

EMPATHY

Teacher Resource

WHAT IS EMPATHY?

Understanding others' thoughts, feelings and actions.

BENCHMARKS

- ✓ **HE.K.R.2.4** Identify and recognize basic feelings. Clarification: Sad, mad, happy, excited and worried.
- ✓ **HE.1.R.2.4** Describe how individual actions can affect others. Clarification: Sad, mad, happy, excited and worried.
- ✓ **HE.2.R.1.1** Identify the benefits of showing kindness and treating others with respect.

PURPOSE

- These interactive activities will help your students learn the characteristic of **empathy** and understanding others' thoughts, feelings and actions. Share the suggested introduction with your students, choose one or more of the activities below, and conclude with the suggested wrap-up. Feel free to modify or revisit activities throughout the week to continue reinforcing **empathy**.



Suggested Introduction:

"Today, we are going to learn about **empathy**. **Empathy** means caring about other people's feelings. It's like putting yourself in another person's shoes and understanding how he or she thinks, feels and acts. For example, if you see a friend fall on the ground and start crying, and you ask yourself, 'How would I feel if that happened to me?' you are using **empathy** to better understand how your friend feels. **Empathy** helps us take care of each other and makes the world a nicer place!"



Activities to Build Empathy:

1 Resiliency Reading Connection

Share the story *The Koala Who Could* by Rachel Bright from the Resiliency Reading List. This story is about Kevin, the Koala, who liked to stay safe high up in his tree even though his friends wanted him to come and play. This story highlights the importance of understanding how and why others think, feel and act, and why it is important to show **empathy** toward others. Visit **buildresiliency.org** to learn about other books listed on the Resiliency Reading List; each title has a corresponding Family Reading Guide.

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GRADES
K-2



Activities to Build Empathy (Continued):

2 The Kindness Jar

Have a discussion about basic feelings and the individual actions that could impact others. Set up a classroom kindness jar where students add a small pom-pom each time they witness an act of kindness or **empathy** toward others. Once the jar is filled, highlight the kindness your students have shown to others as a group.

3 Empathy in Citizenship

Display a variety of pictures that show examples of being a good citizen (e.g., helping someone in need, picking up litter, raising your hand to speak, sharing toys). Then, have students take turns describing how each example affects others. Identify the benefits of showing kindness and treating others with respect.



Suggested Wrap-Up:

Guide student responses or provide sentence stems.

"Can someone tell me what it means to show **empathy? You all did a great job identifying the characteristic of **empathy**! When we practice **empathy**, we help our friends feel better, solve problems together, and make our classroom and world a happier place. Let's keep using **empathy** every day to help and take care of each other!"**