

Empathy I Spy Activity

Secretly spy on the good in others — then tell them what you found.

SCAN TO SEE IT PLAYED



The core game

How it works

- 1 Write every player's name on a separate slip of paper and place them in a bowl.
- 2 Each person draws a name — if you draw your own, put it back and draw again.
- 3 Over the next day or week, secretly watch your person and note two or three positive things they do.
- 4 Come together at the end of the period and share your observations — either out loud or in a written note.

Ways to play

Two versions for every occasion

Way 1 — Classic Secret Observer

Best for 3+ players · Any setting, over a day or week

- Write every player's name on a slip of paper and fold them into a bowl.
- Each player draws a name — redraw if you get your own.
- Spend the observation period watching for two or three positive things your person does well.
- Observe discreetly so your secret shopper doesn't notice they're being watched.
- Gather at the end and share your findings verbally, or hand over a written note in an envelope.

Way 2 — Family Kindness Spotlight

Best for 2-5 players · Home, around the dinner table

- At the start of the week each family member draws a name from the bowl.
- Look out for one kind or helpful thing your person does each day.
- Keep a small private tally — a post-it on your bedside table works well.
- On Friday evening, take turns sharing everything you spotted about your person.
- Celebrate by giving that person a one-minute cheer or a simple handwritten card.

TIP FOR PARENTS

Try this at home

Keep the observation period short (one day) for younger children so the excitement stays fresh. Encourage them to be specific — 'I noticed you helped set the table without being asked' lands much more warmly than a general 'you're nice'.

THE SCIENCE OF
PLAY

Why it works

Research in positive psychology shows that deliberately noticing others' strengths — and naming them aloud — boosts both the giver's and receiver's wellbeing. Being 'caught' doing something good reinforces kind behaviour and deepens trust within a group.

SCHOOL 'HOME

The connection

At school your child practised looking for the best in their classmates — bring that same detective energy home and watch how it changes the mood at the dinner table.