



Big Heart World Educator Guide

Empathy

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PRESENTED BY

spar^kler

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH **noggin**



Contents of This Guide

Find out what's included!



Use Big Heart World resources in your classroom and share our Parent & Caregiver Guide — which will be released each month — with the families of your students.

What to expect in this guide:

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- Empathy: The 5th unit of Big Heart World
- The Big Heart World learning approach
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Visit us!

Go to www.BigHeartWorld.org for articles, games, do-together activities, and more to help you build your students' big hearts!

What is Big Heart World?

Big Heart World aims to help you help the children in your care learn social and emotional skills — what it means to have a *big heart* and how to grow one. This means:

- ★ Learning about me (self)
- ★ Learning about you (others)
- ★ Learning about us (relationships)

Learning social and emotional skills is *a/ways* important to children’s development, but is particularly important now due to changes and school closures brought about by COVID-19.

If you’re wondering how to help your students express their feelings, figure out friendships, and share, Big Heart World is for you.

If you’re feeling overwhelmed by the pandemic, school closures, and endless change and transition, Big Heart World is for you.

If you’re interested in ways to help children adjust to a classroom environment after months of being at home, and want to get advice from leading experts in the fields of education, psychology, medicine and more, Big Heart World is for you.

How wonderful would it be if everyone lived in a Big Heart World?

Big Heart World is presented by Sparkler Learning in partnership with Noggin and with support from many non-profit partner organizations.

Learn more: bigheartworld.org/about-us

Empathy:



The Fifth Unit of Big Heart

Empathy is the ability to understand and share others' feelings. It can take a lifetime to learn — but children can start learning the basics in their earliest years.

Establishing a secure, loving relationship with parents and caregivers is the first step in developing empathy. Feeling accepted and understood, even as a baby, will help children learn how to make others feel accepted and understood as they grow up.

Learning to identify and label feelings helps children develop empathy. You can help children to learn about feelings by using words to talk about feelings and their causes. Try saying things like, "You are angry because we have to leave the playground now," or "We are happy because we get to visit our cousins today!" Your observations about feelings help your child put words to emotions *and* they demonstrate you have empathy for your child.

Before 18-24 months, children don't have the capacity to understand that other people can have thoughts, feelings, and ideas that are separate and different from their own. Once children start noticing others' feelings, parents/caregivers can help them to develop empathy. If your child notices another child crying, you can talk with them about how the child is feeling and what may have caused him or her to cry. For example, you can say, "It looks like they're feeling sad. Maybe they don't want to say goodbye."

With adult support, children will start to understand others' feelings and have enough expressive language skills to start practicing empathy. They will begin to make the connection between how they have felt and how others are feeling. Relating the way that characters in your favorite books feel to real-life experiences will support this developing skill.

Here's a quick framework to help children explore empathy with young children:

1. **Gather Information:** Practice identifying emotional and situational cues. Ask questions to better understand others. Be a careful listener.
2. **Identify Emotions:** Use words to describe how others are feeling, and start to understand that all people have different feelings, even about the same things.
3. **Take Action:** Learn to notice when someone might need help with a big feeling. Help can include noticing, sharing, or resolving an issue, but does not always have to mean "fixing" the feeling. All feelings are okay!

As children grow up, you can look for opportunities to practice everyday empathy. Acts of service, kindness, and generosity toward family, friends, neighbors, strangers, and even plants and animals will help develop children's empathy.

The Big Heart World Learning Approach



We started by focusing on “self” — learning about identity and belonging, feelings, and similarities and differences. In July, we start looking at others with a focus on friendship. This month, August, we are starting to learn about Empathy.



Identity & Belonging

Our identity makes us who we are. This includes our skills, passions, preferences, physical traits, culture, and language.



Feelings

Identifying emotions and managing them helps us build relationships and overcome challenges.



Similarities & Differences

Recognizing similarities and differences helps us appreciate that we have a lot in common and that everyone is unique.



Friendship

Interacting with others and treating them with kindness helps us form strong relationships.



Empathy

Walking in others' shoes helps us understand others and form stronger relationships with them.



Problem Solving

Sharing, listening to others, solving problems together, and taking turns helps us collaborate with others.



Helping

Being kind, fair, and helping others helps us become great friends, neighbors, and community members.



Upstanding

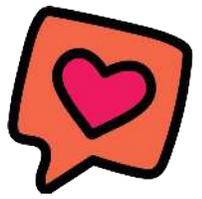
When we see something wrong, we can learn to stand up for what's right. Learning to stand up will help children grow up to be change-makers.



Global Citizenship

Each of us is part of a BIG world: together, we can make the world a better, kinder place.

Let's Learn Some Big Heart Words!



When you introduce new vocabulary words, you help your child learn the words they'll need to express their feelings and communicate with you and others. Here are some words you can share related to empathy.

