



PRESCHOOL

Character Education

Character Building

Character-building activities that focus on these traits and others create foundational life skills that will help kids develop a strong sense of character and serve them throughout their entire lives. Character-building activities also serve to strengthen a child's emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is defined as "the capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically."

This skill is clearly one that will be more important as kids get older, but consider this: when emotional intelligence is enhanced and strengthened from a young age, kids will be better prepared to tackle the challenges and tough situations they face in adolescence and in their adult years. They will also grow up happier and more well-adjusted because they will be equipped with the right skills and tools they need to deal effectively with life from the start.

With these goals in mind, let's take a look at some character-building activities that help kids learn essential moral values like compassion and understanding.

The 6 Pillars of Character Education

- **TRUSTWORTHINESS:** Blue. Think true blue.
- **RESPECT:** Gold. Think the Golden Rule.
- **RESPONSIBILITY:** Green. Think being responsible.
- **FAIRNESS:** Orange. Think dividing an orange into equal sections and sharing with family and friends.
- **CARING:** Red. Think of a heart.
- **CITIZENSHIP:** Purple. Think of regal purple as representing the state.

TRUSTWORTHINESS

- Lost and found box – when children find something that is not theirs, add it to the lost and found.
- Explain to your children that tattling makes them less trustworthy to their friends because tattling is telling a secret. Talk about the difference between tattling to get someone into trouble compared to tattling to get someone out of trouble.

- Be honest, loyal, and reliable.
- Do the right thing.

You are practicing trustworthiness when you...

- Think before you promise something, to be sure you can do it.
- Keep your promises even when they become hard to do.
- Abide by the rules even when no one is watching.
- Let nothing stop you from keeping your word.
- Do your best and finish what you start.

RESPECT

- Use children's books to teach respectful behavior – big bad wolf, evil stepmother, the wicked queen, etc.
- Talk about how people are different. Use a box of crayons. Demonstrate how all colors contribute to the picture and make it look better.
- Teach respect by watching insects and not disturbing them.

How can you show respect?

- **Respect Differences** - You can get in the habit of treating all people with respect. Lots of people are different from you in many ways. You may know people whose race, religion, skin color, or clothing is different from yours. Different does not mean bad or wrong. Respect the differences. Try to learn more about people who are not like you. The ways we are different make us interesting!
- **Use Good Manners** - Manners are another way people show respect. It is respectful to speak in a kind voice and use words like "Please," "Thank you," "Excuse Me," and "May I?"

Good manners mean you act kindly to others, too. Maybe you offer to help carry someone's books or groceries. Maybe you open a door for someone. You show good manners in the way you eat, dress, walk, and talk.

- **Respect Property** - Another part of respect is taking care of things that belong to you and other people. If you respect property, you do not write or draw on the school bathroom walls. You bring your toys and games in out of the rain so they will not be ruined. You put used paper in the recycling box. You take only what you need and what you will use of everything.
- **Respect for Rules** - Discuss respect for rules, such as not hurting others and not destroying someone else's property. Help your child understand that respecting rules is a way of respecting people. Respect protects our own rights as well as the rights of others.

You are practicing respect when you...

- Treat others as you want to be treated.
- Speak courteously to everyone.
- Take special care of other people's belongings.
- Are receptive to the wisdom of elders.
- Honor the rules of your family, school, and nation.
- Expect respect for your body and your rights.

RESPONSIBILITY

- When you take responsibility for your own actions, others can trust you. When people are not responsible, they break their promises, fail to do what they said they would do, and let people down. When you are responsible, you get things done with excellence.
- Pet chores teach responsibilities.



- Allow your child to use small child-size brooms and rags to help wipe and sweep (remember no chemicals).
- Wash dolls outside.
- Having your child put dishes away or transferring laundry from the basket to the machine.
- Being accountable.
- Doing what you are supposed to do.
- Using self-control and thinking before you act.

You are practicing responsibility when you...

- Take agreements seriously.
- Respond by doing things to the best of your ability.
- Are willing to do your part.
- Admit mistakes without making excuses.
- Are willing to make amends.
- Give your best to whatever you do.

FAIRNESS

- Follow the rules.
- Do not place blame.
- Be kind.
- Demonstrate the importance of taking turns.
- Board games are an easy way for children to learn fairness.
- Be compassionate.
- Forgive.
- Show others you care.

- Help those in need.
- Kindness tree – place a new leaf on the tree when someone does a kind act. Put your child's name on the leaf along with the act of kindness he carried out. Hang the tree on the refrigerator.

Looks like:

- I play by the rules.
- I take turns and share.
- I treat others fairly and know they have a right to their opinions.

Sounds like:

- Now it is your turn to go first.
- I will divide this exactly in half for us to share.

CARING

- Teach kindness by taking care of stuffed animals, setting up a home for them, feeding them, or taking care of them when they are sick.
- Here are some ideas for kind acts.
 - Empty the wastebasket.
 - Read to your younger sibling.
 - Let someone else choose a TV show.
 - Help your grandpa shine his shoes.
 - Tell your brother you love him.
- You are practicing caring when you...
 - Give tender attention to someone who is sad or needs help.
 - Do things to give others happiness.
 - Practice habits that help the environment (reduce, reuse, recycle).
 - Resist the temptation to be cruel.
 - Accept people who are different.

