

Join us in building empathy

Welcome to the twenties!

Join us in making a resolution to build empathy. In a world where our differences increasingly tend to alienate us from one another, we need empathy so we can connect with each other and form healthy relationships.

So, let's start with children.

Let's give them the tools they need to understand and help each other now, and later, when they are parents, co-workers, leaders.

Here are 5 things to help get you started.

1. Listen to children

Do you follow us on social media? (please do if you don't – see the links at the bottom of the website)

If you do, then you might have seen our [12 Days of Wishes](#). We publish them every year, and they're a window into children's minds – their hopes, dreams and feelings for 'their' baby.

We've gathered all 12 from the recent holiday season [on one page](#). Enjoy the scroll.



2. Let children draw

“Picasso said all children are artists until they are told they’re not. I feel that all children are musicians and painters and dancers too. It is their way to express every emotion from joy to sorrow – and it gives them a form of language, even before they can label their feelings. Their work reaches out to touch others, to create empathy and a sense of belonging, and the feeling that they’re not alone.” – Mary Gordon, Roots of Empathy Founder and President.

Right from the start Mary Gordon made art an integral part of Roots of Empathy. [Watch our slide show](#), with context from Mary Gordon, to understand why.



3. Let children play

Play. Remember that? Freedom, focus, joy.

As adults we forget to play, but children NEED to play. “Children are at their most joyful when they are with their families – and at play...Without free, unstructured time to be creative, to let the imagination flow, curiosity fades. Children don’t become problem solvers, critical thinkers, creative thinkers. When curiosity fades, entrepreneurship fades, political ideas fade, progress fades. Children’s brains are built on experience and the deepest learning happens in self-created experiences.” – Mary Gordon, Founder and President.

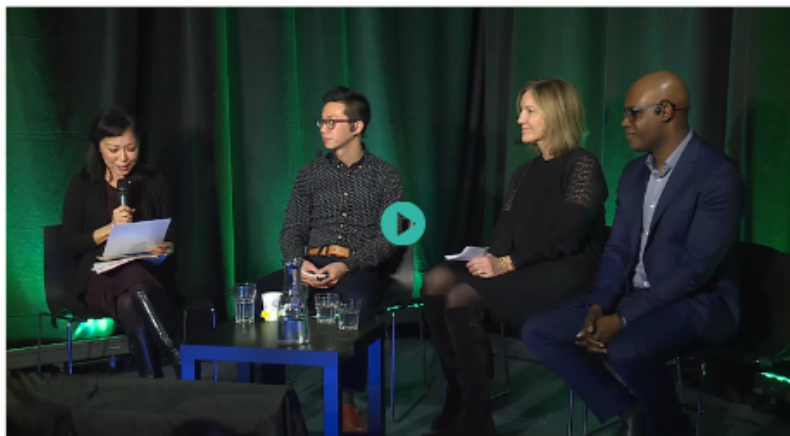
In [this Roots of Empathy Speaker Series presentation](#) Alison Gopnik argues that children need time and space to explore and come up with new ways of thinking and doing.



4. Read with children

You know what it's like to be engrossed in a novel, right? You learn the characters' thoughts, feelings, what drives them, what scares them, what makes them happy. You root for them – sometimes. You FEEL for them.

When we read with children, they learn to understand the world through the characters too. How does that happen? Dr. Raymond Mar is an expert on this and he spoke on our panel about [Empathy and the Arts](#).



5. Help children make sense of their world

Dr. Dan Siegel, who presented the keynote at the 2017 Roots of Empathy Research Symposium, has written a blog that helps us to understand [The Psychological Effects of the Conflicting Stories We Hear](#).

“As babies, our connection to our caregivers—our attachment figures—provides us not only with comfort and connection, but a way of *making sense of our experiences*. Life “makes sense” when our experience matches up with how those we are close to respond to us, as well with the messages we receive in the stories they tell.

Dr. Siegel suggests that today’s world offers conflicting truths and can leave us feeling distressed, and he has a solution. [You can read his blog here](#).

If you’d like to hear more from Dr. Siegel, [watch his 2017 presentation](#).