- ★ **Afraid** - feeling fear or anxiety, frightened
- ★ **Angry** - mad
- ★ **Anxious** - uneasy, worried, and fearful about something
- ★ **Brave** - having courage
- ★ **Calm** - not feeling strong emotions
- ★ **Confused** - mixed up
- ★ **Curious** - eager to know or learn
- ★ **Disappointed** - not meeting someone's hope, desire, or expectation
- ★ **Embarrassed** - feeling awkward, self-conscious, or ashamed
- ★ **Emotion** - a deep feeling
- ★ **Empathy** - the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person
- ★ **Energetic** - with a high level of energy
- ★ **Excited** - enthusiastic and eager
- ★ **Feelings** - an emotional state or reaction
- ★ **Frustrated** - feeling or expressing distress and annoyance, especially because of inability to change or achieve something
- ★ **Happy** - glad
- ★ **Hopeful** - feeling optimism about a future event
- ★ **Lonely** - feeling sad because you're without companions
- ★ **Mad** - very angry
- ★ **Nervous** - uneasy
- ★ **Proud** - pleased with yourself
- ★ **Relaxed** - free from tension and anxiety; at ease
- ★ **Sad** - unhappy, feeling sorrow
- ★ **Scared** - feeling afraid
- ★ **Silly** - playfully lighthearted and amusing
- ★ **Surprised** - feeling astonished by something unexpected
- ★ **Upset** - feeling disappointed, unhappy, or worried



BIG HEART

Activities





Play to Learn About Friendship



Notice Others' Feelings



For the Birds



Big Rescue



Hide it from Teddy

Visit the Big Heart World Playroom (<https://www.bigheartworld.org/big-heart-playroom>) to find fun activities that will help children explore empathy — from making friends to sharing to taking turns.





Little Kids, Big Hearts Podcast



Little Kids, Big Hearts is a podcast that helps families and educators introduce big topics in social and emotional learning to children.

Little Kids, Big Hearts was recently featured in the **Wall Street Journal's family & tech** newsletter. The report said, "As post-pandemic playdates return, it might be helpful for little ones to freshen their social emotional skills. Little Kids, Big Hearts is a new podcast that aims to teach children ages 3 to 8 what it means to be a good friend and how to stand up for what's right."

Our "Friendship" episode is coming out in July! Listen on Apple, Spotify, wherever you find your podcasts. Find discussion guides (in English and Spanish) and more at www.BigHeartWorld.org/podcast.



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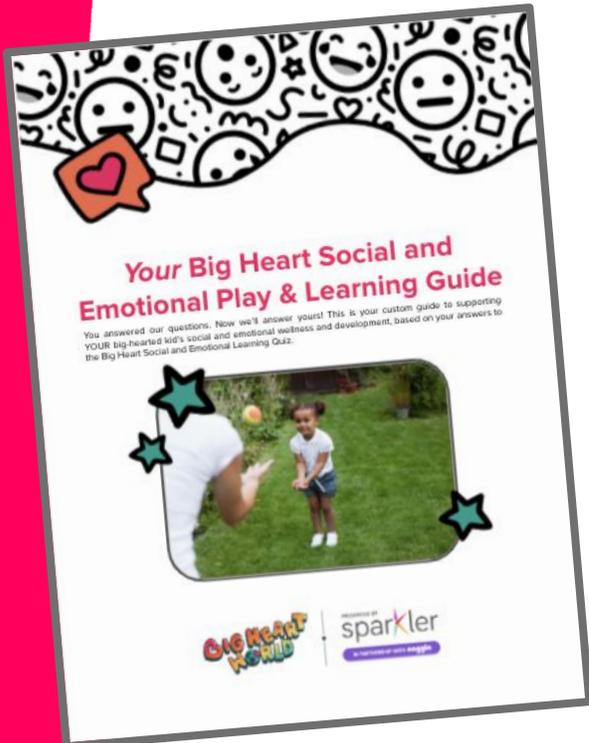
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Answer *our* questions and we'll answer yours!

We've all been through A LOT recently! One thing we have learned through this time is the importance of focusing on our kids and on our own emotional well-being. This starts with learning to develop core social and emotional skills, including identifying and understanding our emotions, learning skills to calm our bodies and minds, and building friendship and empathy.



Take our 10-question quiz and get YOUR custom social and emotional play and learning guide, full of fun, creative, off-screen activities that you can play with your students to help them get ready to transition back to the new “normal” and address the areas of need you identified.

Sparkler Learning (the nonprofit organization presenting Big Heart World) and the [Housman Institute](#) created the quiz and guide, in collaboration with other experts who are partnering on the Big Heart World initiative.

