

# TEACHING COMPASSION TO YOUNG KIDS

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Compassion is tied to empathy, but it's bigger than simply having the ability to imagine another person's feelings. Compassion includes the desire to help and to prevent sadness or suffering.

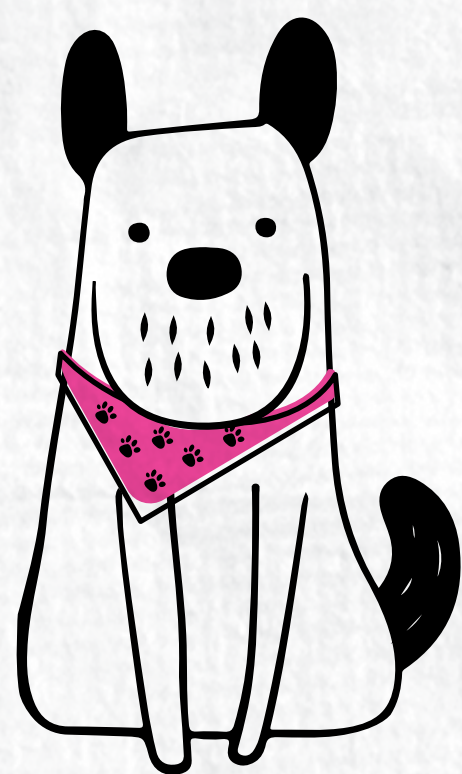
This seems really big for little kids! But kids are amazingly capable. Most kids develop feelings of empathy and compassion naturally with age, but you can help deepen their ability for compassionate behavior.

Keep it simple and use relatable, real-life examples when you can.

**Model compassionate behavior with small acts of kindness.**



- Compliment someone.
- Hold the door for a stranger.
- Help your neighbor.



**Practice perspective-taking.**

- Imagine the viewpoint of characters in books: "How do you think T-Rex feels right now?"
- Take the perspective of your pet: "Does Sparky feel happier when you pet him gently?"
- Consider their friends: "I wonder how she felt when she fell down?"

**Encourage everyday caring behavior.**



- Let your kids know when you see them sharing, helping, and showing empathy.
- Your kids will notice the good feelings that come from showing compassion and feel motivated to continue.



**Practice open communication.**

- Model active listening by giving your kids your full attention when they are talking to you. Ask questions and repeat back what they are saying so they know you really heard them.
- Talk about feelings and practice naming emotions while feelings are happening: "You're so proud of your drawing!"
- Reflect on feelings that happened throughout the day: "You looked sad when your friend went home. Did that make you feel lonely?"