

Emmons School

A Note from the School Counselor
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Character Education Newsletter

May 2019

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

This month at Emmons School, we are working on the character trait of **Empathy**. **Empathy** is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. It is the experience of understanding another person's condition from his/her perspective. You place yourself in his/her shoes and feel what he/she is feeling. Encourage your students to practice empathy so that they begin to think about how others are feeling and consider how their actions may impact others. Being empathetic is important because it is the foundation of loving and healthy relationships. Below are some essential ways you can begin to teach children the concept of **empathy**.

1. Consider others' motivations. It can be easy to take someone's behavior toward you at face value, but so many times, other unseen factors are influential. When your kids complain about a friend's rude or hurtful behavior, help steer them toward looking past the surface into why the person may have acted that way, especially if the behavior was out of character.

2. Make sure you are meeting your children's emotional needs. If your children are secure in getting their emotional needs met, they will be more able to develop empathy for others. Kids whose parents help them handle their negative emotions are also more likely to be empathic with others. Talk with your kids about their emotions, their perspectives, and their needs. Be available for them and be dependable.

3. What do you have in common? When your children have things in common with other people, they are more readily able to understand and sympathize with them and their situations. If your child is reacting judgmentally to another person, help him think about aspects of that person he can understand and relate to, as well as thinking about why the person may have acted the way he did.

4. Call them on their bad behavior. If your children do something rude or mean to you, call them on it. Tell them that you don't like that behavior from anyone, not just them, which lets them know that it doesn't have to do with them personally. Setting limits in this way helps your children understand the effects of their behavior on others.

5. Other points of view. Reading books or watching television programs are a great way to look at other people's perspectives. You can talk with your kids about how the characters feel, what they want, and what they think, and how we know. In this way, your children can learn about other ways of thinking and perceiving the world. They will learn to think outside their own views and comfort zone, which will make them more able to empathize with other people.

Source: educateempowerkids.org

Children's Books that Teach **Empathy**...

- What's Wrong with Timmy? By Mary Shriver
- Wonder by R.J. Palacio
- The Invisible Boy by Trudy Ludwig
- Hey Little Ant by Philip and Hannah Hoose
- The Hundred Dresses by Eleanor Estes
- One by Kathryn Otoshi
- Amazing Grace by Mary Hoffman
- Just Because by Amber Housey
- Enemy Pie by Derek Munson
- Amos and Boris by William Steig
- Bully by Laura Vaccaro Seeger

GIVING
EMPATHY