Find the Quiz: <https://www.bigheartworld.org/sel-quiz/>



Expert Tips & Opinions



“One of the greatest ways we can show that our children are worthy of love and care is by meeting them where they are, sharing in things they seem curious about, and letting them know that their feelings—all their feelings—matter (here’s a great feelings song to sing together).”

— Jane Park, *Parenting with a Big Heart: Growing Empathy*



“Parents can teach young children empathy by being the example. Show empathy daily to your children, family, and others in your community. When you show empathy, talk it through with your child and be attentive to their feelings. Use language like: “I know that was hard for you, you seemed sad but you’re safe and loved.” This language will help children become aware of their own emotions and feelings and it will help them become empathetic to others.”

— Monica Guthrie Purchase, *How to Raise an Empathetic Child: Tips from a Mother, Grandmother, and Educator*

Books to Spark Big Heart-to-Heart Conversations

Big Heart World partner organizations **First Book** and **School Library Journal** have shared beautiful lists of book recommendations that help parents, caregivers, and educators talk with children about empathy. See all the recommendations at www.bigheartworld.org/the-big-heart-book-list.

- ★ **We Don't Eat Our Classmates by Ryan T. Higgins**
It's the first day of school for Penelope Rex and she can't wait to meet her classmates. But it's hard to make human friends when they're so darn delicious! That is, until Penelope gets a taste of her own medicine and finds she may not be at the top of the food chain after all.



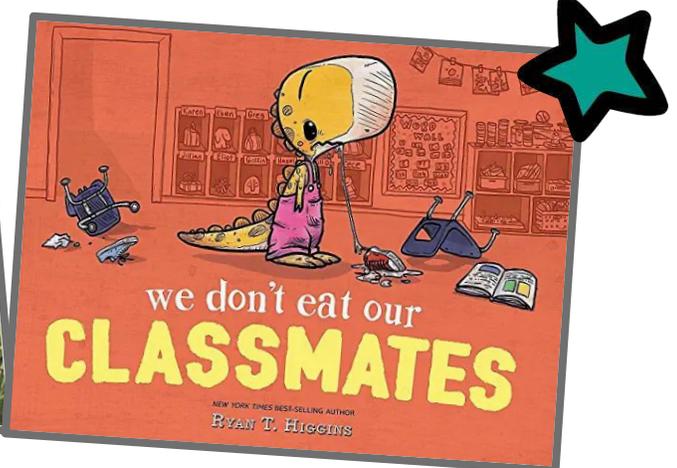
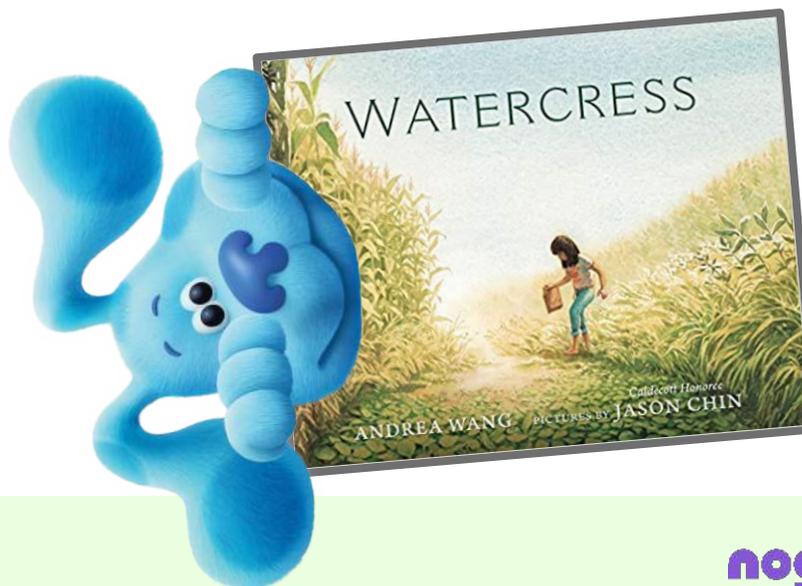
For Discussion: What helps Penelope realize how she's making her classmates feel? Have you ever experienced something similar?

- ★ **Watercress by Andrea Wang and Jason Chin**

A powerful story sure to awaken empathy and curiosity: Who else has left behind a homeland, and at what cost? Simple text and beautiful illustrations pack a strong emotional punch in this picture book about love and loss, and the lessons of leaving other people behind.



For Discussion: Have you ever had to move far away? What did you gain? What did you lose? How do you think the characters in the book feel?



How wonderful would it be if we lived in a big heart world? Join us!

Do you have ideas about how we could make Big Heart World a useful resource for educators like you?

We want to make this a useful resource for YOU. Please email us at support@bigheartworld.org. We'd love to learn about your needs and see if we can help.



For more tools and resources, please visit us
online at <https://bigheartworld.org>

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