:

1. Have the teacher hold up the "Please" sign. Ask the children if they know this word. When do we hear this word? Can they say this word? This word is "magic" and if said when asking for some help or to share or work with someone else, many times it helps us get what we need.

Hold the "Thank You" sign up and ask the children if they know this word and how to use it. This is another "magic" word. We use "thank you" to express our thanks when someone helps or shares with us.

Hold up the "You're Welcome" sign and ask the children if they know this word and how to use it. We use "you're welcome" to acknowledge the person who shows appreciation to us when we share or help them.

2. Have one child hold the *Zink* beanbag toy (or the stuffed zebra) for a few seconds. When it is someone else's turn, the teacher identifies the next person and that person must say: "May I please hold *Zink* (or the stuffed zebra)?" The child who had been holding *Zink* (or the zebra) now must share with this new person. The child who receives *Zink* (or the zebra) then says: "Thank you." The child who shares *Zink* (or the zebra) must say: "You're Welcome."
3. This continues until everyone has had a chance to hold the *Zink* beanbag toy (or the zebra). Introduce the idea that when we are kind to one another that makes us special and makes the people we are kind to feel special. We are special because we are kind to one another.

Use examples of the other ways we can show kindness. For example, using compliments: "I like your \_\_\_\_\_." "You do well at \_\_\_\_\_." Using words like "Excuse me" and "I'm sorry" also shows kindness toward others.

4. Practice the "I Am Special" song again.

### Lesson 3

### The Zebra In Me

#### Overview:

In this lesson, the children will color cut-out puppets of *Zink* or her brother, Fink. The children will review the lessons of understanding differences and similarities. They will recreate the story from the book and the production in lesson one.



#### Objectives

The children will

- color puppets of *Zink the Zebra* or her brother Fink, and
- discuss how each child's puppet is different and special.

#### Materials

*Zink the Zebra - A Special Tale* storybook (electronic copy provided)

Cut-outs in the shape of a zebra (provided)

