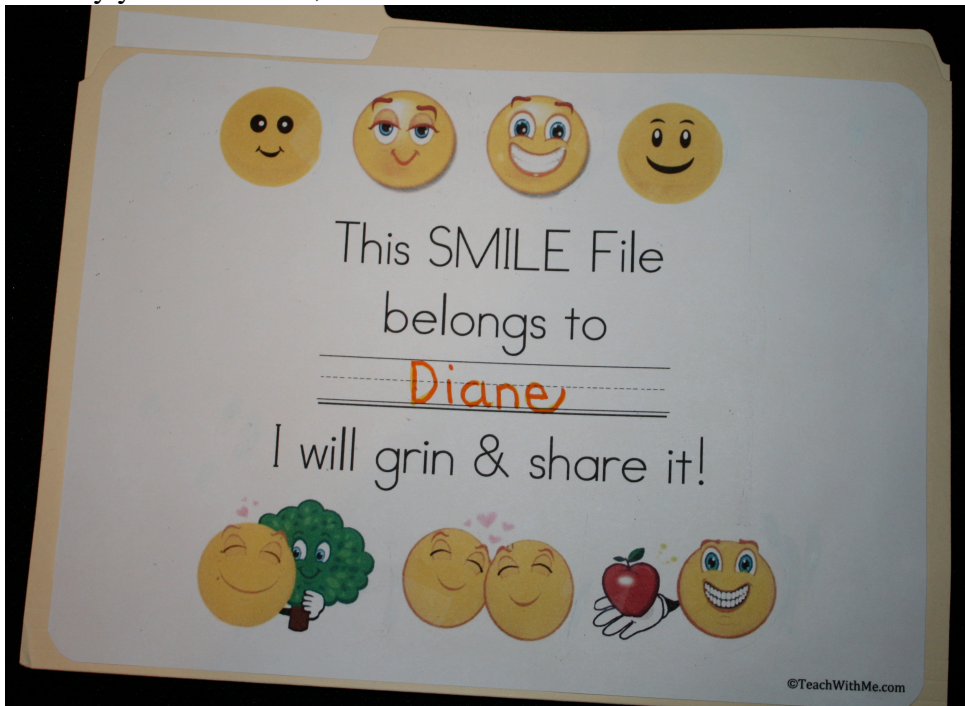


Building Students' Self-Esteem

When I taught high school, I remember running into a mother of a student years later. She shared with me that her son still carried a dog-eared scrap of paper around in his wallet with a list of positive qualities his classmates had wrote about him in my class. I never forgot the impact something so simple can have on a person.

I think it's extremely important to build young children's self-esteem. Various studies have shown that children who are willing to take risks learn to read faster.

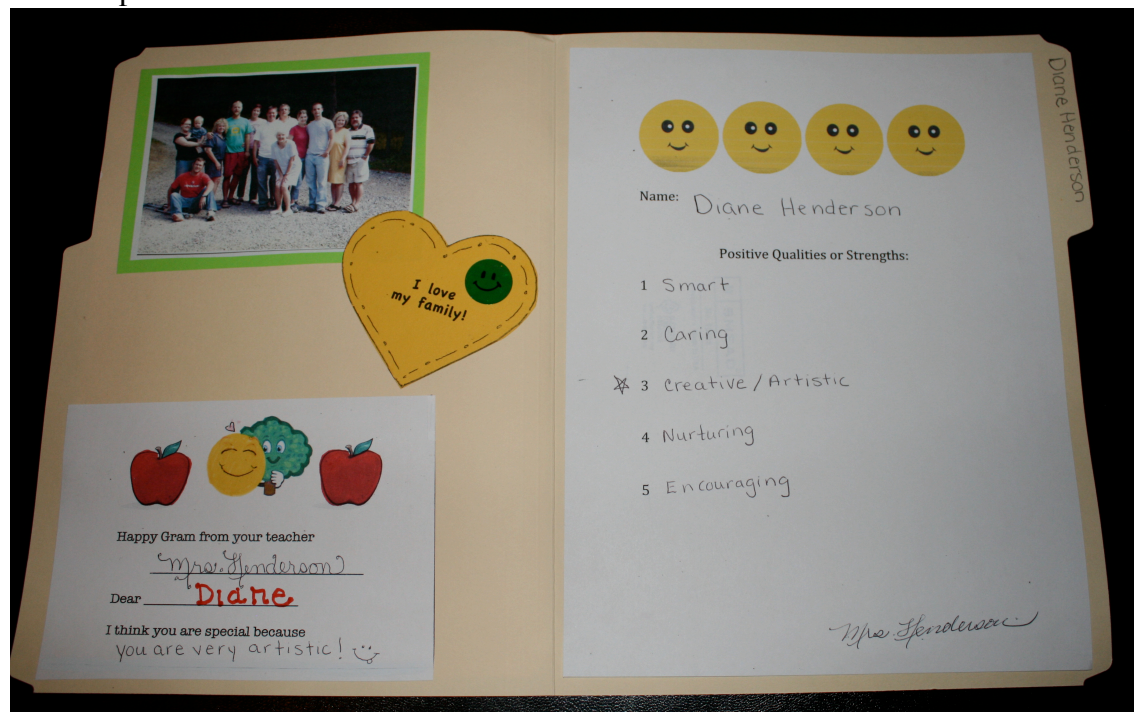
A child needs to feel confident to venture a guess, to make a mistake in order to learn. A fun way you can do this, is to make a **Smile File** for them.



