

# What Empathy Teaches Us About Families

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I recently met with a group of parents to discuss how we can increase our children's awareness and empathy for others. Through our sharing, we learned that:

Having experienced a disability or learning challenge has helped others better understand what it is like to be in someone else's shoes with a disability and experience empathy.

Empathy can be learned when we overcame adversity or a negative experience. When we are rescued by others, we may not learn to overcome a challenge.

When family members provide healthy support and not rescue their children, the children must learn how to resolve a challenge. This reflective process can help children learn compassion, empathy, and how to successfully solve daily challenges with others.

# Our Children Can Provide Community Support

With ongoing natural disasters occurring in local communities, our children have ample opportunities to determine how they want to give back to their communities. Families have been able to help others by:

- Helping those who have lost everything in fires by collecting home goods, raising funds for gift cards, and reproducing lost recipes, photos, and locating relevant family mementoes

- Participating in community resource fairs and events to support others in need

- Serving food to the homeless at a homeless shelter or rescue center

- Participating in a community service project with others in need

## We Can Give to Others

We all have the capacity to give to others in need. Through our participation in our community, our children learn that they can take the time to give to others in need or respond to a community crisis.

Our love for our neighbors will transcend us to have more empathy for others.

Mary Ann

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