

Relationships that Nurture

Monthly tips provided by St. David's Center in partnership with Mom Enough

Fostering Compassionate Children

Audio can be heard here: [Fostering Compassionate Children](#)

As a parent, the most important thing you can do to foster compassion in your child is to teach by example. Below are some ways you can demonstrate a sense of compassion for your child to model.

I. Speak compassionately to your son or daughter.

If your child falls down, say “I’m sorry you fell down” instead of “get up.”

II. Focus on a person as an individual.

A person is not defined by how they look or their special need. It’s important to acknowledge differences and how that makes a person unique.

III. Act compassionately to everyone, not just people you know.

If you see a homeless person on the street, you don’t need to give them money, per se, but talk about how difficult that situation must be for them.

IV. Don’t shield children from others.

Engross your child in opportunities to be with children of different backgrounds and needs. Your child will get to know them simply as another child.

V. Look for opportunities to show empathy.

If an animal is hurt, talk about how it must feel and what you could do to help it feel better.

VI. Do things for people who are less fortunate.

Go to a soup kitchen. Rake an elderly neighbor’s leaves.

VII. Talk about what children see or hear.

- The words we use when we see difficult things are important. For example, if your child comments about another child with tattered clothes you could say, “Wow, that’s sad. Maybe their mom and dad don’t have money to buy new clothes.”
- Embarrassing words are teachable moments. When your child loudly says, “He walks funny!” explain that “His walker works really well to help him get where he needs to go.” Then ask the man if it’d be helpful for you to open the door for him, without assuming that it’s something he needs.
- Different languages are to be admired, not discriminated. When you’re child says that it’s difficult to understand another child and her family, say something fun like, “She can say ‘ice cream’ in two different languages.”