Here's how:

- Write your students name on manila file folders.
- Run off my letter + positive quality attachment to parents explaining the file and requesting a family photo and send them home the first week of school.
- Buy a pack of various sizes of smilie face stickers.
- Run off the Award calendars.
- Run off the "I love my family!" hearts on a variety of colored construction paper.
- Print off the "Happy Grams" from your teacher and fill them out as soon as you know your students well enough to make a "special" comment about them.
- Keep the folders in a crate under your desk for easy access.
- Run Off "This is your day!" sheets. Keep them in the crate.
- Keep all masters in the crate.

- As soon as students return their forms and photo pass out the folders and have them cut and glue their "pieces & parts" together.
- Whatever system you use for choosing children, pick a child each day to have your class fill out a "This is your day!" sheet, so you can get these completed the first month of school.
- Whenever you pass out certificates have students put them in their Smile File.
- Periodically star work that children will put in their Smile File so you have things to show parents for Parent Teacher conferences.

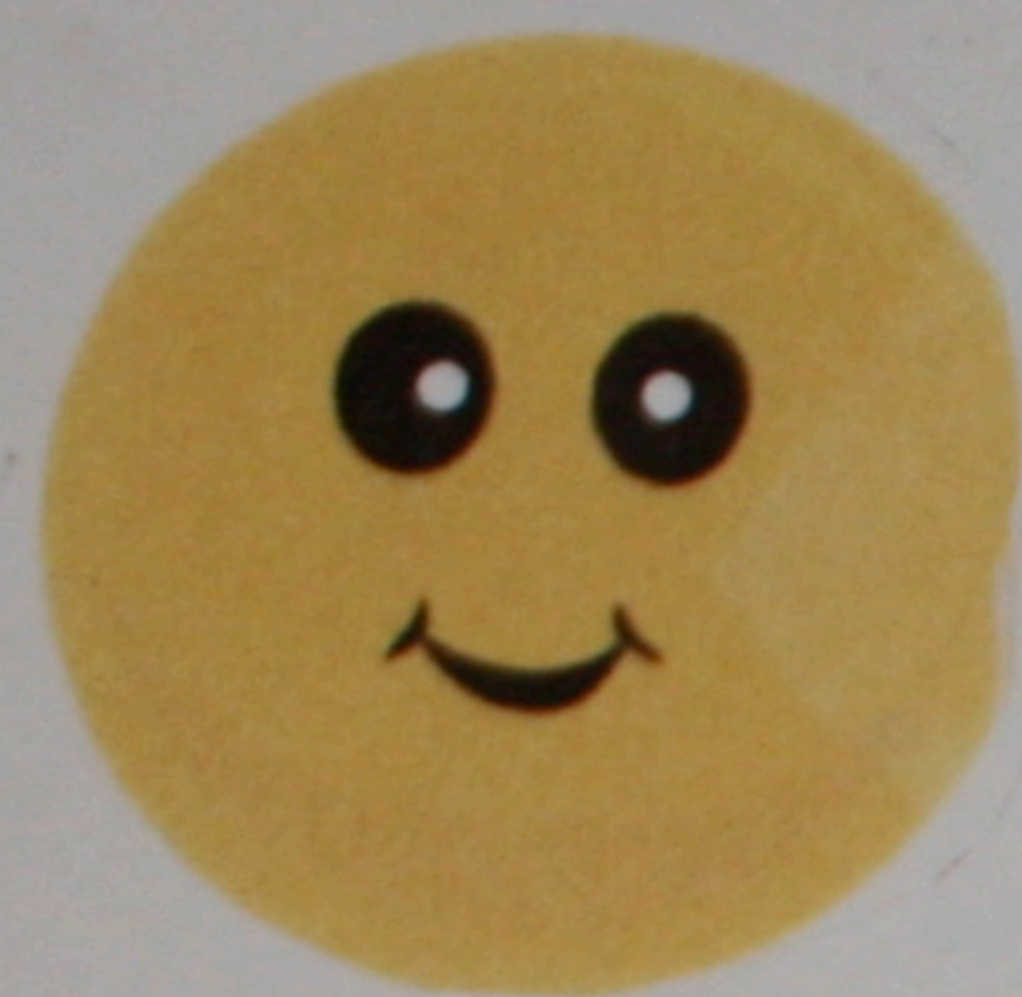


- If a member of their family comes to help in the class or chaperone, take a photo of them with mom, dad, grama, grampa working with them.
- They can glue the photo to a sheet of construction paper, write about it and put it in their Smile File.
- Give students a choice of things they want to put in the Smile File.
- Perhaps they got an "I love you" note from mommy in their lunch box, or a 100% on a spelling test, or were Star Student; you can make copies of things so they can take originals home.
