



3 Keys to Developing Children's Empathy

Courtesy of Priceless Parenting



Children are not born with empathy. They are born with the capacity to have empathy but it only develops under certain conditions. Parents play a critical role in developing their children's empathy.

In their book, Born for Love: Why Empathy is Essential - and Endangered, Perry and Szalavitz write "The essence of empathy is the ability to stand in another's shoes, to feel what it's like there and to care about making it better if it hurts." They document numerous cases where children have not experienced adequate empathy while growing up. These kids' behavior towards others also reflects a lack of empathy which often leads to serious problems.

There are three key things you can do to help develop empathy in your children:

Key 1: Show empathy when responding to your children's behavior.

Children learn to be empathetic by being treated with empathy. This begins when they are babies with loving adults responding to their cries and needs. Soothing young children when they are upset lays the foundation for their own development of empathy.

Older children learn empathy when you respond to their behavior in a caring way rather than with anger. Instead of yelling "How could you do that?" or "What were you thinking?" respond in a way that demonstrates you understand what your child is going through.

Reflecting your child's feelings is another way of showing empathy. If your child has angrily thrown her math book down, you could say "I can see you're frustrated. I get frustrated too when I'm having trouble doing something."

Expressing empathy puts you and your child on the same side of the problem. When you show compassion and understanding, your child is in a better position for thinking about a solution to the problem.

Key 2: Demonstrate genuine empathy.

When using empathy, it needs to come from your heart. If it doesn't sound genuine, children will quickly see through it as fake empathy.

To see a situation from your child's viewpoint, it can help to think of a situation where you've experienced something similar to what your child is experiencing.



FALL INTO READING !

Key 3: Discuss other people's perspectives

Reading books can help develop understanding of other people's points of view. Perry and Szalavitz talk about the importance of reading to children and discussing the actions and feelings of the characters. "When you read to them or discuss books, ask what they think the characters are thinking and feeling. Point out facial expressions and body language and talk about what these mean."

You can have this same type of discussion with the events happening in your children's lives. When you help your children see the world from different viewpoints you help them develop their empathy. When children can feel empathy for others, they are far less likely to engage in behaviors like bullying.

By treating your children with empathy and guiding them to treat others that way, you are helping to build a more caring community for everyone. This is a very worthy goal indeed!

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7 Habits of Highly Happy Children

By Katie Hurley

When it comes to kids, people just don't think about happiness enough these days. They think about success. They think in comparisons. They think about milestones, graduations and shiny trophies.

Once upon a time, childhood was filled with endless days spent outside and very little TV. Imaginations ran wild and kids made their own fun with nothing but a few Matchbox cars and an old cardboard box. They played, they learned, and they socialized. But most of all, they had fun.

Life is far too scripted today. Plans are made. Classes are attended. Craft projects are intended to mimic those found on Pinterest. Gone are the days of free play and creating something out of nothing. Many kids today are simply following a script.

That's not to say that kids aren't happy, because many kids are. Many kids live a life full of adventure and wonder in their own backyards. But many don't. Many simply follow the plan. And that's a shame, because childhood should be all about happiness.

How can we focus on happiness when there is always so much to do? We can start by taking a breath (don't worry, that enormous pile of laundry will wait for you), and then we can take a few cues from happy kids.

1. **They eat on time.**

I know what you're thinking; that's too simple to be a real parenting strategy. Think again. Have you ever been so hungry that you just wanted to scream? That's how kids feel when they miss a snack or have to wait two hours past their normal mealtime to participate in some super-fancy family dinner. Eating at regular intervals refuels their growing brains and bodies and keeps hunger under control. When kids are calm and satisfied, they experience greater happiness.

2. **They get consistent sleep.**

I know, I know, some kids are better sleepers than others. While that's certainly the truth, it isn't an excuse for poor sleep habits. Kids need to learn how to sleep. It's up to us to teach them. When they are completely exhausted, they are cranky. When they are well-rested and ready to embrace the day, they are happier. Make sleep (and a consistent bedtime) a priority.

