Hug the Monkey

In this exercise, (adapted from Dr. Rick Hanson), we use a monkey puppet to represent our “inner monkey,” that part of us that feels hurt or scared when something hard happens. When we feel this way mostly we just want “recognition, inclusion, respect, and love.” Share a time when you felt this way. Then have the children talk about a time when they felt that way. Ask them what helped them feel better. And then share the story of our “inner monkey” who just needs a hug when things aren’t going well. They can either hug the puppet, or hug themselves and their inner monkey, or get a hug from someone they care about. Talk about how it feels to hug the monkey. How does the monkey feel now?

Fact: A hug causes the brain to release its “feel good” chemicals into our bodies. They physically help us feel better. It’s reported that our brain needs 10 hugs a day to feel happy! Practice hugging every day, throughout the day.