



6 Tips for

unlocking empathy in your kids

Empathy is the ability to recognize, feel and respond to the needs of other people. It requires that you put yourself in another person's "slippers" to imagine what they are thinking and feeling, and then to offer your help. Empathetic kids grow up to be successful, caring adults. Below are some evidence-based strategies for nurturing your child's ability to empathize.



Be a role model by empathizing with your child and other people.



Follow the "2 ears, 2 eyes and 1 mouth rule". Spend more time listening and paying attention than talking. Seek understanding and show kindness.



Teach your child how to regulate their negative emotions.



Kids need to learn techniques--like belly breathing or counting to 10--to manage their own negative feelings like frustration or anger.



Look for frequent opportunities to practice empathy.



Encourage empathy by asking your kids to reflect on how family and friends are feeling. Involve your kids in helping neighbors and with community projects.



Teach how to read facial expressions and body language.



Young children and some children with disabilities misinterpret facial expressions or body cues (like crossed arms), making it harder to identify feelings in others.



Help your kids discover what they have in common with others.



People tend to find it easier to show empathy to someone who they think is similar to them. That's why making kids aware of how others are more like them than different is helpful.



Assist your kids to develop their internal sense of right & wrong.



Kids are more likely to develop their own sense of morality if their parents avoid using bribes or shaming to help others, and talk to them instead on how wrong- doing affects others.

