

Empathy in Action (Levels A-B)

WRITTEN

To help students recognise basic emotions and practise small, concrete acts of kindness that build empathy and connection in their classroom environment.



Learning Intentions

Notice Feelings in Others:



Students will begin to recognise when someone looks sad, upset, or needs help.

Practise Kind Actions:

Students will explore simple ways to help others feel better (e.g., smiling, sharing, gentle touch with permission, offering help).

Use Empathy Every Day:

Students will practise one small act of kindness or caring in their daily routine.



Success Criteria

Students identify or point to a picture of someone feeling sad or upset.



Students choose or show at least one way they can help someone feel better.

Students practise a simple empathy action through gesture, picture, or AAC.



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Duration: 10 - 15 minutes

Objective

To help students recognise basic emotions and practise small, concrete acts of kindness that build empathy and connection in their classroom environment.

What You Need

Visual emotion cards (sad, happy, worried, calm, lonely) (found in PDF resource)
Kindness/action cards (helping, sharing, smiling, give company, play with, offer toy) (found in PDF resource)

Paper for drawing or sticking in cards

Coloured pencils, stickers, stamps, decorating materials.

AAC devices with symbols such as: "sad," "help," "share," "friend," "kind," "I care," "yes/no"

Setup

1. Print and cut out a set of the Emotion and Kindness Action cards (one set per student).
2. Create a calm, quiet space for reflection (circle time or small groups).
3. Teacher shows and demonstrates the emotion visuals and kindness action cards and explains empathy in simple terms:
"Empathy means caring when someone feels sad. It means helping."
4. Provide picture options and AAC modelling before starting the activity.

Gameplay / Activity Steps

Step 1: Notice a Feeling

Have the students in a semicircle formation, the teacher presents two emotion cards:

- "sad" and "happy"

Ask:

"Which one looks sad?"

Students respond by:

- pointing to the relevant card
- eye gaze towards the relevant card
- touching the card
- pressing AAC "sad"

Teacher labels emotions clearly:

"This person is sad. They need help."



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Step 2: Think of a Time

Teacher offers simple prompts:

"Have you seen someone who was sad?"

"Have you seen someone who was lonely?"

Teacher prompts, "think about how you could help that person feel happier/better".

Step 3: Choose or Draw a Kind Action

Move students into pairs (either with another student or educator). Give each pair a set of the emotion cards and kindness action cards.

The student selects one emotion card, processes the emotion and then aims to pair the card with an appropriate kindness action card. As the teacher explain to the students "what would help this person if they are feeling that way?".

The students choose a kindness card or draw a simple picture showing:

- giving a toy
- sharing
- waving
- smiling
- playing with someone
- sitting with someone
- saying "Are you ok?" through AAC

Students stick their chosen picture on paper or draw their idea with support.

Step 4: Plan for Everyday Kindness (optional)

The teacher asks:

"What is ONE thing you can do to help a friend this week?"

Students choose from the kindness action cards and holds up an option they think will help someone:

Reflection Prompts

Use simple visuals and one question at a time:

- "How does being kind make YOU feel?" (happy/calm/excited visuals)
- "Do you want to help a friend today?" (yes/no)

Any gesture, sound, or AAC selection is a success.



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Sensory-Seeking Learners Variation

1. Use Puppets or Soft Toys

Let students show empathy to a puppet who is "sad." They can:

- pat it gently
- hug it
- show a smile card
- rock it

2. Movement-Based Empathy

Pair emotions with gentle movement:

- sad = slow stretch
- helping = reaching arms out
- kindness = heart pose
- cheering someone = clap or hand wave

3. Sensory Action Cards

Use textured cards for kindness actions:

- soft (hug)
- rough (help carry)
- smooth (share)
- fuzzy (comfort)

Students choose their helping action by touch.

4. Breaks Between Steps

Offer regulation supports:

- deep pressure
- rocking
- slow breathing with visual guide
- weighted object



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AAC-Specific Supports

1. Prepare Vocabulary

Symbols for:

- sad
- help
- kind
- friend
- share
- yes/no
- happy
- I care
- good

2. Aided Language Input

Teacher models:

"They feel sad."

"You help."

"That is kind."

"You care."

3. AAC for Choice-Making

Students select empathy actions:

- "help"
- "share"
- "sit with friend"
- "wave"

Teacher narrates:

"You chose SHARE."

4. AAC for Reflection

Students respond using simple symbols:

- "happy"
- "good"
- "more"
- "finished"

KINDNESS ACTION CARDS

PRINT AND CUT OUT THE CARDS. A STUDENT DRAWS AN EMOTION CARD FIRST, IDENTIFIES THE FEELING WITH SUPPORT, THEN DRAWS A KINDNESS CARD THAT COULD HELP THAT EMOTION. THE STUDENT ACTS OUT, POINTS TO, OR MODELS THE KINDNESS CHOICE. CELEBRATE EVERY ATTEMPT.



KINDNESS ACTION CARDS



PLAYING



OFFERING A TOY



COMFORTING
A FRIEND



**YOU ARE
THE BEST!**

GIVING A
COMPLIMENT



KINDNESS ACTION CARDS



BUYING A FOOD



SAVING A SEAT



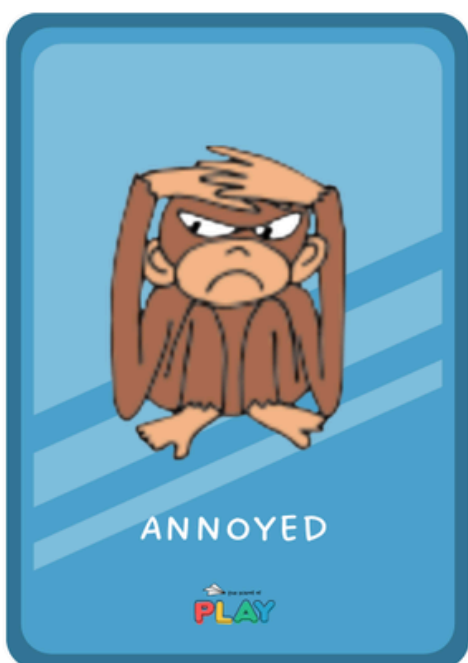
INVITING TO PLAY



OFFERING A TURN



VISUAL EMOTION CARDS



VISUAL EMOTION CARDS



SMILING



DISAPPOINTED



SAD



WORRIED



VISUAL EMOTION CARDS

