

Character Education Information

"If we want our children to possess the traits we most admire, we need to teach them what those traits are." ~William Bennett

September's Character Trait: RESPECT

Parents set the tone and lead by example. Parents *do* make a difference. Take advantage of your influence and spend time with your children talking about the character traits you value and look for in others.

Remind your children that although we may look different on the outside, we all have the same feelings on the inside. Encourage them to respect others by treating them the way they want to be treated. Tell them to zip their lips and count to ten instead of saying something mean or disrespectful to someone.

Respect

Definition: To have high regard for, to hold in esteem, to treat with courtesy and consideration

"Children may close their ears to advice, but they open their eyes to example." - Unknown

Your child can show respect by:

- Being kind to a brother, sister, or friend when angry.
- Sitting down and talking with a grandparent.
- Answering his or her teacher politely.
- Not talking when someone else is talking.
- Not using foul language.

Questions to discuss together:

- How would you feel if someone got mad and yelled at you for something you didn't do, and then refused to listen to your point of view?
- Do we use a lot of "put-downs" in our family? What are some examples? How can we speak to each other respectfully?
- Do we respect the environment? What could we do to reduce the amount of trash we throw away?

- Are the household chores fairly divided? Does it show respect for other family members to leave things lying around the house? In what areas do we need to show more respect for each other?
- Do we respect our clothes and other possessions? What does it mean to take care of what we have?

Projects to do together:

- Help your child develop a list of questions to ask a grandparent. You can suggest fun things about the grandparent that your child may not know. Then encourage your child to sit down and get to know that grandparent better.
- Plan how your family can "Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle" to cut down on waste and respect the environment. Look for specific ways to reduce your trash.
- Do a community service project with your child, like picking up trash on the sidewalk. While you are working, discuss how your efforts show respect for your community.
- If possible, go out to dinner together and discuss how to ask for something from the server. Talk about how to treat persons who are serving you with respect.

Encouraging respect in your child:

- Answer your child's questions with respect, and expect your child to do the same with your questions.
- Catch your child doing something respectful and give him or her praise.
- Remind your child to say "please" and "thank you."
- Encourage your child to talk to grandparents, neighbors, and others in a polite tone of voice, and comment when he or she does.
- Point out that when people are respectful, it's easier to understand each other.
- Give your child an example from your day of how someone was respectful and how that made you feel.

Respect:

- 1) What does respect mean? Give examples of ways we show respect for ourselves? For others?
- 2) What is the "Golden Rule"? If it's so simple, why do more people today have difficulty practicing it?
- 3) How do we show respect for our country? Review & discuss the words to the "Pledge of Allegiance" & the "Star Spangled Banner".
- 4) What does it mean to show respect for authority? For property?
- 5) Discuss the following quotes. What do they mean & how do they relate to respect?

Bringing Character Education Home - Table Talk Questions

- One way to reinforce the character education traits being discussed at school is by integrating into your dinner conversations. Read on for some "Table Talk" ideas.
- **Respect at Home:**
 - ♥ After a family meal, take turns having family members share something they respect and appreciate about one another.
 - ♥ Take a cup full of uncooked rice and dump it on a plate. Ask family members to take turns retrieving each grain using chopsticks or two toothpicks. Compare this difficult task with "picking up" unkind words that have spilled from our mouths.
 - ♥ Establish a "no put down" policy in your home. For example: Anyone who says something unkind to another family member must make that person's bed.
 - ♥ On the next trip to the grocery store with your child take the opportunity to point out ways to show respect to others. While waiting in line, let someone with fewer items go ahead of you or allow someone who has been waiting longer than you to move over to the check-out lane that just opened. Be polite to the cashier and take your cart back to the corral when you are finished. Explain to your child that actions like these show that we value and respect others and their property.
 - ♥ As a family, write down on small pieces of paper all of the unkind and disrespectful words (e.g., stupid, ugly, hate etc.) you have said or heard. Commit to never use them again, crumble each piece of paper, and throw it away!
- "Kind words cost little, but accomplish much". author unknown
- "When we do good things, our self-respect grows". Abraham Heschel
- "If you want respect, show it". anonymous
- "Don't judge a book by its cover". Maxim

