

Tissue Paper Flower

Materials:

- 1 Pipe cleaner
- 6 squares of colorful tissue paper
- 1-inch-wide strip of white paper
- Pen or marker



Instructions:

1. Cut out 6 squares of tissue paper and layer them together. Fold back and forth like an accordion. Tie the end of the pipe cleaner around the middle of the paper. Open and spread the paper to make the flower bloom.
2. Ask families to help their child to think about the recipient of their flower. Who is someone who could be gifted a flower to brighten their day?
3. Ask children to think of a message they want to share with their flower recipient.
4. Have grown-ups write the message on the strip of paper.
5. Tape one end of the message to the pipe cleaner. Coil the strip of paper around the pipe cleaner stem
6. Take home your tissue paper flower and give it to someone who might need some extra compassion and kindness!

Materials:

- **Construction paper**
- **Stickers**
- **Markers**

Instructions:

1. Making a card is a special way to show you care about friends and family. Think about who you want to give a card to. Is it the senior citizen center, a neighbor, a veteran, a hospital patient, or a friend? Did the person do something special? Is it the person's birthday? Is the person sick? How do you want the person to feel when they receive your card?
2. Help your child fold a piece of paper in half.
3. Help your child write a short message. Talk about the feeling words you can write on the card.
4. Ask your child to draw a picture on the card.

Tissue-Paper Flowers



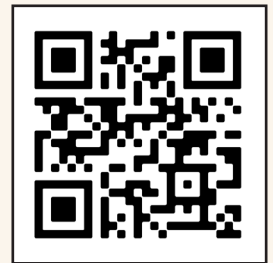
What You'll Need

- 1 Pipe cleaner
- 6 squares of colorful tissue paper
- 1 inch wide strip of white paper
- Pen or marker

Steps

1. **Make the flowers! Cut out 6 squares of tissue paper and layer them together. Fold back and forth like an accordion. Tie the end of the pipe cleaner around the middle of the paper. Open and spread the paper to make the flower bloom.**
2. **Ask families to help their child to think about the recipient of their flower. Who is someone who could be gifted a flower to brighten their day?**
3. **Ask children to think of a message they want to share with their flower recipient.**
4. **Have grown-ups write the message on the strip of paper.**
5. **Tape one end of the message to the pipe cleaner. Coil the strip of paper around the pipe cleaner stem**
6. **Take home your tissue paper flower and give it to someone who might need some extra compassion and kindness!**

Watch Video





WQED KINDNESS BINGO



SET THE TABLE	TELL SOMEONE WHY THEY'RE SPECIAL TO YOU	DONATE OUTGROWN CLOTHES/TOYS	CLEAN UP YOUR ROOM WITHOUT BEING ASKED	TALK TO SOMEONE NEW AT SCHOOL
SEND A CARD TO A SERVICE MEMBER	HELP A TEACHER	EAT LUNCH WITH A NEW FRIEND	GIVE SOMEONE A COMPLIMENT	RETURN SOMEONE'S CART AT THE STORE
VOLUNTEER SOMEWHERE	SAY THANK YOU WHEN YOU SEE A SERVICE MEMBER OR PUBLIC SAFETY PERSON	FREE SPACE	HOLD THE DOOR FOR SOMEONE	SAY 'PLEASE' AND 'THANK YOU'
LET SOMEONE GO AHEAD OF YOU IN LINE	SHARE YOUR TOYS	HELP A FRIEND	PICK UP LITTER	HELP CLEAN UP AFTER A MEAL
PUT CHANGE IN THE VENDING MACHINE	MAKE A CARD FOR SOMEONE	TAKE TURNS	DRAW SOMEONE A PICTURE	GIVE SOMEONE A HIGH-5

Share your completed card by tagging @WQED and use the hashtag #EXPRESSKINDNESS

Don't forget to share your acts of kindness on our tree at wqed.org/kind



WQED KINDNESS BINGO



HELP A COWORKER	VOLUNTEER SOMEWHERE	PLACE A POSITIVE BODY IMAGE NOTES IN CLOTHES AT A STORE	LEAVE A LARGER THAN NORMAL TIP	SAY THANK YOU TO A JANITOR
LET SOMEONE INTO YOUR LANE IN TRAFFIC	LET SOMEONE GO AHEAD OF YOU IN LINE	OFFER TO BABYSIT FOR FREE FOR PARENTS YOU KNOW	PUT CHANGE IN SOMEONE'S EXPIRED PARKING METER	BUY SOMEONE COFFEE
HOLD THE DOOR FOR SOMEONE	SAY HI TO THE PERSON NEXT TO YOU ON THE ELEVATOR	I'M A WQED MEMBER	GIVE UP YOUR SEAT ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION	INVITE A FRIEND OVER FOR DINNER
RETURN SOMEONE'S CART AT THE STORE	HOLD THE ELEVATOR FOR SOMEONE	PAY THE TOLL FOR THE PERSON BEHIND YOU	BRING A TREAT INTO WORK	CALL AN OLD FRIEND AND ASK ABOUT THEIR DAY
PUT CHANGE IN THE VENDING MACHINE	LEAVE UNUSED COUPONS NEXT TO PRODUCTS IN THE STORE	PICK UP LITTER	GIVE SOMEONE A BOOK YOU THINK THEY'D LIKE	SHOP LOCAL AND SMALL BUSINESS