- At the end of each day, pass out a smiley sticker to anyone who has put a smile on the teacher's face ALL day. In other words, this student has made wise choices (not moved their apple or other behavior management token, or been in the Time Out chair etc.), has completed their work or whatever else you have explained to your students as the guidelines for receiving a sticker.
- Children put their smiley face sticker on the appropriate day of the week.
- This Smile File then, can work as a great behavior modification program as well. You can reward students who have gotten a smile for the entire week/month if you want to.

- I've designed monthly certificates for this purpose, which of course they can collect and put in their Smile File!
- Have students paperclip certificates so they can stay organized from other things.
- If you'd like a writing extension for the calendar, post a list of one-word "happies" that students can choose from, to write on their calendar of what made them smile the most that day.
- I've given you a list of suggestions that you can keep posted.
- You should make one for yourself too! I keep my favorite drawings, cards and little notes from parents and students in mine.
- Then when you're having one of those "*I feel so unappreciated!*" days... you can sneak a peak at your Smile File and feel "*paper hugged*" and KNOW the reason why from "*scribbles of love!*"

I hope this idea brings a smile to your students' faces and helps build their self-esteem. Who knows, some day, maybe you'll meet a mom somewhere and they'll tell you their child still has their Smile File!





This SMILE File
belongs to

Diane

I will grin & share it!



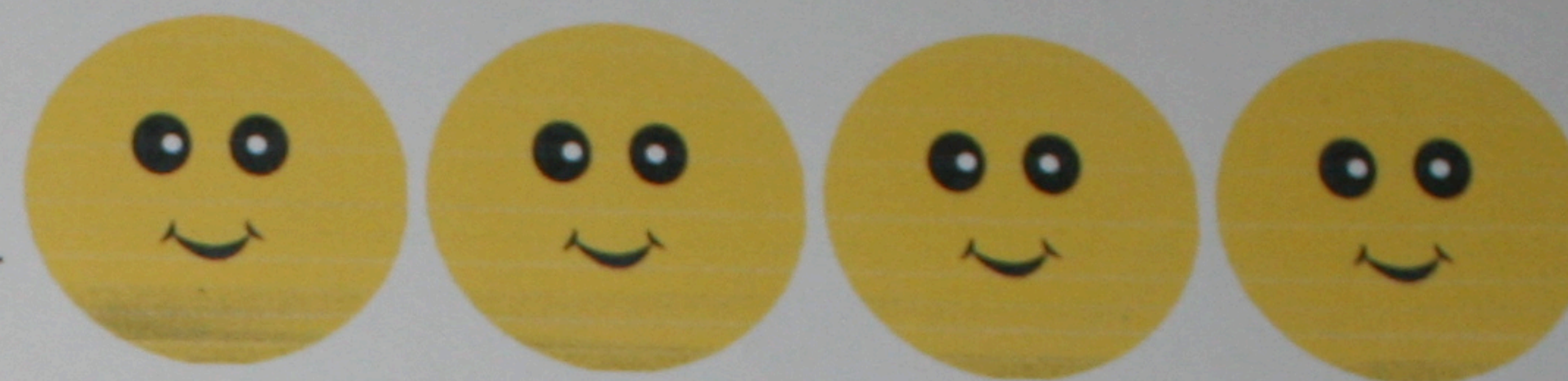


Happy Gram from your teacher

Mrs. Henderson

Dear **Diane**

I think you are special because
you are very artistic! 😊



Name: Diane Henderson

Positive Qualities or Strengths:

1 Smart

2 Caring

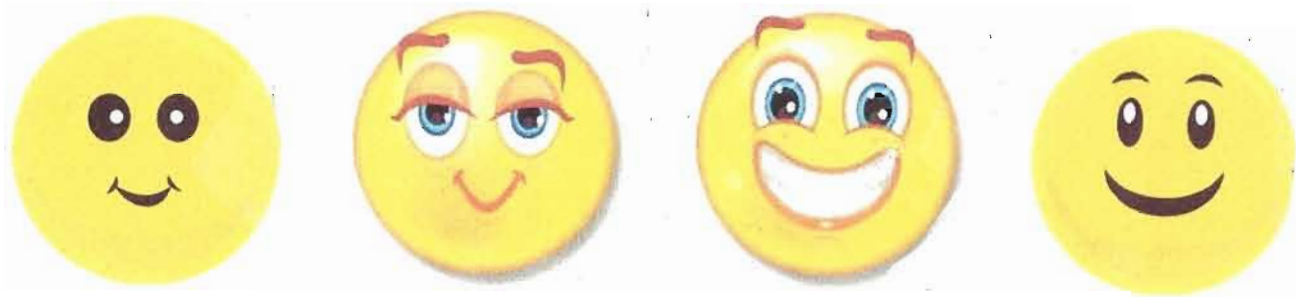
★ 3 Creative / Artistic

4 Nurturing

5 Encouraging

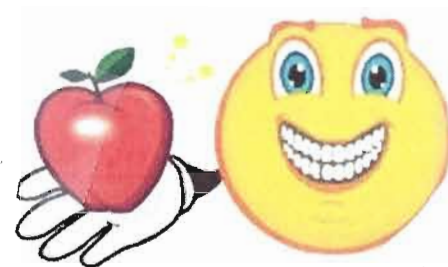
Mrs. Henderson

Diane Henderson



This SMILE File
belongs to

I will grin & share it!





Dear Families,

Your child will be making a Smile File at school during the first week and I need your help.

A smile file is a file folder that your child is proud of. When they open it up it makes them smile. It is filled with their certificates of accomplishment, their best or favorite papers or whatever else they or I deem appropriate to put in their Smile File.

You'll be able to look at it at conferences and they'll have a lovely keepsake to take home at the end of the year.

For the start of school, one of the things that makes a child smile is a photo of their family. Sometimes during the first week of school, a child may be missing their family or feel a little bit afraid. A quick peek into their Smile File to see a photo of their loved ones brings an instant smile to their face!

Would you please send in a photo of your family (one that your child can GLUE to the inside of their Smile File) so that they can sneak a peek any time they feel the need?

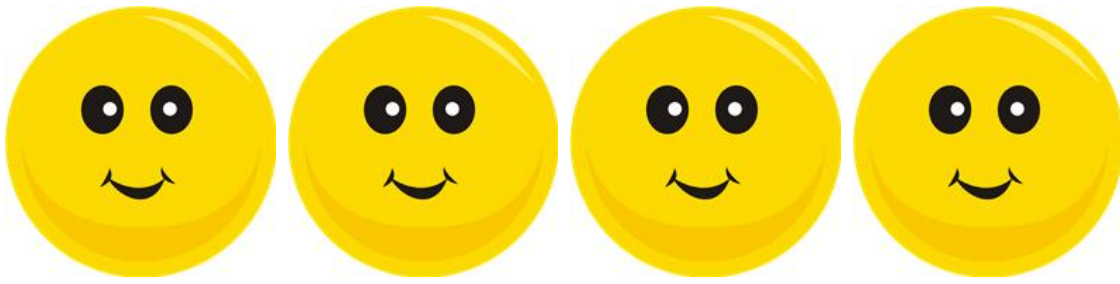
The other thing I need your help with is something I call positive words of character. Children need to feel confident. We need to build their self-esteem so they are willing to take risks in school when they are learning to read and take on new challenges.

