

## PUTTING POSITIVE STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS INTO PRACTICE

Try one of these ideas or others you know to promote positive relationships in your classroom.

1. Take time at the beginning of the year to play some “get to know you” games such as this:
  - Have students stand in one line facing the teacher or one student leader. Pose various questions such as, Who has a pet dog? or, Who loves to jump rope or play basketball? or, Who plays a musical instrument? When students say “I do” to any of these questions, they cross the room and become a part of a subgroup of the class. Teachers can invite students to elaborate on their answers or to observe who is in the subgroup with them. Membership in any of these subgroups can provide later grouping for working on some academic task or clean-up team or anything that builds on the students’ shared interests. There are no stakes involved, and these subgroups are just a way to help students “see” one another and appreciate shared interests. These would be, of course, very temporary groups. How would this activity work with your students?

2. Encourage helping.

- Teachers can encourage students to help one another in both spontaneous and planned ways. Helping also conveys empathy and shows respect for one another. How can you encourage helping in your class without formalizing it, so that students spontaneously help one another?

3. Express empathy.

- Assist your students in writing a get-well or sympathy card for a classmate who has a prolonged illness or who has lost someone important.