



**Civil Behavior
Getting to the Heart
of the Matter**

Civil Behavior in Action

71%

of District 64 students in grades 6-8 reported that others asked them to join in a group or conversation when they saw they were alone.

89%

of students in grades 3-5 said when they are upset other kids will try to comfort them or cheer them up.

KATRINA RELIEF

So far, students have collected over \$21,000 for victims of Hurricane Katrina. Some schools are also gathering clothing, books, school supplies and other items to help those in temporary housing.

Heart-to-Heart

Making Civil Behavior an Accepted and Expected Part of Our Lives

Teaching Empathy to Children

- ...listen to others and be sensitive to their feelings
- ...display tolerance and understanding of others
- ...be of service to others

In our world filled with conflicts and people of various backgrounds and beliefs, opportunities arise on a daily basis to develop and nurture empathy in children. Parents can capture these opportunities by turning them into "teachable moments".

Starting with even very young children, parents can reason with them by talking about the effects of their actions on others. "When you told Susie she couldn't play, how do you think she felt?" prompts the child to examine the consequences of his or her words and actions. Help your child learn how to make amends. "Why don't you go and ask her to play on the swings with you?" gives the child a specific, positive action to take.

Parents can model empathetic behavior by demonstrating service to others. For example, volunteer at school and then discuss how those efforts helped the teacher, the PTO, or the class. Talk about the positive outcomes of your actions with your child to reinforce the concept of empathy. Share the work of organizations, such as the Red Cross, to help children understand that people can help others in many ways.

Another way to help develop empathy in children is to learn about famous empathetic people, such as Mother Theresa or Martin Luther King, Jr. Focusing on their lives and work gives children good models of empathetic behavior.

MORE HELP FOR PARENTS

Print Resource

Teaching Your Children Values
by Linda and Richard Eyre

Online Resource

www.parentcenter.babycenter.com/refcap/preschooler/praising/65717.html

Dear Advice Lady,

My son came home from school today very upset. He said that kids were making fun of another child who has special needs but my son didn't do anything. How can I help him?

Concerned Parent

Dear Concerned Parent,

The good news is that your child demonstrated empathy for the other child. The hard part is in helping him to develop strategies to act upon that empathy. Tell your child about a time when you stood up for another person, even though it was a hard thing to do. Then share a time when you didn't stand up for something or someone because you were afraid. By acknowledging how difficult it can be to do the right thing, you are being empathetic to your child's feelings and modeling both empathy and action for him.

The Advice Lady