Markers or crayons

Yarn

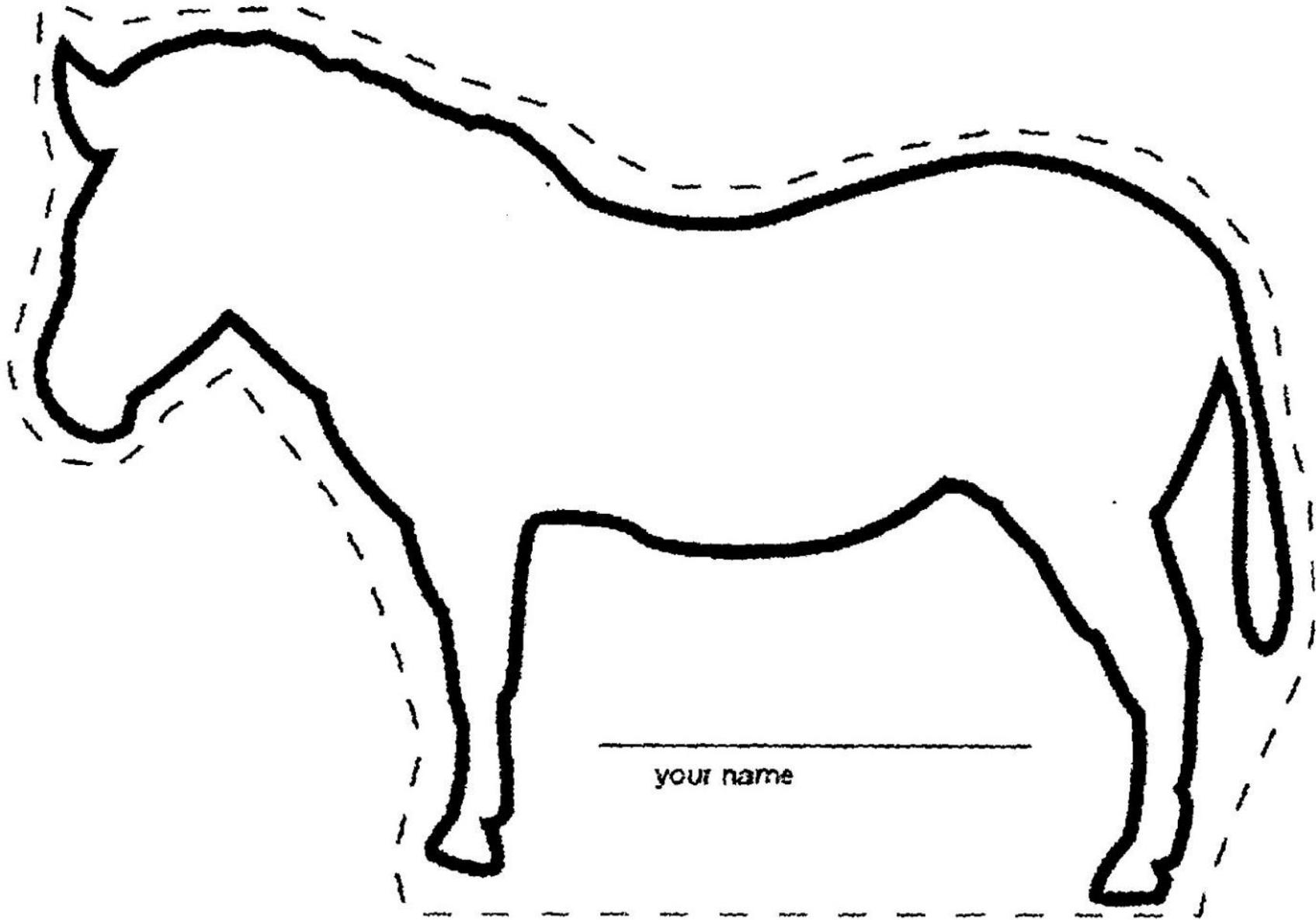
Tape

Wood sticks (optional)

#### Activities

1. Use precut puppets in the shape of a zebra and markers or crayons for the children to color.
2. Color the zebra cut-outs with stripes or spots. Allow the children to decide whether they will color spots or stripes. Give them markers/crayons to draw spots or stripes on their puppets. Tape a few pieces of yarn to the back of each puppet for a tail. You may want to create stick puppets by taping the zebra cutout to a wood stick.

3. Have the children discuss their puppets with each other, emphasizing the similarities and differences of each one.
4. Emphasize the past learning of the previous weeks—understanding, respect, compassion, and acceptance.





## Lesson 4 Re-enact the Story from *Zink the Zebra - A Special Tale Storybook*



*NOTE TO CHILDCARE PROVIDERS AND TEACHERS:  
ONCE YOU HAVE COMPLETED LESSON 4, PLEASE  
GIVE TAKE-HOME MATERIALS ON CHILDHOOD  
CANCER TO PARENTS.*

### Overview

The children hear the story again. They become part of the story as the class acts out the story. They prepare and practice to re-enact the story for a celebration on the last day of the formal *Zink the Zebra* program.

### Objectives

The children will

- better understand feeling different and the meaning of kindness, and
- practice/rehearse the *Zink the Zebra* story.

### Materials

*Zink the Zebra - A Special Tale* storybook (electronic copy provided)

OPTIONAL: Video Camera

Take-home packet for parents (provided and included in Section VII, Take-Home Materials)

### Activities

1. Read the story with class participation. Let the children repeat what each character says.

2. Give each child a part. Make sure the story is repeated so that all children who wish to have a chance to participate in the story. Practice the story the way it is written.
3. Re-enact the story with all the characters being kind throughout the story. This gives the children an opportunity to display what they have learned.
4. Help the children to clearly display
  - Kindness,
  - feeling left out, and
  - feeling included/happy.
5. Have the teacher read while children act out scenes.
6. Optional: Videotape the children acting out the story.
7. Practice the "I Am Special" song.

## For Teachers



Even though it has been emphasized in the training materials, it is important to restate that the Zink story is **not about cancer** and **cancer should not be mentioned in your classroom**. However, Kelly Weil wrote the *Zink the Zebra* story when she was 11 years old and undergoing treatment for cancer. Kelly felt alone because she was different.

As adults, we know the importance of reducing cancer in our community; therefore, we included five **parent/teacher-only handouts** (not to be shared with children) to increase awareness of cancer - as a first step in eliminating it.

The following "Take-Home Materials" can be found in Section VII of this kit:

1. Differences in Adult and Childhood Cancers
2. Possible Signs of Childhood Cancer
3. Important Points
4. Did You Know?
5. Did You Know You Can Help?

If you have questions about cancer or would like further information, please contact the A-B-C-1-2-3 Healthy Kids in Tennessee project director, Cindy Chafin, at 615-898-5493 or [cindychafin@comcast.net](mailto:cindychafin@comcast.net) or [cchafin@mtsu.edu](mailto:cchafin@mtsu.edu), or the Tennessee Department of Health, Cancer Control program manager at 615-741-1638. In addition, we can present more information to your school, if desired.

## Tobacco and Secondhand Smoke

### Classroom Activities



### Songs

Take the children's favorite songs and modify them using a tobacco/secondhand smoke theme, reminding children of the dangers and how it may affect them.

