



# Pawsitively Social Emotional Learning Curriculum

## Empathy

### Definition:

Empathy is the experience of understanding another person's thoughts, feelings, and condition from their point of view, rather than from your own. You try to imagine yourself in their place in order to understand what they are feeling or experiencing.

### Helpful Vocabulary:

Empathy is easily confused with sympathy. One is better able to practice empathy if the differences are understood.

When we are **sympathetic** we feel:

- Concern for another person that is in an unfortunate situation or is emotionally hurt.
- Often a feeling of pity.
  - "I see a homeless person and I feel sorry for them."

When we are **empathetic** we feel:

- We can feel what someone else is feeling.
- We see something from another person's perspective - putting yourself in their shoes.
  - "I see a person who has been in a car accident and I feel empathy for them because I also have been in a car accident. I know what they are feeling and going through."

### Benefits of Teaching Empathy:

Children are born with the capacity for empathy, but it needs to be nurtured throughout their lives. Learning empathy is in certain respects like learning a language or a sport. It requires practice and guidance. Regularly considering other people's perspectives and circumstances helps make empathy a natural reflex and, through trial and error, helps children get better at tuning into others' feelings and perspectives. Children learn empathy both from watching us and from experiencing our empathy for them. When we empathize with our children they develop trusting, secure attachments with us. Those attachments are key to their wanting to adopt our values and to model our behavior, and therefore to building their empathy for others.

Here are just some of the benefits to helping your child/children practice empathy.

- It helps to build strong, lasting relationships.
- It encourages a loving attitude.
- It is linked with increased happiness and scholastic achievement.
- It is a key to prevent bullying and other cruel behaviors.

The following page provides information on ways in which you can support and practice empathy in your home.



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## Empathy

### Kinder-2nd Grade

#### Discussion Starters

- How do you feel when your friend doesn't share with you?
- How do you think your friend feels when they are laughed at?
- When should you practice empathy at home? Who should you be empathetic towards?
- When was the last time you noticed your brother/sister/or relative feeling sad? How did you know they were sad? (have your child describe the body language that represented sad) (repeat for happy, scared, surprised, or any other emotion) When you are feeling sad, what are some things others can do to cheer you up? (repeat for all emotions)

#### Picture Books and Read Alouds to Spark Empathy and Compassion

- *You, Me and Empathy: Teaching children about empathy, feelings, kindness, compassion, tolerance and recognising bullying behaviours* by Jayneen Sanders (Author)
- *Listening with My Heart: A story of kindness and self-compassion* by Gabi Garcia (Author), Ying Hui Tan (Illustrator)
- *The Other Side* by Jacqueline Woodson (Author), E.B. Lewis (Illustrator)
- *I Am Human* by Susan Verde (Author), Peter H. Reynolds (Illustrator)

#### Videos That Teach Empathy

- Sesame Street: Mark Ruffalo: Empathy [https://youtu.be/9\\_1Rt1R4xbM](https://youtu.be/9_1Rt1R4xbM)
- Bridge Port Elementary Student on What is Empathy [https://bpe.eanesisd.net/cf\\_notify/view.cfm?n=238](https://bpe.eanesisd.net/cf_notify/view.cfm?n=238)
- My Friend Isabelle: Teaching Tolerance, Empathy and More (Read Along Book) <https://youtu.be/IZ9EY0cwmmY>
- Sesame Street - Ernie Learns to Stop and Think <https://youtu.be/R0O69yyenww>





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### 3rd-4th Grade

#### Discussion Starters

- How do you feel when your brother/sister/mother/father/grandparent is kind to you?
- How do you think your friend feels when they are laughed at?
- When should you practice empathy at home? Who should you be empathetic towards?
- When was the last time you noticed your brother/sister/relative feeling sad? How did you know they were sad? (have your child describe the body language that represented sad) (repeat for happy, scared, surprised, or any other emotion) When you are feeling sad, what are some things others can do to cheer you up? (repeat for all emotions)

#### Picture Books and Read Alouds to Spark Empathy and Compassion

- Stand in My Shoes by Bob Sornson (Author), Shelley Johannes (Illustrator)
- Bluebird by Bob Staake (Author, Illustrator)
- Train Your Dragon To Be Kind, Volume 9 by Steve Herman (Author)
- Wonder by R. J. Palacio (Author)

#### Videos That Teach Empathy

- Empathy (a song about empathy) <https://youtu.be/XgGKgBosXaE>
- What is Empathy? (kids talking about what empathy is) <https://youtu.be/icllUdTEQnU>
- My Friend (kids being empathetic while an empathy song plays) <https://youtu.be/EVT6-1OOJ7I>
- A Little Book About Empathy (Read Aloud) <https://youtu.be/2MW5BmKiy7I>





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## Empathy

### 5th-6th Grade

#### Discussion Starters

- How do you feel when your brother/sister/mother/father/grandparent is kind to you?
- How do you think your friend feels when they are laughed at?
- When should you practice empathy at home? Who should you be empathetic towards?
- When was the last time you noticed your brother/sister/relative feeling sad? How did you know they were sad? (have your child describe the body language that represented sad) (repeat for happy, scared, surprised, or any other emotion) When you are feeling sad, what are some things others can do to cheer you up? (repeat for all emotions)

#### Picture Books and Read Alouds to Spark Empathy and Compassion

- Learning to Listen, Learning to Care: A Workbook to Help Kids Learn Self-Control and Empathy by Lawrence Shapiro (Author)
- Empathy: I Know How You Feel! (Rookie Talk About It) by Liz George (Author)
- The Watsons Go to Birmingham--1963 by Christopher Paul Curtis (Author)

#### Videos That Teach Empathy

- The Present <https://youtu.be/96kl8Mp1uOU>
- Empathy Can Change The World (kids talking about empathy) <https://youtu.be/aU3QfyqvHk8>
- Amazing Kids of Character <https://youtu.be/yJocKAe-Rqs>
- Empathy vs. Sympathy <https://youtu.be/1Ewgu369Jw>

