**Family Movie Night – ABC Champion Year Review**

**Champion Year Review**

This school year the focus of the books we read and the activities we shared was the theme, *connect with* *empathy*. We discussed the importance of guiding children in understanding and caring for people who are different from them and who may be facing challenges very different from their own challenges. Empathy builds healthy relationships, promotes social connections, and fosters community. This is the definition we used:

**“Empathy is an emotional skill set that allows us to understand what someone is experiencing and reflect back that understanding.”** Brené Brown

**Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings, perspectives, and experiences or others.**

The movies that complement the books we read this year are *Elemental* and *Freaky Friday.* **Please review the movies before watching as a family.** Movie suggestions are from Common Sense and full reviews can be found under Parental Guidelines for movies:

***Elemental* (age 6+)**

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/movie-reviews/elemental>

**Discussion Questions for *Elemental***

1. Families can talk about what Elemental has to say about the immigrant experience.
2. How does Ember's situation embody what life can be like for immigrants' children?
3. Some of the movie's scenes are sad or scary. Is it OK for a kids' movie to not be cheerful and silly all the time?
4. The characters learn and demonstrate character strengths like [compassion](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/articles/what-is-compassion), [perseverance](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/articles/what-is-perseverance), and [empathy](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/articles/what-is-empathy). Why are these important?
5. How are race and discrimination addressed in the movie? What parallels can you see to our real life?

***Freaky Friday (2003)* (age 8+)**

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/movie-reviews/freaky-friday>

**Discussion Questions for *Freaky Friday***

1. Families can talk about the common motif of switched identities in Freaky Friday.
2. Have you seen the original [1976 version](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/movie-reviews/freaky-friday-1976)starring Jody Foster as a kid?
3. Why it is hard for Tess and Anna to understand each other at the beginning of the movie?
4. If the parents and children in your family switched places, what would be the biggest surprises?
5. What do you think of how Anna resolves her problems with her English teacher and the honors exam?
6. How do Tess and Anna demonstrate [self-control](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/articles/what-is-self-control), [gratitude](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/articles/what-is-gratitude), and [empathy](https://www.commonsensemedia.org/articles/what-is-empathy) in Freaky Friday?

**Ways to Reinforce this Lesson at Home:**

Building empathy within families fosters understanding, compassion, and strong bonds. Here are some activities that families can engage in to connect with empathy:

**Story Sharing:** Encourage each family member to share personal stories about times when they felt understood or misunderstood. This helps everyone gain insight into each other’s experiences and emotions.

**Volunteer Together:** Spend time volunteering at local charities or community organizations. Working together to help others fosters empathy and gratitude.

**Mindfulness Exercises:** Practice mindfulness as a family through activities like deep breathing, meditation, or yoga. This helps everyone become more attuned to their own emotions and the emotions of others.

**Nature Walks:** Take family walks in nature and encourage everyone to observe and appreciate the beauty around them. This can foster a sense of interconnectedness and empathy towards the natural world.

**Random Acts of Kindness:** Challenge each family member to perform acts of kindness for each other and for strangers. Discuss how these acts made everyone feel and the impact they had on others.