3. **They play without instructions.**

Unstructured playtime appears to be a lost art these days. It used to be that kids made their own fun. Today, kids are over-scheduled, dialed in and in awe of toys that essentially do the playing for them. Sure, those garbage trucks with all of the bells and whistles are neat, but be sure to mix in some wooden trucks and building blocks. And, please, take a look at the busy schedule and find some time where your kids can just play each day. Play is good for the soul.

4. **They are allowed to express emotions.**

Kids yell when they're mad. They cry when they're sad. They might even stomp their feet and run around in circles when they're not sure what to feel. And sometimes, if you're really lucky, they do all of that in the middle of aisle 9 at your friendly neighborhood Target store. Let them. Kids need to express their emotions. While adults know to call a friend to vent when the going gets tough, kids are a bit more primitive. Shushing them and publicly shaming them doesn't help. Let them vent in their own little way and then offer to help. Enduring a public temper tantrum might feel overwhelming in the moment, but it's better than a lifetime of internalizing negative emotions that could lead to eating issues, depression or other emotional problems for your child.

5. **They get to make choices.**

Kids have very little control over their lives. They are constantly being told where to go, what to do and what to eat. A little bit of control goes a long way toward feeling happy. Let your kids choose their outfits. Allow them to choose the dinner menu one night per week. Ask them what classes they want to take. Give them the opportunity to make some decisions and watch them smile in return.

6. **They feel heard.**

Kids are intuitive. Even toddlers can tell when parents are tuning them out or answering on autopilot. When kids feel like their parents truly listen to them (about everything from Lightning McQueen's best race to what they learned in school), they feel more connected. This increases their self-confidence and increases their overall happiness. Listen when your children speak. It's the best way to build an open and honest relationship with your child and it makes your child happy.

7. **They experience unconditional love.**

Kids mess up. You tell them not to jump off the couch over and over again, but they do it anyway. And then they cry. Because childhood is largely based on trial and error, and sometimes kids just need to take chances. Forgive them. Love them anyway.

When kids know that their parents love and support them no matter what, they are more likely to take healthy risks. They are confident and secure in their decisions. They learn that sometimes people make mistakes, but there is always a chance to right a wrong. When children know that their parents will always be there for them, for better or for worse, they are happy.

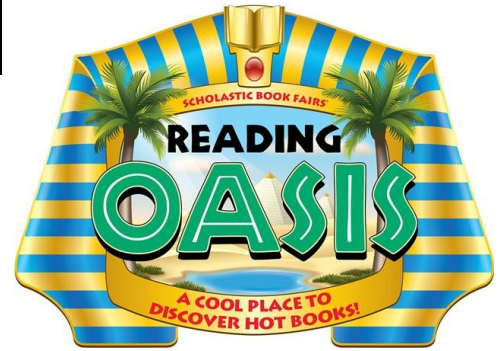
I Can Read with my Eyes Shut by Dr. Seuss

I can read in red. I can read in blue.
I can read in pickle color too.
I can read in bed, and in purple. and in brown.
I can read in a circle and upside down!
I can read with my left eye. I can read with my right.
I can read Mississippi with my eyes shut tight!

~~~~~  
There are so many things you can learn about.  
But...you'll miss the best things  
If you keep your eyes shut.

The more that you read, the more things you will know  
The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.

~~~~~  
If you read with your eyes shut you're likely to find
That the place where you're going is far, far behind
SO...that's why I tell you to keep your eyes wide.
Keep them wide open...at least on one side.



COME TO OUR...

SCHOLASTIC
BOOK FAIR

SEPTEMBER
23RD—27TH

IXL Comes to Barrington Academy in September

Barrington Academy Welcomes IXL & Tablets to the Private Pre-Kindergarten Classroom!

