



## CREATING EMPATHY – GRADES K-2

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### **Creating Empathy 5-7 years (grades k-2)**

#### **Play emotion charades - Activity**

Teaching emotions through play is an important way to develop empathy in children. Games and activities can help children learn the language to express and understand complex feelings.

To play emotion charades, take turns acting out emotions and guessing what feeling is being portrayed. After a player has guessed correctly, you can also discuss the emotion with questions like:

- When do you feel sad?
- What helps you feel better when you're sad?
- How can we help someone else when they're feeling sad?

Lisette at the Where Imagination Grows blog suggests a helpful variation on this game. She uses the characters from the movie *Inside Out* to represent different emotions.

She cuts out images of the characters and glues each character onto an index card. The performer then draws an index card from a bucket and acts out that emotion. The other children hold up the corresponding *Inside Out* character figurine to guess the emotion.

#### **Use pictures.**

Visuals are another great way to help children learn. Cut out pictures from magazines or use emoji pictures (see attached) that show sad, angry, or happy faces. You can also work up to more complex emotions like scared, embarrassed, disappointed, frustrated, etc.

As you discuss how the people in the pictures are feeling, you can also ask children about times they felt the same way. Provide examples from your own life too, showing that even adults grapple with big emotions and that it's perfectly normal



**Embrace diversity.**

A major component of empathy is respecting others from different backgrounds.

Read books or watch shows featuring different children. Help children understand and focus on what they have in common with others.

**Teach healthy limits and boundaries.**

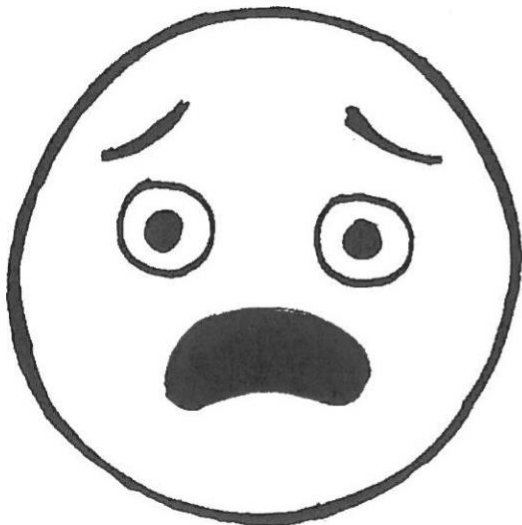
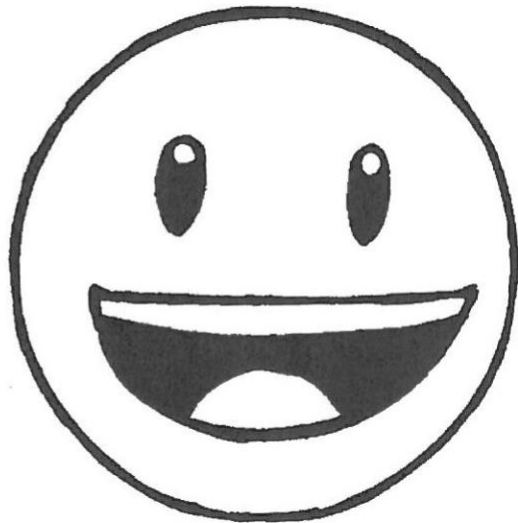
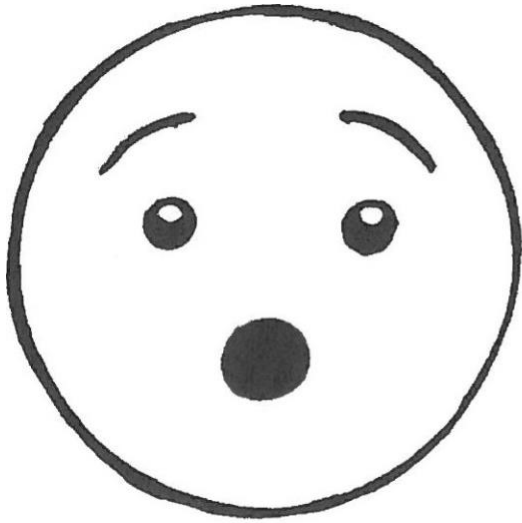
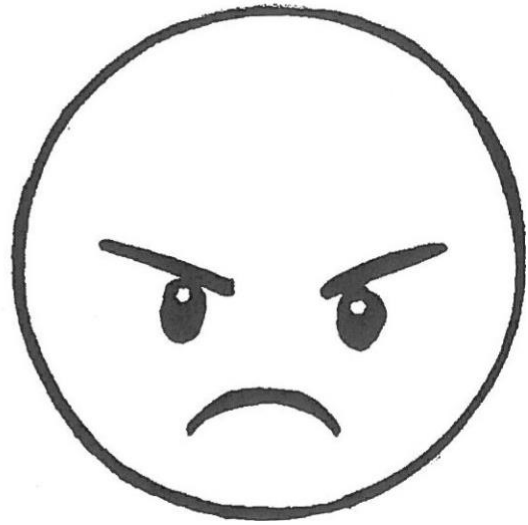
As children grow older, it's important that they also understand empathy doesn't mean taking on the problems and needs of everyone around them. It doesn't mean always saying "yes" or dropping everything to help others.

Teach your students to understand and respect their own needs by following these 2 steps.

1. Create a plan for how the child can respond in certain scenarios. If, for example, another child gives an unwanted hug, the child can say, "I don't like that. Please don't touch me." If a child calls another child a name, they can say, "My name is \_\_\_\_\_. Call me that instead."
2. Create a list of scenarios in which it's necessary to ask an adult for help, like a child refusing to take no for an answer or any situation that feels dangerous or uncomfortable. In addition, explain that being helpful to others should not involve breaking any rules or doing anything that the child isn't comfortable with.

Retrieved and adapted from:<https://biglifejournal.com/blogs/blog/key-strategies-teach-children-empathy>





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