

Tatjana Gjurković & Tea Knežević

I will show you that I'm thinking of you

Illustrations:
Jelena Brezovec

BEHAVIOURAL EMPATHY

+
Advice for parents
and caregivers





Tatjana Gjurković i Tea Knežević, magistre psihologije

Pokazat ću ti da mislim na tebe

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Urednica: Jelena Kovačić

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Behavioural empathy in a relationship

Empathy is defined as understanding or feeling the emotional experience of another. It is expressed in direct contact with another person who is going through uncomfortable emotions or an uncomfortable experience, but we often empathise with someone who is not physically close to us, someone we don't even know, but we see their difficulties or troubles.

In that situation, we can do something specific to show the other person that we're thinking about them, that we care, that we sympathise, or that we miss them. Most often it will be a sign of affection like a message, conversation, little gift, or a good deed. That type of empathy is what we call behavioural empathy.

Experts mostly describe empathy as a partly inherited trait, and partly as a consequence of upbringing and life experience. They also agree that upbringing focused on empathy should start from the earliest age.

Children learn from us, they observe us and react to our direct incentives, so it's crucial to give empathy a great importance in children's upbringing.

When we see that a child is being compassionate or is empathising with someone, it's okay to encourage them to somehow show it to the other person. It is up to all adults to help children find an appropriate way to do it.

In this story, children will meet an empathetic boy Carl, who, while in kindergarten, missed his friend Peter who had to stay home because he was ill. To show that he was thinking about him and wishing him a fast recovery, Carl made a drawing for Peter and brought it to him on his way home from kindergarten.

At the end of the picture book, there are tips for adults where we provide guidelines for how to act when a child's behavioural empathy is too strong or too overwhelming, or is not expressed enough.

Reading itself, your soothing voice, the attention and closeness you establish with the child you read to, play a big and important part in developing empathy.

Enjoy those moments together. ♥

”

Hi! I am Carl and I have two best friends –
David and Peter.

Peter couldn't come to kindergarten yesterday because he was sick. I missed him a lot and I had a hard time thinking how he was all alone and couldn't play with us. A little bee whispered to me that I could draw him a picture and bring it to him on the way home from kindergarten.

So I did. Peter was very happy because he knew that we were thinking about him a lot.

Make yourself comfy and listen to my story...



„Maybe Peter will finally come to kindergarten today“, Carl was thinking to himself on his way to the kindergarten.

– Mum will Peter come today? – he asked his mum as they quickly approached the kindergarten.

– I don't know, honey. I didn't talk to his mum – mum answered gently.

– And why didn't he come to kindergarten yesterday? – Carl was curious although he already knew the answer.

– Peter is sick, so he had to stay home.

The teacher had already told him that Peter was ill and needed to stay home to lie down and get some rest. Carl was really sorry for Peter because being sick is always difficult, and because he knows that Peter likes to run and jump around a lot, so it must be hard for him to be in bed and not be able to play. Carl likes to play with Peter the most in kindergarten.



When he entered the kindergarten, Carl saw David in the hallway.

– Hey David, what’s up? – he asked him curiously.

– I have new felt-tip pens. My dad bought them for me. These are special, I’ve never had felt-tip pens like this before – David said proudly.

– Can I draw with them too? – Carl got excited too.

– You can. Here’s one – David replied and gave him a green felt-tip pen. It was Carl’s favourite colour.

They started drawing immediately, and Carl kept thinking about his friend Peter. And he was not the only one. David was also worried about Peter. When they drew, the three of them always sat at the same table. Since Peter was not there, they also couldn’t play soccer, which is their favourite sport. Peter was the best goalkeeper ever.



Peter lives in a house near the kindergarten and that morning was particularly hard for him. Besides being sick, he also missed his friends. He had already had enough of all the toys he had at home and could hardly wait to be able to play with with Carl and David again.

– Mum, I want to play soccer. I'm bored of resting – Peter complained to his mum who stayed at home with him until he got better. – Carl and David must be playing soccer in the kindergarten right now, and I'm all alone here and not allowed to do anything fun – he started to feel sad.

– I know Peter, and I believe that you miss your friends, as well as playing with them. Now you can have fun some other way, I can give you your crayons and you can draw something – mum tried to make it easier for Peter.

Peter didn't consider drawing to be a good replacement for soccer, but since he had no other ideas, he decided to draw something. And while he was drawing, he remembered his friends again and how the three of them always sat together while drawing. Everyone always started with their favourite colour – Carl with green, David with yellow, and Peter with blue.

