



HELLO PARENTS,

Encouraging a sense of empathy in your child ensures that they are emotionally aware, and thoughtful. Empathy is the skill of imagining how others feel in a given situation, and responding accordingly. Empathy is often the foundation for strong relationships. This can seem to be a complex skill to develop; but surely it is possible to kindle empathy in your child. For children, learning to empathize happens gradually. Your child will eventually understand that others may feel differently than they do, and they will learn to respond to these feelings with compassion and comfort. In this newsletter, you will be provided with activities that nurture empathy.

ACTIVITIES

INFANTS (3 -18 MONTHS)

IMITATING EXPRESSIONS

DIRECTIONS:

- Place your infant on the floor, and sit in front of them.
- Begin making different facial expressions.
- Talk to your infant as you are making these expressions. For example, when making a sad face, say: "I am sad" and when making a happy face, say: "I am happy!"

[Click here](#) to listen to "Nice to Meet You".

TODDLERS (19 MONTHS – 2.5 YEARS)

FEELINGS FACES

MATERIALS:

- White paper
- Markers

DIRECTIONS:

- Get the white paper, and cut it into different sized circles. Help your child draw an emotion on each one. For example, draw a happy face on one circle, and an angry face on another.
- When you are finished drawing them, show your child each circle. Make the expression on your face as you are saying what each emotion is. For example, if you are looking at the sad-face circle, make a sad face and say: "This is a sad face, I am sad!" Encourage your child to understand empathy, by discussing your feelings together.

[Click here](#) to read, "How to Help Your Child Develop Empathy".

PRESCHOOLERS (2.5 – 5 YEARS)

THE GIVING TREE

[Click here](#) to read "The Giving Tree" by Shel Silverstein.

MATERIALS:

- Piece of paper
- Brown pencil
- Pencil
- Green and brown paint
- Paintbrush
- Plate

DIRECTIONS:

- Put a bit of green paint on a plate.
- Draw a tree trunk on a piece of paper.
- Have your child dip the palm of their hand into the green paint, or using a paintbrush, let them paint the palm of their hand green.
- Once painted, tell your child to stamp their hand near the tree trunk that they drew. Leave the paint to dry.
- Once your paint has dried, discuss with your child what it is to be kind, and what you can give to others. Reflect on the book "The Giving Tree", and talk about what the tree gave the boy to feel comforted, and vice versa.
- Encourage your child to draw pictures of what they can give to others on the handprint that they made. Discuss how others may be comforted by what they have drawn.

[Click here](#) for "Building Empathy" activities.

JK/SK (4 – 6 YEARS)

EMPATHY CUBE

MATERIALS:

- Net for a cube shape
- Scissors
- Paper
- Writing utensils: pencils, coloured pencils, markers
- Tape

DIRECTIONS:

- Help your child to draw, or print the net for a cube shape.
- On each face of the net, write simple empathetic scenarios about a friend, with your child. As you write these scenarios, read them to your child. Some examples may be:
 - His friend did not want to play with him.
 - His ice cream fell off his cone.
 - She is having a hard time with her zipper.
 - He received a gift from a friend.
 - He met a new friend.
 - She scraped her knee.
- Have your child decorate the square boxes on the net for the cube.
- Help your child cut out the perimeter of the net for the cube. Fold the net to make a cube shape, and tape it in place.
- You have made an empathy cube! Have your child throw the cube in the air, and discuss the empathy scenarios with your child.

[Click here](#) for more activities to encourage empathy in children.

[Click here](#) to learn how to draw a net for a cube shape.

SCHOOL-AGERS (6 – 12 YEARS)

WALK A MILE IN MY SHOE

MATERIALS:

- Piece of paper or construction paper
- Scissors
- Coloured pencils
- Pencil

DIRECTIONS:

- On a piece of paper or construction paper, draw a big shoe.
- Using scissors, cut out the shape of the shoe.
- Decorate your shoe with your coloured pencils.
- Think about ten facts about yourself that are interesting, and write them on your shoe.
- Once you are done, share with a friend, sibling, or parent your ten facts, and talk about what makes each person different. Discuss the word "empathy"; what does it mean? Imagine being in the "other person's shoes." Taking another person's perspective helps us to be empathetic.

[Click here](#) to watch "All About Empathy" to understand more about empathy.



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A TIP FOR TODAY

- Be a role model, and empathize with your child. For example, you may validate their feelings and say: "Are you feeling scared of that dog? He is a nice dog but he is barking loudly. That can be scary. I will hold you until he walks by."
- Talk about others' feelings. For example, "Susan is feeling sad because you took her toy car. Maybe you and Susan can play with the car together."
- Suggest how your child can show empathy. For example, you may say: "Let's get James some ice cream to help him feel better."
- Read stories about feelings and empathy.
- Use pretend play to act out scenarios which encourage empathy.