In November’s newsletter, under Parents, Did You Know?, there was an excerpt from *How Parents Can Cultivate Empathy in Children* (Weissbourd and Jones, *Making Caring Common Project,* Harvard Graduate School of Education). The first of five guideposts, along with suggestions to parents, was provided:

GUIDEPOST #1: Empathize with your child and model empathy for others

(See website [www.les.hsd.ca](http://www.les.hsd.ca) if you missed it.)

What follows is the second guidepost for parents, taken directly from the Weissbourd and Jones article:

GUIDEPOST #2: Make caring for others a priority and set high ethical expectations.

If children are to value others’perspectives and show compassion for them, it’s very important that they hear from their parents that caring about others is a top priority, and that it is just as important as their own happiness. Even though most parents say that raising *caring* children is a top priority, often children aren’t hearing that message.

SUGGESTIONS TO PARENTS:

*Keep to a clear message*. Consider the daily messages you send to children about the importance of caring. For example, instead of saying “The most important thing is that you’re happy,” you might say “The most important thing is that you’re kind and that you’re happy.”

*Prioritize caring when you talk with other important adults in your children’s lives*. For example, ask teachers and coaches whether your children are caring community members in addition to asking about their academic skills, grades, or performance.

*Help your children understand that the world doesn’t revolve around them*. It’s vital at times for parents to put children’s concern for others above their happiness, for example, insisting at times that children turn off the TV and help around the house, be polite even when they are in a bad mood, or not dominate the airwaves when they are talking to other children or adults.