



# Empathy in the Classroom

*Empathy is the ability to share someone else's feelings or motivations and to understand their perspective.*

*Affective empathy is the ability to emotionally relate to someone else's feelings. Cognitive empathy is the ability to imagine what someone else is feeling.*

For the item, "I feel badly when someone gets his or her feelings hurt," students' responses were:

Not at all true: 7%    A little true: 21%    Pretty much true: 35%    Very much true: 37%

## Focus on Similarities

Use activities in which students identify characteristics, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that they share with others.

## Create Bonding Attachments

- Have students draw a picture, bring a photo of, or just visualize someone they feel safe with.
- Use cooperative learning strategies to build bonds between students.
- Have students play music together.
- Express and show care for your students.

## Role-plays & Acting

- Incorporate role-playing into classroom lessons in Language Arts, Social Studies, and even Math.
- Encourage students to act in plays.
- Create an afterschool drama program.

## Identify Feelings

- Ask students how they are feeling.
- Have students notice how others are feeling.
- Teach vocabulary words related to feelings.



## Why is empathy important?

Studies have shown that students who have empathy:

- Do better in school.
- Are more cooperative with others.
- Make morally sound decisions.
- Are more resilient.
- Are more altruistic.

Teachers who have empathy:

- Are less likely to burn out.
- Have students with better academic outcomes.
- Are more likely to respond to bullying behavior.
- Have students who display more prosocial behaviors.

## Resources

*Teaching Tolerance*  
*Empathy in Education*  
*Teaching Empathy*  
*Feelings Inventory*  
*How Empathy Affects Learning*