



Helpful Resources

Books:

- "Teaching Children Empathy: The Social Emotion" by Tonia Caselman
- "Learning to Listen, Learning to Care: A Workbook to Help Kids Learn Self-Control and Empathy" by Lawrence Shapiro

Websites:

- www.kidsenabled.org/articles/index.php/201103/teaching-children-to-empathize/
- www.education.com/magazine/article/Kindness_Counts_Teaching_Empathy/
- www.socialthinking.com

Please copy and distribute to Teachers and Parents

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School Tools

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Modeling Empathy for Kids



Dear Parents and Teachers,

Empathy is probably one of the most important skills we can learn in life. It involves being able to see something from another person's perspective or "put yourself in someone else's shoes."

As parents and teachers we have the opportunity on a daily basis to model this

important skill for our kids. In fact, modeling is one of the best ways to learn a skill. How often do we try to impart an important truth only to hear our kids accuse us of being hypocritical? While we'd like to say "just do it because I said so," if we are not practicing what we preach, they generally won't take our advice.

Bottom line, if we want our kids to be kind, compassionate, understanding and respectful, then we better start acting that way ourselves. And, no faking it...they can see right through it!

Empathy Boosters

1. Learn how to name and identify feelings.
2. Role-play various situations with children and help them identify the feelings.
3. Help children learn how to be good listeners as well as astute at asking questions of others.
4. Create opportunities for children from different backgrounds to interact with your children.
5. Use the arts to foster empathy—film, drama, music, literature and fine arts.
6. Most of all, discuss how to be more empathetic in situations that happen to you or your child.

Practical Tips for Modeling Empathy

1. Talk to your kids about their day and **listen** to what they say. Ask open-ended questions such as, "help me understand what happened." Use active-listening skills. Reflect back on what they said with a comment like "you must have been disappointed when that happened." Refrain from lecturing or trying to fix their problems.
2. Encourage kids to see the other person's point of view. Ask them "how would that feel if that were you...what would you do if you were

- them?"
3. Find ways to show care and concern for others through things such as helping a neighbor, volunteering at a shelter, visiting an older person, sending a card to someone. Do these activities with your kids so they see the way you model empathy.
4. Watch how you speak about other people. Do you gossip, criticize or complain about other people in your life? Do you fight with your spouse or others in front of your kids?
5. At school or sporting

events, refrain from being critical about the teachers, principal, coaches, referees or other parents in attendance. If your kids hear negativity and divisiveness from you, they have no incentive to respect those adults either. Sometimes parents can be bullies but expect their kids not to be this way. Be careful about setting a double standard.

6. Resolve conflicts and forgive. This is a powerful lesson for kids to see and will help them do so in the future with others.

Important info. For
Parents & Teachers!

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