

Home-School Connections: Home Activities
Empathy and Critical Thinking Unit

Your child is learning about **Empathy and Critical Thinking** in the Sanford Harmony social-emotional learning program. The ideas below will reinforce what we are learning in school—there are activities to play, topics to discuss, and behaviors to role-model. These are all designed to fit into your daily routine and provide opportunities to further connect with your child.

- Ask your child what he or she has learned about their thoughts: How do your thoughts influence your feelings and behaviors?
- Ask your child to give you his or her definition of empathy. How does “walking in someone else’s shoes” help us respond to someone in an understanding way?
- Ask your child about change:
 - Can people change?
 - What’s the difference between thinking like a caterpillar and a worm?
A caterpillar changes and evolves, whereas a worm always stays the same.
 - How does thinking like a caterpillar help us interact with others in more positive ways?
- We have been learning the definition of a stereotype and how to identify the problems associated with stereotyped thinking. Continue the conversation at home:
 - How do stereotypes influence our thinking?
 - Why is it important to get to know someone as an individual?
 - How can “thinking outside the box” prevent us from allowing stereotypes to “do the thinking for us?”
 - How do messages on television and in movies influence our thinking?
 - How can we become critical thinkers?
 - How can we become leaders, and think and act for ourselves?

An important part of this program is for students to continue discussing and practicing concepts outside the classroom. Thank you for your involvement in reinforcing at home what is being taught in class!