



the family values toolkit

For Children Ages 8 to 10

This Month's Featured Value Is: **Empathy**

Empathy is the quality that underlies love, caring, and compassion. When you empathize with others, you put yourself in their place and recognize them as human beings with feelings just like you, allowing you to act toward them as you would have them act in return.



What Can Parents Do to Nurture This Important Value?

First, Set Goals:

Show kids how to put empathy into practice in everyday situations with friends.

Children this age are learning to take a friend's perspective. They are able to tailor their help to the other person's needs and to manage some of the requirements of true friendship--mutual trust and keeping commitments, for instance. Individual differences in the capacity for empathy are also becoming evident. Kids who are less empathetic tend to be more physically aggressive.

Parents can intervene at this stage in several ways to ensure they raise empathetic kids, making extra efforts to teach peacemaking skills to children who exhibit signs of bullying behavior.

Next, Take Action! Try These Activities:

- ✓ **Encourage your child to be a gracious winner.** Practice words to use to make the loser feel better, such as "Good game. Maybe you'll win next time." Ask him or her to remember a time when he or she lost a game, and to think about how that felt. In times of victory, teach your child that it's great to celebrate and be excited, but it's also important to remain considerate.
- ✓ **Make the Golden Rule concrete.** For example, if your child makes fun of a classmate, say, "How would you feel if you overheard her saying something like that about you?"
- ✓ **Play "Don't Pick On Me!"** This role-playing game has kids each taking turns acting the part of a bully and his/her intended target. Together (with parents supervising) have kids come up with a script for the "bully" and the "target" and have the kids act it out. Then have the actors switch roles so the "target" turns the tables on the "bully." Afterward, take a few minutes to talk about what the experience was like from both sides.

Then, Report Back!

Share your stories of success, your challenges, and overall experiences with others in our community @

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