Share your completed card by tagging @WQED and use the hashtag #EXPRESSKINDNESS

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WQED KINDNESS BINGO

		FREE SPACE		

Share your completed card by tagging @WQED and use the hashtag #EXPRESSKINDNESS

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Help Kids Be More Empathetic By Caring for Others

By Deborah Farmer Kris

May 31, 2023

Before leaving for preschool this morning, my four-year-old did a few things. She checked on her jar of baby ladybugs, watered her little flower garden, and shared a bagel with her little brother. She may not know the word, but she was showing empathy.

Empathy is a skill we can practice and get better at. It means imagining how someone else feels and responding in a caring way. As picture book author Anna Dewdney put it, “Empathy is an understanding that other people have feelings, and that those feelings count.” Practicing empathy helps us learn how to engage with the people around us while building social problem solving skills.

When kids take care of living things, such as babies, animals, or plants, they are developing their empathy skills. Empathy is a key skill for many careers where people care for living things. Dog walkers, nurses, park rangers, teachers, and others all need to have strong empathy skills as they take care of living things. Playing pretend, caring for a family member, and listening to friends are ways kids can practice empathy. And these activities can help them explore their interests — or find new ways to help others throughout their lives.

Here are some ways you can help your children strengthen their empathy skills:

1 Teach Kids How to Care for Babies

Have you ever noticed how kids are fascinated by small babies? If you have a new baby at home, find small tasks that older siblings can help with. My daughter was two when her baby brother was born. We talked to her about noticing what her brother might need. When the baby needed a diaper change, it was her job to get the diaper and wipes. We also talked a lot about what her brother needed to grow up healthy and how she could be a part of that — and she loved to boast about what a good big sister she was.

In “Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood,” Daniel has a baby sister named Margaret. It makes Daniel feel proud when he can help take care of his little sister! Your child can practice taking care of a baby too with pretend play.

2 Teach Kids How to Care for Animals

Taking care of pets can boost empathy. Pet care can provide a consistent “job” for kids — a meaningful, daily responsibility. Even preschoolers can help fill a dog’s water bowl or give fish a pinch of food. Right now, we have a jar of baby ladybugs on our windowsill. Every day, my daughter checks on their progress and wonders if they need water or more food. If you don’t have a pet at home, play pretend by taking care of a stuffed animal.

The Kratt Brothers in “Wild Kratts” are always thinking about the needs of animals. If your child is interested in learning more about caring for animals, the “Wild Kratts” Baby Buddies app is a resource where kids can learn about taking care of baby animals like elephants, cheetahs, and more.

3 Teach Kids How to Care for Plants

By watering plants and nurturing them, kids can understand how caring for others is like tending to a garden. Recently, my daughter and I prepared a little patch of soil and scattered a few wildflower seeds. Each morning, she waters them. We talk about how seeds need good soil, water and sunlight. Like people, they start small and fragile, but with the right care, they will eventually blossom. Caring for the environment teaches empathy because we learn to support things that provide us with food and water.

To encourage your child’s interest in plants and nature, check out “Elinor Wonders Why!” Watch Elinor as she learns about taking care of plants and what they need. Then set up your own schedule to take care of a plant, pet, or stuffed animal!

How can I tell if my child is becoming more empathetic?

As your child grows, you'll see key signs of empathy development:

They respond to others' emotions. They may show concern when a sibling or friend is upset or try to comfort them.

They consider other people's perspectives. Empathetic children can imagine things from someone else's point of view. For example, they may understand why a classmate is sad after losing a game or why a sibling is angry when their toy is taken away.

They apologize when they are wrong. When a child is building empathy, they become more aware of how their actions affect others. They may apologize for hurting someone's feelings or making a mistake. They might offer a hug or to fix a problem they caused.

They ask about others' feelings. Being curious about others' emotions is a sign your child is developing empathy. They may ask questions like, "Why is he crying?" or "What's wrong with her?" This curiosity shows they're trying to understand others' emotions and experiences. Having conversations with your child about their feelings or others' feelings they've noticed is one way to help support their development of empathy.

Empathy develops over time and can be different for every child. As parents and caregivers, we can help them become more empathetic by showing patience, love, and understanding. By supporting and encouraging their emotional growth, you'll be helping your child build their empathy skills and develop healthy relationships throughout their life. For more about developing empathy, check out these picture books!

