Research has shown that positive reinforcement using a visual image such as stickers, smiley faces, or hearts, helps children develop social-emotional skills in young children. The Hearts will also help children transfer the positive skills and behavior they are taught in the Second Step program.

When paired with clear explanations of reasons for receiving a Heart are effective for:

- Giving Hearts provides a concrete, visual symbol of caring behavior.
- Giving Hearts demonstrates the pleasurable activity of giving something to another.
- Giving Hearts promotes healthy attachments to teachers and school.
- Giving Hearts helps children develop concepts of themselves as "people who do good things."
- Giving Hearts helps children respond to their peers in positive ways.
- Giving Hearts demonstrates that "good behavior" is an effective way to gain recognition.
- Giving Hearts helps children learn self-regulation.