

Teaching Empathy

One of our primary goals at Pisgah Collective, in fact one that synthesizes many of our core practices, is to aid the development of empathy in our students. The term empathy has gained an array of connotations in popular culture and is often over simplified or indeed used as a catchall for myriad concepts.

We believe that, while there may be a spectrum of innate tendencies toward behaving empathetically, and while this may in fact be a somewhat controversial topic, there is very clear, research and experiential based evidence, that empathy not only can, but should, be taught, practiced and discussed, if we are to help the next generation move in a more peaceful direction.

One of the main ways we provide for the development of empathy in our students is by holding everyone to the standard of inclusion and communication. While many of our students have their preferred playmates, we are all friends at school and we regularly discuss ways of including everyone in our games.

We practice pausing play and discussing our plans and desires for a particular game when we are frustrated by another child's choices. We also regularly remind our students that each of us has the freedom to make our own choices.

Sometimes these choices indicate a need for someone to take a moment to play on their own, away from the group. These resets remind our students how much more fun it is to play cooperatively with their friends. When someone is upset, we pause to check on one another, whether or not we caused their distress.

Our students regularly manifest deep, spontaneous empathy for one another. While this reflects our broader community and work you all do outside of school, it also reflects the culture we cultivate everyday at Pisgah Collective.

The following article is not only practical, but full of references to peer-reviewed scientific research on this topic:

<https://www.parentingscience.com/teaching-empathy-tips.html>

Also, please take a look back at previous issues involving some of our practices that relate to the development of empathy in our students:

[1.4 Freedom within Limits and the Value of Conflict and Conflict Resolution](#)

[2.4 Benefits of Limits](#)

[2.8 Power of Play](#)

[2.10 Resolving Conflict Away from School](#)

Cooperative Skills

Cooperation, like anything else, must be consistently practiced in order to spontaneously show itself.

By continually pointing out how much more fun everyone has when working together, we reinforce this practice in our students.

Humans evolved to naturally be tribal. The practices of inclusion and cooperation can, and should, be promoted by the children's adult village, in order to not only encourage but also set the example of the benefits of cooperation to everyone involved.

An integral aspect of cooperation is awareness of one's self. We all must acknowledge when we need some space or time and our students are always given this option and often independently ask for it.

One of the ways we create opportunities to practice cooperative skills, is by intentionally having a scarce supply of certain popular items. Our students all learn how to ask for a turn "when someone's all done" as well as to assure their friends that they will be able to "have a turn when they are all done."



SAVE THE DATE: MAY 1!!!

We are excited to announce, thanks to the success of our Holiday Hoopla fundraiser, we will officially be hosting our Greenhouse Gallery, community building, and fundraising event on Saturday, May 1 from 11-2 P.M. We will send more details in the coming weeks but hope you add this event to your calendar! Families and children are encouraged to attend. This will be a great opportunity to meet other families, Pisgah Collective staff, and enjoy the beautiful space we call our classroom!



FROG LIFE CYCLE

Last week, we welcomed some new barn guests: tadpoles! One of our favorite times of year at the barn is when we get to learn about the life cycle of frogs and watch our tadpoles go through metamorphosis. We observe, discuss, read, sing, and so much more! Below is our song and here is a link to our YouTube lesson video:

<https://youtu.be/PvrHwEtT8VM>

I see a mass of ooey gooey eggs
down in the water
They wiggle and they jiggle, until they hatch
down in the water
The tadpoles swim around, they start to get bigger
down in the water
They start to grow legs, somethings changing
down in the water
With four legs and lungs, I'll call them froglets
down in the water
Their tail starts to shrink, they're something else I think
down in the water
From ooey gooey eggs, to tadpoles, to froglets,
and now they're FROGS!

THANK YOU

We raised over \$2,000 during our anniversary fundraising events last month! From our online fundraiser, to merch sales, to Trivia Night, we cannot show enough gratitude for everyone that helped us exceed our goal! This community is our rock and we are excited to see our non-profit grow along with our scholarship program and more!



Important Dates

- CLOSED: Spring Break
April 5-9
- Save the Date: May Day Event
Saturday, May 1
Stay tuned for more info
- Last Day of Spring Semester
Afternoons: Thursday, May 13
Mornings: Friday, May 21
- Summer Program Dates
Mountain Medley Mornings:
Session 1- June 14-July 9
Session 2- July 12-Aug 13
Afternoon Seedlings:
June 14-July 9
- CLOSED: July 5
- Book Discussion
Wednesday, July 7
5:45-7 p.m. *Adults only*
Join us for a discussion of our summer reading: Last Child in the Woods by Richard Louv.

Spring Payment #4 Due:
Wednesday, April 14
**Spring Payment #5 Due +
Summer Program Deposits:**
Wednesday, May 12