Deborah Farmer Kris is an education journalist, parent educator and the author of the "All the Time" picture book series. Her bylines include PBS KIDS, NPR's Mindshift, The Washington Post, the Boston Globe Magazine, and Oprah Daily. She also spent 20+ years as a K-12 teacher and administrator. You can also find her at www.parenthood365.org

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<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-caring-for-living-things-helps-kids-build-empathy>



How to Teach Your Child to Be An "Includer"

By Katie Hurley, LCSW

Jun 7, 2016

A ten-year-old girl came to me with tears in her eyes. She was sad and frustrated and couldn't understand *why* her "former best friend" left her out at recess that day. To hear this little girl tell her version of events, her friend iced her out of a new club she formed with their peer group. Not only that, the other girl teased her in the classroom to get a laugh from the kids around her. It's a heartbreaking story to hear, and yet I hear some version of this over and over again from many kids.

When we talked more about the circumstances leading up to the event, new information emerged. My client, as it turned out, left that other girl out of a big weekend outing just weeks before. She felt hurt and excluded, so she responded by hurting and excluding.

Relational Aggression

This story took place almost a decade ago, but similar stories play out with young children every single week. Exclusion is an example of relational aggression, which is defined as behavior that intends to harm others by damaging or manipulating their peer relationships. This insidious form of

bullying can be hard to detect but causes significant psychological stress for kids. Other acts of relational aggression include gossiping, rumor spreading, alliance building and public humiliation.

Survey results from The Ophelia Project, a national non-profit dedicated to addressing relational aggression through systemic change in social culture, show that 48 percent of students are regularly exposed to relational aggression and that students age 11 to 15 are exposed to 33 acts of relational aggression during any given week.

While many bully prevention programs aim to put an end to negative behaviors in the classroom setting, teaching kids prosocial behaviors empowers them to make positive choices both in school and out in the world. It's not enough to teach kids what *not* to do; we also have to teach them what to do to promote kindness and compassion among their peers.

The good news is that not only is kindness contagious, but it also results in greater happiness and increased friendships. A study published in the journal *PLOS One* followed a group of 400 9-to-11-year-old students in elementary schools in Vancouver. The kids were split into two groups. One group was asked to track the pleasant places they visited while the other was asked to perform acts of kindness. After four weeks, both groups reported higher levels of happiness, but the kindness group also reported greater acceptance from their peers. Simple acts of kindness resulted in both greater overall happiness and more friendships in the classroom. That's a win-win.

Empower Your Child

The question I hear more often than not is not, "How can I raise a kind kid" but "What do I do when my kid is excluded?" It's heartbreaking to hear that your child is on the receiving end of any kind of relational aggression, but to think that your child might be alone and upset at school each day can be devastating. It's natural to want to "fix" the problem. The thing is ... fixing rarely fixes.

The best thing parents can do is to empower kids to act as "includers." When we instill kids with prosocial skills, we spread kindness and compassion. Follow these steps to teach your kids to include others.

1 Listen and empathize.

It can be very difficult to sit back and listen when a child tells a story of being excluded, humiliated or otherwise hurt at school, but listening and empathizing are the two best things you can do. While it might be tempting to respond, "What a terrible friend!" what your child *actually* needs to hear is, "That sounds terrible. You must feel so upset right now." When we empathize with our kids, we teach them to do the same for others. Empathetic kids can create giant ripples of kindness in this world. All we have to do is be there for them and let them work through their emotions.

2 Be an “includer.”

Ever stare at your phone to avoid social interaction when you're just not up for it or you don't know anyone in the room? You're not alone. Technology makes it easy to avoid uncomfortable situations, but using technology to avoid social interactions sends mixed messages to our kids. If we want our kids to learn to reach out to others and include new people (or people they wouldn't otherwise sit with), we need to do the same. Show your kids how to make new friends by introducing yourself to new people and striking up conversations with people they don't know.

3 Look for someone who needs a friend.

It's normal for kids to get caught up in their usual groups. Young children like routine and tend to sit at the same table at lunch or play with the same groups at recess, but this can be limiting. Teach your child to scan the room (or field) to look for someone who might need a friend. Practice ways to invite a new kid into the group or ask others to join a game. When kids practice these skills at home, they are better able to use them out in the world.

4 Talk about unintentional exclusion.

Sometimes kids exclude others without intent to harm. In the case of my client above, she didn't invite that other girl to the weekend outing because it involved roller coasters and she knew the girl didn't like roller coasters. She meant to protect her friend, but in planning a secret outing with others she actually caused more harm than good. Talk to your kids about what it means to exclude and how they can include others. Ask your kids to draw connections between being excluded and possible negative emotions *and* between being included and possible positive emotions. Open and honest communication helps kids work through feelings and emotions. It also increases empathy and compassion. Host a weekly family meeting to talk about the good, the bad and the in-between. In helping our children process emotions, we show them that kindness really does count.

