

Practice Empathy!

In a world where our kids often face bullying, stress and fear of being different, building their empathy skills is a critical way to help them thrive.

Empathy is...the ability to understand others' feelings as if we were experiencing them ourselves. Empathy allows us to understand how another person might feel in a specific situation, even when different from our own feelings.

SYMPATHY:



EMPATHY:



How does empathy help kids?

- Helps a child understand that he/she is a separate individual with unique feelings
- Helps a child understand that other people can have different thoughts and feelings (and that's okay)
- Builds self-esteem by valuing a child's individual thoughts and affirming their right to those thoughts
- Supports mental health by enabling a child to express emotions, cope with stress, and understand it's okay to be different
- Allows a child to develop healthy relationships because they can relate to, communicate with, and share feelings with another person

3 Simple Tips to Build Empathy in Kids:

1. Model kindness and draw attention to examples of empathy.

Instead of asking about a grade or activity, ask, "What caring thing did you do today?" or, "How did that make you feel?"

2. Talk about feelings.

Ask about your child's feelings. Ask your child about the feelings of others in specific situations. Help them learn how to describe emotions and feel safe when they share.

3. Read to (and with) your children.

Stories help us understand other's situations, reactions and feelings. Role play situations where empathy is critical: bullying, peer pressure, conflict with siblings/friends to help them prepare for challenges where empathy might be especially difficult (and important).