One way to do this is if they know what their strengths are. Would you please list 3-5 strengths or positive things about your child on the attached sheet? Read it to them to see if they agree or have anything to add. Have them star their favorite. They will be sharing their favorite quality with their classmates. This paper will go into their Smile File.

Thanks in advance for your cooperation in helping make your child's learning experience fun!

If you have any questions, feel free to give me a call.

Educationally Yours,



Name:

Positive Qualities or Strengths:

1

2

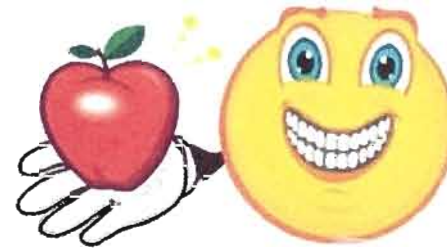
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4

5

Award Calendar

Month: _____



My behavior was so GREAT
it brought a SMILE
to my teacher's
face ALL day!




















| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
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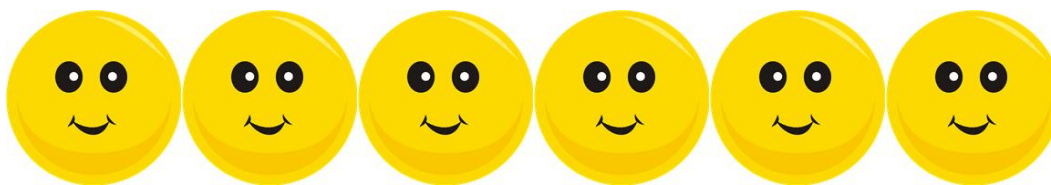
Award Calendar

Month: September



My behavior was so GREAT
it brought a SMILE
to my teacher's
face ALL day!

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|----------|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students write what their favorite thing was or a "smilie" of the day. Have a list of one-word "happies" on the board. This can be part of your morning message. <div>SAMPLE</div> <div>Children earn a sticker for the day.</div> | | | | | | |
| 4 | 5 | reading  | 6 Painted  | 7 Dan's B. day  | 8 Lunch  | 10 |
| 11 | recess  | 12 writing  | 13 centers  | 14 Table top  | 15 Certificate & Calendar  | 17 |
| 18 | Show & Tell  | 19 Snack Sack  | 20 Speaker  | 21 field trip  | 22 Nana came to help  | 24 |
| 25 | Puppets  | 26 Free play  | 27 Play dough  | 28 Science  | 29 Blocks  | 30 |



Ideas For one/a few word “happies or smilies of the day” that students can jot down on their calendars.

- You can make this into a poster and put on your white board for them to copy, or make it part of your morning message.
- Students jot down their “happy word” when you give them their smile face sticker for the day.
- Any one who had to move their apple of name card, or had to be reprimanded or spend time in the Time Out chair or whatever your form of student behavior management is, does not get a sticker.

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| • Lunch | • Special holiday |
| • Recess | • Halloween, Valentines, Easter etc. |
| • Reading | • We wrote letters |
| • Math | • We made a card |
| • Art | • We made a gift |
| • Computers | • Fieldtrip |
| • Centers | • Got 100% |
| • Gym | • Could read my booklet |
| • Music | • Got a certificate |
| • science | • Got a happy gram |
| • Spelling | • My mom came |
| • Writing | • My grama came |
| • Free play | • My grampa came |
| • Play dough | • My dad came |
| • Blocks | • We had a visitor |
| • Dress up | • Assembly |
| • Toys | • Magic |
| • Puppets | • Story |
| • Party | • Aced the test |
| • Candy | |

- Project
- Sharing
- Listening
- Playing
- We earned a free recess
- Table top
- Finger painted
- Painted with watercolors
- Painted at an easel
- Played games
- Played with a partner
- Watched a video
- Had a speaker

- It was my birthday
- Brought snack
- Special snack
- Show & Tell
- I was star student
- I was a helper
- It was my turn
- Hug
- Got picked
- Won the game
- Understood
- Knew the answer



Happy Gram from your teacher

Dear _____

I think you are special because



Happy Gram from your teacher

Dear _____

I think you are special because

It's Your Day _____

Your Friends have each named a quality they like or admire about you.

Here is your special list for your Smile File



Something I like about you.

Quality I admire about you.

[illegible]

[illegible]





Congratulations!

put a SMILE on their teacher's face
EVERY day all MONTH long!

For the month of _____



Keep up the great work!

Teacher: _____

Date: _____