Technology is here to stay. The debate on technology and children will undoubtedly continue and experts will weigh in on both sides. However, as parents, you already see in the daily lives of your children the dynamic role that technology plays in their present – think about what this means for their future!

Exposure and interaction with current technology provides the opportunity to instruct our students on how to use this powerful information tool to learn and develop skills. It is important at Barrington Academy to provide a complete educational experience and technology is a key component of our culture that must be included. Therefore, this school year, we are introducing tablets to our Private Pre-Kindergarten classroom for guided use and content supplement as well as academic skills practice.

We are pleased to offer each student in our Private Pre-K Program a

subscription to IXL that can be used both at school and at home to reinforce and develop skills in Math. But that's not all, IXL is currently developing language arts programming too! Parents who do not wish their child to be enrolled in this program may opt out.

IXL: Math for the Left and Right Brain

Math is about so much more than just numbers. IXL understands this and works to make an online learning experience that is interactive and fun for our Pre-K students! Each math concept is approached from all angles, offering visual representations, word problems, interactive activities, and more. With an abundance of math problems for every learning style, students can't help but build lasting skills and confidence. Additionally, IXL is the ultimate focused learning environment, free from any gimmicks or distractions.

IXL's math skills are aligned to the 2011 Common Core Georgia Performance Standards, the 2006 Georgia Pre-K Program Content Standards, the 2006 Georgia Performance Standards, and the 2004 Georgia Performance Standards.

Not only do students gain new skills on IXL—they gain a whole new appreciation for how fun math can be! From the vibrant images that permeate IXL's activities, to the enticing awards and certificates that are hidden throughout the site, students cannot wait to hop on to IXL—and you'll have trouble tearing them away.



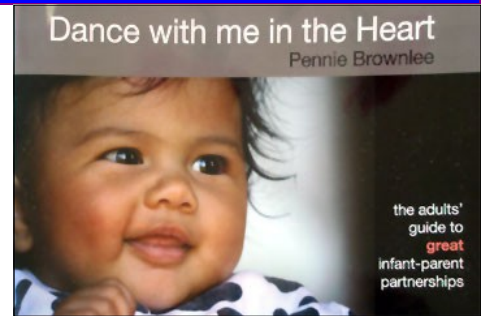
Dance with me in the Heart: The Adults' Guide to Great Infant-Parent Partnerships

The child who refuses to eat, who refuses to be defeated in the meal-time battle, will most certainly be the child who hasn't been asked into the partnership," observes Pennie Brownlee in Dance with me in the Heart: The Adults' Guide to Great Infant-Parent Partnerships.

She explains:

"This child is expected to dance to someone else's tune rather than being encouraged to move towards autonomy. It seems that quite unconsciously, these children have to find ways to exercise their autonomy as they push to develop, and eating, toileting, and sleeping are three very good places to start. When any of these activities start to resemble a battleground, it is time to reassess the battle plan. Call a truce, declare peace, take your cues from the child, and get back into heart coherence. Battles around these crucial activities do long-term unnecessary damage to the psyche. As my Dad used to say, *'There is no such thing as an unwounded soldier.'*"

Dance with Me in the Heart is written for parents and caregivers as a guide to the most important dance in every baby's life — the partnership dance. The book provides very practical and thoughtful advice on all aspects of caring for infants — nurturing, playing, feeding, toileting, sleeping, stimulating, and comforting.



September "My Wonderful World"

I am Special

My Family

My Friends

My School

My Neighborhood

What's Happening in September ...

EVENTS

September 2nd
SCHOOL CLOSED

September 23rd-27th
SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIR

September 26th
GRANDPARENT'S DAY
At BARRINGTON

September 30th –October 4th
COMMUNITY HELPERS
WEEK

**Grandparents
are Great!!
So Let's Celebrate!**



**Grandparent's Day
Celebration
September 26th**

**School Closed
MONDAY,
September 2nd**



**In observance of
LABOR DAY**