



The Big Idea: Empathy means understanding what another person is feeling, and it's a key to all relationships.

Growing Empathy

🗨️ Caring & Sharing 🧒 Age 4 to 6 🕒 1-4 Min



Everyone can develop empathy, but it needs to be taught. Parents can model kindness with their own little everyday acts. Help plant the seeds of empathy by:

- Asking the other children to notice when one of their peers is sad or hurt, and imagine why they're feeling that way. What might they do to make that person feel better? Praise all efforts at empathy.
- Inviting children to stand in someone else's shoes. Literally! Switch shoes and imagine what the person whose shoes they're wearing would say and do. (No meanness allowed!)
- Playing a "compliments" game: Pick one person as the "star of the day." Others can come up with one nice thing to say about that person. The next day, choose a new star until everyone has had a chance.
- Hosting an Oscar (the Grouch) party: The nicer Oscar's friends treat him, the grumpier he gets. Choose one person to play Oscar and act as grumpily as possible. Then, pile on the niceness! In the real world, there are lots of grouches—but even grouches appreciate kindness!

- Helping the larger community. Brainstorm a project that you can do together to make your community a better place for everyone: saving coins for a local animal shelter, recycling newspapers, or collecting books or cans of food to give to a family shelter. Take a picture of everyone who helped with the project to include with the donation.