

Start Empathy: Equip Students. Transform Our Schools. Change the World.



Step 1. Prepare

- Create a Safe Space
- Lead by Example
- Develop Emotional Competency

Step 2. Engage

- Group Play
- Storytelling
- Immersion
- Problem Solving

Step 3. Reflect & Act

- Identify Shared Values and Differences
- Instill Courage
- Enable Action

Start Empathy A Road Map for Promoting Empathy in Schools

Step 1. Prepare

Before we can develop empathy, we must first create the conditions in which empathy can thrive.

Create a Safe Space:

Creating a trust-based environment is core to unlocking empathy.

Lead by Example:

Empathy can't be learned in isolation; it must be modeled by teachers, principals, parents and friends.

Develop Emotional Competency:

Before we can identify and interpret emotions in others, we must first understand and manage our own.

Step 2. Engage

While there is not one single way to cultivate empathy, there are a number of steps you can take to develop empathy over time.

Group Play:

Empathy begins on the playground, where imagination is allowed to run free; where kids learn to solve their own conflicts and enforce their own rules.

Storytelling:

Stories challenge our preconceptions, enabling us to wear the shoes of those whose experiences are different from our own.

Immersion:

By immersing ourselves in others' experiences, we learn to look beyond labels and stereotypes, and shift from projection to deep understanding.

Problem Solving:

The act of collaboration builds empathy through shared challenges and victories.

Step 3. Reflect & Act

Our ability to empathize with and understand others is only as good as how we act based on that understanding.

Identify Shared Values + Differences:

Empathy means recognizing the shared humanity in others but also naming and appreciating differences. This is how we move from projection, where we imagine what we would do in someone else's shoes, to empathy, where we understand and respect the decisions of another.

Instill Courage:

Decades of research in social psychology have shown us that it's not enough to simply cultivate prosocial behaviors and attitudes: you must counteract the forces that stand in their way.

Enable Action:

The final step to cultivating empathy involves creating opportunities through which kids can put empathy into action and exercise prosocial behavior intended to benefit others.

Students learn to:

- Express feelings
- Identify emotions
- Listen to peers
- Read body language/tone
- Respond appropriately to conflict
- See others' point of view
- Consider words and actions
- Support their classroom and their community

For more information on the power of empathy, including facts, figures, academic research and application case studies, please visit us online: www.startempathy.org.