

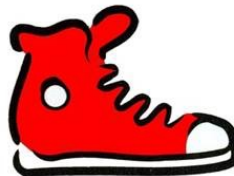
COUNSELOR'S CORNER

BRIT DOTY, SCHOOL COUNSELOR

EMPATHY: THE SOCIAL EMOTION

Empathy (the ability to understand and share the feelings of another) is at the root of what it means to be human, experts say, and it's at the core of all good relationships. Some children may naturally have more of it than others. Empathy, however, is something that can be enhanced, learned, and practiced. How do you foster an empathic environment at home? Well, to teach empathy you have to show empathy. Your kids are watching you and they copy you. Try these ideas to strengthen your child's empathic muscles and help them learn how to put themselves in someone else's shoes. [*source: greatschools.org]

- **Model caring for others:** Show concern for people outside your circle, as well as your family, friends, and associates.
- **Model good listening skills:** Actually listen and let your body language and facial expressions convey that you are listening. Respond attentively to what people around you say.
- **Be forgiving:** Remember, forgiveness is not about the other person. It's about how you act and feel. Let your child see you being the bigger person.
- **Challenge prejudices and stereotypes:** Encourage your kids to be inclusive, so that means you need to be inclusive, too. What's your group of friends like? It's important to let your child talk about race, prejudice, and stereotypes.
- **Help them learn to recognize, express, and manage their feelings:** Your child's other feelings could be getting in the way of their ability to feel empathy. Help your child learn to identify other people's feelings when reading books or watching movies or TV shows.
- **Encourage responsibility:** Let your children participate in the home. Have family meetings where you listen to their concerns and get their opinion. Give them chores and teach them life skills. Let them join you in your community and volunteer activities.
- **Immerse them in literature and art:** Surround your child with diverse books and music from other cultures. Pictures, books, and music allow kids to vicariously experience another person's world.



MINDFUL MOMENT

Is bedtime a stressful time in your household? Many children and adults have a hard time winding down and falling asleep at night. The mindfulness skills (especially mindful breathing) that your child is learning at school can help make bedtime a calmer, more peaceful time for everyone. Here are a few tips from the experts at mindful.org:

- Start winding down before bed by dimming the lights and doing a relaxing activity.
- Avoid looking at any kind of brightly lit screen (T.V., computer, tablet, game system).
- Take a few minutes before going to bed to practice mindful breathing or a body scan.
- Once you or your child gets into bed, try focusing your attention on breathing calmly.

Sitting Still Like a Frog

Mindfulness Exercises for Kids and Their Parents



Simple mindfulness practices to help your child deal with anxiety, improve concentration, and handle difficult emotions

■ Eline Snel ■

Foreword by Jon Kabat-Zinn

A fun and helpful mindfulness resource for children and parents is "Sitting Still Like A Frog." Give some of the simple exercises a try at: <http://www.shambhala.com/sittingstilllikeafrog>.

JANUARY LESSONS

MONTHLY RESOURCE: COMMON SENSE MEDIA

Kindergarten

Mindfulness, Appreciating Differences, Kelso's Choice

Grade 1

Mindfulness, Appreciating Differences, Kelso's Choice

Grade 2

Mindfulness, Appreciating Differences, Kelso's Choice

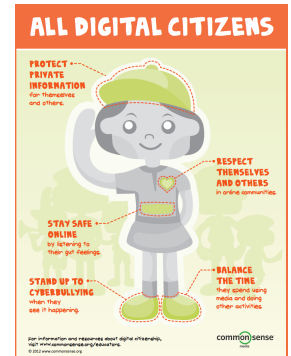
Grade 3

Mindfulness, Respecting Differences, Empathy

Grade 4

Mindfulness, Respecting Differences, Empathy

Media and technology are at the center of all our lives today and this is especially true for our children. On average, kids today spend over 50 hours of screen time every week. The media content they consume and create has a strong impact on their social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development. Learning how to use media and technology wisely is an essential skill for life and learning in the 21st century.



Common Sense Media is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping kids safely and successfully navigate the world of media and technology. The Common Sense Media website (www.comonsensemedia.org) is a trusted guide to help parents and teachers support appropriate technology use by children and students. Check out the many resources available on this website including: reviews/ratings of movies, books, music, games, apps, and websites, tips for managing children's technology use, and information addressing parents' concerns regarding media and their children.

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS WEEK FEBRUARY 15 - 19