There is no one quick, easy answer to relational aggression. Neither you nor your child can control how other children act. What you can work on is how your child responds to relational aggression or exclusion and how your child can take the lead to be an “includer” of other children.

Katie Hurley, LCSW, is a child and adolescent psychotherapist, parenting expert, and writer. She is the founder of “Girls Can!” empowerment groups for girls between ages 5-11. Hurley is the author of No More Mean Girls and The Happy Kid Handbook, and her work can be found in The Washington Post, Psychology Today, and US News and World Report.

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<https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-teach-your-child-to-be-an-includer>



Three Ways to Help Your Child Build Better Friendships

By Dana Winters, Ph.D.

Aug 4, 2022

How can parents support their children’s friendships through different ages and stages? As children grow, so do their abilities to build friendships. Here’s how to guide your kids as they grow and make new friends along the way!

Depending on your child’s age, you might find yourself more engaged in their friendships. When children are young, parents and caregivers plan playdates and guide them into friendships. As children get older, they can choose their friends for themselves — from fleeting friendships on a playground to lasting friendships in a school classroom or outside activities. For kids and grown-ups, friendship can teach us something new about ourselves and others.

As a parent to 12- and 8-year-old daughters, I’ve watched my kids build friendships across many times and places. The “Friendship” episode of the “PBS KIDS Talk About” video series reminds me of how parents play an important role in helping children understand their friendships.

Three Ways to Help Your Child Build Better Friendships

Allow your child to see your friendships. There's a saying that "attitudes are caught, not taught." Children can also "catch" how to relate to others from the friendships they observe. For young children, this might mean watching the adults around them interact. As children develop, they learn what to do (and not do) from the friendships they observe. As we see in the "Friendship" episode, as kids grow, they begin to identify the qualities they like in a friend and seek out friends with these characteristics and behaviors. Caregivers play an important role in helping children understand appropriate and supportive behavior in friendships by modeling our own healthy friendships. For example, perhaps you've made a meal for a friend who's going through a hard time. Showing your child how you care for your own friends is a chance for you to talk about how they can apply the same attitudes of goodwill in their own relationships.

Help your child to understand that there are many ways to be a friend. Not all children will interact with one another in the same way — and that's OK! In the "Friendship" episode, sisters Naura and Aanya talk about making new friends with children who were new to their school with the help of a "buddy bench." A buddy bench is a place where children looking for a friend can sit and other children can invite and include them in their play. Helping children understand that there's no one "right way" to make or be a friend can help them invite and include others who may interact differently than them. Some children may be hesitant to engage with their peers, while others may be excited to meet new people and interact.

While there is no "right way" to be a friend, there are wrong ways to be a friend. Children in the episode talk about what they look for in friends. Ask your child to list what makes a good friend. This can help them make good choices and approach others with kindness and care. Teaching children to approach others with empathy and compassion can help them to interact with all types of children — and make all types of friends!

Support your child when friendships are hard. As parents, it can be difficult to see our children unhappy or hurt because of social situations. Maybe you remember a time when you were your child's age and you had similar difficulties making or keeping friends. Sharing these stories with your child can show them that challenges in friendships are normal — and that you can be a support during hard times.

Teach your child that disagreeing with a friend doesn't mean a friendship is over. Discuss how they can respectfully disagree with others without being hurtful or harmful. If your child has a tough argument with a friend, offer to talk about the issue together and listen to understand what has happened. Talking through what happened can help children navigate tricky friend situations in the future.

During the "Friendship" episode, Jayce recounts a disagreement with a friend over a computer game. He tells his mom that it made him upset, but agrees that it's OK to be mad and still be friends. When arguments happen, consider helping your child explore which parts of the issue are their responsibility — and if they need to apologize for things that they said or did. Sometimes the hurt is so deep that it might be hard for your child to forgive. When this happens, it might result in

the end of a friendship. Guiding children at the end of friendships is just as important as helping them at the beginning.

It can be hard to see your child experience the ups and downs of friendship. But the friendships your child has in their younger years will prepare them for the more complex friendships they may have in the future. Your support and care are important parts of helping children learn how to be caring friends throughout their lives.

Dr. Dana Winters supports children, families, and their helpers by focusing on the power of human relationships across child-serving settings. Dr. Winters' efforts to promote human interactions and relationships have resulted in research and intervention efforts around the world. She currently serves as the Executive Director of the Fred Rogers Institute, which advances the legacy of Fred Rogers by investing in the strengths of families and caring adults to support the healthy development of children. Dr. Winters is better known as mama to her two daughters and one adorably fluffy labradoodle.

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