

Walk in Their Space Boots – Levels F-3

PLAY

To help students explore the feelings of others by stepping into their "space boots" and imagining life from another point of view. Neptune teaches us that emotions can be deep and powerful. Empathy helps us understand and support others through those waves.



Learning Intentions

Students will learn to think about how someone else might be feeling. This builds emotional awareness and empathy.

Students will practise taking turns and listening to other students' ideas. This supports respectful communication and kindness.

Students will learn to use imagination to pretend to be someone else and talk about feelings. This encourages creativity and emotional understanding.



Success Criteria

I can switch roles with another student and talk about their feelings.
This supports perspective-taking and self-expression.



I can listen carefully to others when they speak.
This builds listening skills and social connection.

I can show kindness when someone shares their feelings.
This promotes empathy and emotional safety.



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Objective:

To help students explore the feelings of others by stepping into their “space boots” and imagining life from another point of view. Neptune teaches us that emotions can be deep and powerful. Empathy helps us understand and support others through those waves.

Players:

Ideal for 4–26 students working in pairs or small groups

Materials:

- A few pairs of different shoes/boots (old shoes, boots, slippers, sandals, costume shoes)
- Optional: emotion cards or facial expression images (you can brainstorm a list of emotions as a whole class).
- Carpeted or soft floor space for safety

Time Required:

10–15 minutes

Setup:

Begin by reading the Neptune page from *The Playful Astronauts* and discussing:

- “What does empathy mean?”
- “Have you ever felt sad or happy and someone helped you?”
- “Why is it important to try to understand how others feel?”

Introduce the activity as a chance to *pretend* to be someone else and talk about their feelings, try to explain the saying “to walk in someone else’s shoes (or boots)”.

Gameplay:

Step 1 – Pair Up and Pick Shoes:

Students are paired up. Each pair selects one pair of “imaginative shoes” (or pretend to switch shoes if limited by materials).

One student wears the shoes and takes on a new role (e.g., “I’m someone who dropped their ice cream,” “I’m nervous on my first day at school”).

The other student listens and then responds with something kind, like:

- “I understand how that might feel.”
- “That sounds really hard. Can I help you?”
- “I’d give you a hug or tell a joke!”



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Step 2 – Switch Roles:

After one round, students switch roles and repeat. You can rotate pairs or create new scenarios if time allows. As the facilitator you know your class the best, you can bring in images of other countries or people to demonstrate how different other people can live even though we are on the same planet.

Step 3 – Group Sharing:

Bring the class together and ask:

- “What did it feel like to walk in someone else’s shoes?”
- “What can we do if a friend is feeling sad or left out?”

Winning the Game:

Everyone wins when they practise empathy. Neptune shows us that even the deepest feelings can be understood when we truly listen and care. The best reward is making someone else feel seen and supported.

Variations:

Emotion Explorer Challenge:

Instead of choosing random roles, use emotion cards (e.g. happy, worried, shy, proud). Students act out or describe that feeling while their partner guesses or responds with empathy.

Whole-Class Circle:

Students take turns stepping into an imaginary pair of *space boots* in the middle of the circle, acting out a short scenario. The class responds with kind ideas for how to help or support that person.

Story Extension:

After playing, invite students to draw or write about a time they showed empathy, titling their picture *“When I Walked in Someone’s Space Boots.”*

Home or Family Version:

Encourage families to try this game at home using shoes from around the house, helping children practise empathy within their family environment.



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For Wheelchair Users / Accessibility:

- Replace physical “walking” with *symbolic gestures*: students can roll forward, tap their wheels, or hold a photo or prop to represent stepping into someone’s shoes.
- Provide visual emotion cards or communication boards for non-verbal students.
- For limited mobility, the activity can be entirely verbal or expressive using facial expressions or voice tones.
- Pair with supportive peers for role-play, ensuring equal participation.
- Emphasise *imaginative empathy* over physical movement.

Notes for Inclusion:

- Reinforce that empathy is about *listening and caring*, not fixing or judging.
- Celebrate every effort to show understanding, even small gestures count.
- Use affirmations during discussion such as:
 - “Listening is kindness.”
 - “Everyone has feelings that matter.”
 - “Understanding others helps us all feel safe.”
 - If some students prefer not to act, allow them to share their responses through drawings or short written reflections.
- Model vulnerability by sharing a time you needed empathy and how it helped you.
- End the session with a class affirmation inspired by Neptune:
 - “We can listen deeply, care kindly, and understand each other, that’s our empathy power!”

Additional Notes:

Walk in Their Shoes gives students the chance to practise one of the most essential social-emotional skills: empathy. It helps them step outside their own experiences and connect with others on a deeper level. Like Neptune, where storms swirl and feelings run deep, this activity helps students understand the power of listening and kindness.

