

# Tips for Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child

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## **Raising Kind, Emotionally Literate Children**

Three important components of childhood are learning to be kind, treating others well, and managing emotions. Because of this, in Waldorf Education, we emphasize developing these crucial social-emotional skills in our daily lessons. With this in mind, our teachers embrace inclusive storytelling and positive behavior modeling in and out of the classroom.

At Summerfield Waldorf School & Farm, our holistic approach to education builds empathy and interpersonal skills through imaginative play, meaningful work, and community engagement.

Above all, these activities help students develop an understanding of their role and responsibility in creating their environment and community. Additionally, they understand how their actions impact others, and why that's important.

*“When we consciously raise our kids to be kind, we ensure that they will thrive – and build a better, fairer, stronger world in the process. Furthermore, Moyer states, “over and over again, I saw studies that pointed out that just talking about feelings – allowing kids to have their feelings – is an important foundation for the development of generosity.” . – [Melinda Wenner Moyer](#), science journalist*

*If we want to raise kind kids, we have to attend to their emotional development. -KQED article, [“Why Kindness and Emotional Literacy Matter in Raising Kids”](#), by Deborah Farmer Kris*

There is a direct connection between what we do and what other people feel. When children stop to wonder what their friend is thinking and feeling, they are developing their emotional intelligence. Additionally, when a child stops to think about what they themselves are feeling, they are also growing. It is crucial for education to instill empathy in students as soon as possible.

### **How do we nurture and raise an emotionally intelligent child?**

1. One key way is to teach children **why**. Why are you asking them to do their chores? Giving an explanation, instead of just a command, is of key importance for the child to develop emotional intelligence.
2. Speaking of chores, doing physical tasks around the home and classroom can also build emotional intelligence and kindness. And it is important for the child to understand why what they are doing is helpful to those around them.

*“There is a strong link between doing things that are good for the whole family [or classroom] and the development of generous behavior,” said Moyer.*

3. Tell children that they matter. When children feel valued, they are proven to thrive. Let children know that their actions are meaningful, and why what they do matters to you. This will build respect and empathy.

4. Engage in clear, open conversations with children about bullying and meanness.

*Moyer states, "bullying is a continuum and a child's role may vary from day to day – from aggressor, to bystander, to target. Even the kindest child might laugh along to a mean joke one day."* It is crucial to communicate with children why it is not okay for them to engage in this behavior, and what to do if they see this behavior occur.

5. Have patience. Children develop at different rates and in different ways. Raising children to have emotional intelligence is not a simple task, and it will not happen overnight. Instilling empathy and kindness in children is an ongoing process, and will happen over the many years a child is in school and being raised.