



# Family Reading Fun



Empathy is the ability to understand how others feel and think. It is having the capacity to place oneself in another person's position. Empathy is another of the stances of a growth mindset. Children who are shown how to have empathy tend to be more confident and less aggressive. So how does one go about teaching children empathy? Read on to discover a few simple ideas that parents can try with a child of any age.

It's important that adults model empathy. One way to do this is to respond to physical hurts with empathy. No matter how large or small an injury might seem to be, say things like: "That looked like it hurt. What will help you feel better?" Showing children how to offer help; a bandaid, an ice pack, a hug, etc. is another way to develop empathy.

Naming feelings is a beginning step in developing empathy. You can label your own emotions; "It makes me sad when I think about my friend who lives far away." You can label your child's emotions; "When you stomp on the floor and scream that shows me that you are angry." You can also label the emotions of others; "That baby is crying. She seems sad. I wonder why she is upset?"

An adult's words and actions have the power to teach children to imagine how others feel and it gives them the ability to be empathetic which can help lead to a growth mindset.

## Family Tips



A growth mindset is something that can be learned and developed. You can help your child develop empathy by doing the following.

- While reading a picture book with your child talk about the characters' feelings. Ask questions like; How do you think that character is feeling? Why do you think that? If the character is sad or upset ask; What can that character do to feel better? How did another character help?
- You can do the same things when watching a movie. Discuss how the character is feeling and how you can tell.
- Talk about how to make amends. Everyone makes mistakes. It's a part of life. But if your child did something to cause someone's upset, what can he or she do to make it better?



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# Author Spotlight



Looking for a way to start a conversation on empathy? Try reading these children's books.

- Each Kindness by Jacqueline Woodson: A child learns that a small act of kindness can change the world.
- Come With Me by Holly M. McGhee: It sends the message that what we do matters.
- Last Stop On Market Street by Matt de la Pena: A boy learns to appreciate the beauty in everyday things.
- Those Shoes by Maribeth Boelts: A boy comes to realize that the things he has are worth more than the things he wants.

# Technology Corner

Sesame Street is a great educational show that can help children learn about empathy. Go to [PBSKids.org](http://PBSKids.org). Click on the picture of Elmo to access Sesame Street. You can then search for full episodes by title. Look for ones that seem to fit the theme of empathy.

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