Healthy Habits: Code Blue Ribbon

LESSON PLAN

SKILLS & OBJECTIVES

- Problem solving
- Knows basic personal hygiene habits required to maintain health (e.g., hand washing)
- Knows ways in which a person can prevent or reduce the risk of disease (e.g., practicing good personal hygiene)

MATERIALS

PENCILS AND PAPER

COPIES OF HINT SHEET (SEE BELOW)

SURPRISE TREAT
(ICE POPS, WATERMELON, ETC.)

ACCESS TO A SINK WITH
SOAP AND WATER

Staying healthy is no mystery. Students will crack (and create) simple codes to reveal healthy habits messages about hand washing and other smart ways to stay well all school year.

DIRECTIONS

1 Tell students that you have a surprise treat that you are going to keep secret until everyone in the class has decoded your secret message."

2 Discuss that throughout history, people have used different methods of coded systems to communicate. Cave dwellers used pictures to communicate with one another. Beginning in the mid 19th century, people used Morse Code to send telegraphs. Ancient and modern languages use symbols and letters to represent meaning. Today, high level encryption requires complex math and computers to create and break the secure codes.

3 Challenge students to see how quickly they can crack this simple code (1st number = left column, 2nd number = top row) and receive their surprise. Write the following on the board:

53 11 44 23 55 35 51 43 23 11 34 14 44

KEY	1	2	3	4	5
1	A	B	C	D	E
2	F	G	H	I	J
3	K	L	M	N	O
4	P	Q	R	S	T
5	U	V	W	X	Y, Z

4 The solution to the cipher is, of course, "Wash Your Hands!" Once everyone in the class has scrubbed with soap and water, you can serve your special snack as a reward. Ask the class to tell you why hand washing before snacks and meals is so important.

WRAP UP

Explain that your sneaky message was an attention-grabbing way to communicate a healthy habit message that students hear over and over again every day from teachers, parents and other caregivers. Talk about other uses for codes in everyday life.

- Policemen use an emergency code system to detail the particulars of crimes.
- Firemen use an emergency code system to detail the particulars of a situation.
- Doctors use codes in an emergency room to communicate quickly and efficiently with one another.
- A baseball player uses a code made of gestures to signal plays.

LESSON EXTENSION

Have students research other codes and ciphers to try on classmates.

HOME CONNECTION

Ask students to create a secret code with their families or caregivers. Leave a different healthy code for everyone in the family to follow each day. Urge them to try communicating healthy habits messages with this shared secret code by leaving notes:
- On lunch bags
- Under pillows
- Next to toothbrushes