



RedRover Readers guide to  
**READING TO  
BUILD EMPATHY**

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A quick guide for  
parents and educators



Visit [RedRover.org/Readers](https://www.RedRover.org/Readers) for more information.

The RedRover Readers program helps children develop empathy for people and animals through stories and discussion. This guide can help you use some of the RedRover Readers techniques at home with your children as young as 2 and as old as 11.

Start by choosing well-told, illustrated stories. For ideas, visit [RedRover.org/books](http://RedRover.org/books) for a list of recommended books with humane themes.

Choose a quiet place to read together.

**Before you begin reading**, ask your child (or children) about the cover image, the title and what they predict the story will be about.

For example:

Describe the cover.

What do you think this book will be about?

Why do you think that?

**While you are reading**, stop at points in the story and ask what the characters might be thinking about and feeling in each situation.

For example:

How do you think this character feels?

How do you know?



Why do you think she feels that way?  
Have you ever felt this way?

With younger kids, say, "Show me what your face looks like when you feel that way."

**After you finish reading**, ask if the child's predictions about what the story was going to be about came true.

Ask what parts your child liked, which parts he or she would change and what your child would do if he or she was in a similar situation.

For example:

How do you think he felt when that happened?  
Why?

How would you feel if that happened to you?

What if that had happened to the other character?

How might the story be different then?

**Accept each answer without judgment.** This is not a time to tell information; it is a time to ask for information and ideas based on the stories. It is a time to discuss the story and any ideas, thoughts and feelings that the story brings up for the child.

**Extend children's comments.** Ask your child to tell you more about what he or she is sharing.

For example:

What makes you feel that way?

Why do you think that was the case?

**Listen.** Model good listening skills and show interest in what your child is sharing.

**Create an activity** to do together that reinforces what the story was about. You can find ideas for activities at [RedRover.org/ReadersActivities](http://RedRover.org/ReadersActivities).

*RedRover Readers is a social and emotional learning program designed to help students develop positive relationship skills, empathy and critical thinking through stories and discussion. Training is available for teachers to bring the RedRover Readers program to the classroom.*

**RedRover.org/Readers**