#### **I Won't Smoke (to the tune of "Three Blind Mice")**

I won't smoke, I won't smoke, when I grow up I won't smoke.  
It will make you choke; it will make you choke, when I grow up,  
I won't smoke it will stunt your growth, it will stunt your growth.  
When I grow up I won't smoke.

#### **Oh, What a Beautiful Day (sing to the tune of "Hickory Dickory Dock")**

Oh what a beautiful day to laugh, sing, and play.  
The air is clean, do you know what I mean?  
Oh, what a beautiful day.

Note: This is a short song and introduces cognitive development allowing the children to learn through song. Ask these questions after the songs have been sung. What is it about the sky that makes it beautiful? After that has been discussed ask the children another open-ended question. If someone is smoking what are they putting in the air that we all breathe?

- Estimated. length of activity = 5-10 minutes

## Is Your Heart in the Right Place? (Math/Art)

Have pre-cut numbers (1, 2, and 3) on the center of the table for children, and draw heart shapes on red paper for children to cut out. Ask the children to paste the correct number of hearts on the paper that has that particular number on it. Example, the number 2 will have 2 hearts pasted next to it. While the children are working in the center, provide them with secondhand smoke facts. Let them know that smoking can affect the human heart in unhealthy ways.

- Estimated. length of activity = 15-20 minutes

## "My Little Heart" (Science)

This science project will aid in the cognitive development of the children in your classroom. Although it will start in the classroom, it will end in the home of the child and parent. This project will show the parent and child what is going into their bodies from the air that they breathe at home.



### Supplies

- \* New sponges (one for each child)
- \* Scissors
- \* Spray bottle
- \* Sandwich bag



### Directions

1. Cut each sponge into the shape of a heart.
2. Send the cut-out sponges home with the children with instructions for the parents to soak the sponge in water and then squeeze out the excess water. Let them know that it should be wet but not dripping.
3. They should then place the sponge on a plate or dish. If a parent smokes, they should make sure the sponge is placed in the room where the parent smokes. This is also the room where the child is when the parent smokes.

4. Within 10 days, the sponge should begin to have a darker color. It should also have an unpleasant smell.
  5. Ask the parents to bring the sponges back in the sandwich bags within 10-14 days of receiving the heart-shaped sponges.
- Estimated Length of Activity (in class) = 5-10 minutes

### **Collage Creations (Art)**

Encourage children to bring at least one magazine from. Have the children cut out pictures of pro-tobacco advertisements in magazines as well as pictures of stars using tobacco products. Don't forget to talk about the pressures of media influence and the ways to avoid them.

- Estimated length of activity = 15 minutes



### **Secondhand Smoke Hurts Where? (Art)**

Show children a diagram of what body parts can be damaged due to exposure to secondhand smoke and discuss how it can be harmful. Provide each child with a coloring page of a person and a red crayon tell them to indicate the parts that can be affected.



### **Supplies**

\*Diagram of affected parts

\*Coloring page (1 per child)

\*Red crayons (1 per child)

- Estimated length of activity = 15 minutes

## **Smoke-Free Pledge Take-Home Activity**

Share the "Smoke-Free Home Pledge" commitments (samples included) with your children and encourage them to take them home for their parents to sign and return. For all parents who return the cards, have incentive items/prizes available.



## Reading Suggestions



*Cigarettes, Cigarettes: The Dirty Rotten Truth About Tobacco*

**Pete Traynor, Patrick Reynolds (Introduction), Rebecca Grace Jones (Contributor), Susan Ryan (Contributor)**

A tale of four children, one whom is a smoker, who cast out on an afternoon adventure. Displays the marketing of tobacco products to children and the facts that children and parents need to know.

*Smoking Stinks*

**Kim Gosselin, Thom Buttner (Illustrator)**

Maddie spends a lot of time worrying about her grandfather's smoking habit and the smell also bothers her allergies. Her grandfather is invited to speak to the class about his habit and try to make him see how it's affecting everyone, not just him.

*Know How to Say No to Drugs and Alcohol: A Kid's Guide*

**Jim Auer, R.W. Alley (Illustrator)**

A book teaching children how to stand up and say no to drugs and other harmful substances.

*Smoking (My Health)*

**Alvin Silverstein, Virginia Silverstein, Laura Silverstein Nunn**

This book explains exactly how smoking harms the body and how to break the habit, or avoid it altogether.

*"N" is for NO SMOKING...Please*

**Eileen Tucker Cosby**

This book spreads the word about the dangers of smoking and begs children not to start this nasty habit.



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