

PARENT WORKBOOK ACTIVITY 5: Perspective Taking

We are social beings and our brain is a social brain. As parents, we know that our children must be able to connect with others, feel empathy and understand the perspectives of their peers in order to have a fulfilling life. What we now know from science is that in order to do this, they must first be able to self-reflect and understand their own thoughts, feelings, experiences and impact on others. We can help our children develop perspective taking and empathy, while increasing our own perspective taking skills. Like any skill it requires modeling, practice and feedback.

Perspective Taking

Remember the story of the “Big Bad Wolf?” Put yourself into the perspective of the Big Bad Wolf character.

- Think of a time you were seen as the “Big Bad Wolf”
- Why did others see you as the “Wolf?”
- How did you see yourself at the same time?
- Write your reflections below:

MindUP™ Family Activity Ideas:

Ages 4-6: Teaching perspective taking

- “Who Are You Hats!”- Bring several hats to a dress up area and encourage young children to imagine the character that might wear the hat. What would their voice sound like? What would they wear? How would they do their work?

Ages 7-10: Teaching perspective taking

- Help your child take on the perspective of your household pet. Ask questions like: What do you think makes Rover happy? How do you know what kind of petting Rover likes? Why do you think he spends time in the closet when it’s thundering?

Ages 11-14: Teaching perspective taking

- “Charades”- This classic game invites you to take on the experience of someone else and convey it in an understandable way. Audience members have to take the perspective of the actor in order to guess correctly!

Parent Workbook Activity 5 :

MindUP™ For Parents

Parent Personal Reflection

After the workshop, take a few quiet and focused minutes to reflect and thoughtfully respond to the following:

- Write about the areas of your life where you are MOST open to other viewpoints and LEAST open?
- How open was your childhood home to differences? What effect did that have on you? What effect does that have on how you parent?
- Describe the types of relationships you envision for your child when they are an adult. What characteristics must they develop now in order for those relationships to flourish? What must you do to facilitate the nurturing of those characteristics?



PARENT WORKBOOK ACTIVITY 5: Practice at Home! Choosing Optimism

We all come into this world leaning toward glass half full or glass half empty. While that set point is very real, research shows genetics account for only about 25% of our optimistic tendencies. There are concrete things we can do to shift to a more optimistic outlook, and parents play a key part in making this happen. Children who see the world optimistically experience life as hopeful and full of possibilities.

Choosing Optimism

Optimism, Pessimism, and Unrealistic Thinking are three different things! On your own, at home, write out a definition of each. Next, consider the following scenario:

Scenario: The whole family has been really looking forward to a bike ride on Saturday, but when Saturday comes it is violently raining and blowing wind.

Respond to the following scenario in the different ways: optimistically, pessimistically, and with unrealistic thinking:

MindUP™ Family Activity Ideas:

Ages 4-6: Teaching perspective taking

- “Optimistic I Spy”- Have your child pick out his favorite picture book. Play this new “I Spy” game by saying things like: “I Spy something that makes me happy,” “I Spy something I can do,” and “I Spy someone who tried hard.”

Ages 7-10: Teaching perspective taking

- “Positive Pennies”- Around the dinner table or at bedtime, reflect on the day’s experiences. Help your child think about times when she responded with an optimistic attitude. For each response, have her add a penny to the Positive Penny Jar. When the jar is full, take a field trip together to a favorite charity followed by a trip to the ice cream store.

Ages 11-14: Teaching perspective taking

- “Flash Forward”- Consider your most optimistic future. In one, five or ten years, what will you be doing? What will I be doing? Let your child see you dream big about your own future too. Next, create a visual of the dream (poster, drawing, shoe box, vision board). Post it somewhere and keep the conversation alive. Tie it to daily choices. Is this taking us closer to our preferred future or away from it?

Parent Workbook Activity 5 :

MindUP™ For Parents

As a MindUP™ parent, once a day:

When something does not go your way, think of it as an opportunity to model optimistic thinking. Verbalize what you are thinking and how it is affecting you. Do it again and again.

For example, next time you are in traffic and going to be late, move from:

I always get caught in the wrong lane, we are never going to get there and I’ll probably get fired.

to...

The traffic is crazy today! Oh well, we’ll get there when we get there and it will all work out. Let’s practice your times tables while we wait.

