

TIPS FOR PARENTS



Because your kids are counting on you.

Character education begins at home. Parents need to help build character; it doesn't just evolve. Encouraging young people to think independently and to do right are the bare-bones of character education for parents. Teaching, enforcing, advocating, and modeling the Six Pillars of Character daily will set behavior boundaries that will shape the character of your kids — and yourself.

The core universal values we use are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Remember the Six Pillars by its acronym, TRRFCC (terrific).

Follow the T.E.A.M approach: teach, enforce, advocate, and model the Six Pillars. Your style will depend on your child's age, but active and authoritative parenting at every age goes a long way.

A TRRFCC Way to Remember the Six Pillars of Character:

Trustworthiness

T Be honest • Don't deceive, cheat, or steal • Be reliable — do what you say you'll do • Have the courage to do the right thing • Build a good reputation • Be loyal — stand by your family, friends, and country

Respect

R Treat others with respect; follow the Golden Rule • Be tolerant of differences • Use good manners, not bad language • Be considerate of the feelings of others • Don't threaten, hit, or hurt anyone • Deal peacefully with anger, insults, and disagreements

Responsibility

R Do what you are supposed to do • Persevere • Always do your best • Use self-control • Be self-disciplined • Think before you act — consider the consequences • Be accountable for your choices

Fairness

F Play by the rules • Take turns and share • Be open-minded • Listen to others • Don't take advantage of others • Don't blame others carelessly

Caring

C Be kind • Be compassionate and show you care • Express gratitude • Forgive others • Help people in need

Citizenship

C Do your share to make your school and community better • Cooperate • Get involved in community affairs • Stay informed • Be a good neighbor • Obey laws and rules • Respect authority • Protect the environment

T.E.A.M. parents monitor and impart clear standards for their kid's conduct. They are assertive but not restrictive. Their disciplinary methods are supportive rather than punitive. They want their children to be assertive as well as socially responsible and self-regulated as well as cooperative.

Here are some suggestions for activities and strategies to help build the character of your kids:

T

Teach the meaning of each of the Six Pillars. Do this in a way that your child can understand. Make it clear that the Pillars represent the standards of acceptable behavior in your house, for both adults and kids.

E

Enforce the acceptable standards of behavior and action in your house. For kids of all ages, setting boundaries is a way to do this. When they overstep the limits of agreed-upon behavior, there should be consequences and they should be consistently enforced. For parents of teens, there may be a need for some negotiation over the extent of control parents have over their behavior, but this too should be conducted through the lens of the Six Pillars.

A

Advocate the values regularly. Read stories to your kids that demonstrate good results of ethical behavior. For younger kids, fairy tales and picture books have great examples. (See our website for books that advocate the Pillars.) When watching TV, discuss the conduct of characters and how the media portrays celebrity behavior. Teens have a strong sense of what's right and good and often feel frustrated when the real world doesn't live up to their standards or when people don't practice what they preach. Recognize that the world is imperfect, but their actions and behavior can make it better.

M

Model the Six Pillars of Character through your own actions and words. Parenting for good character means you too will need to reflect on your actions and improve your behavior so you can provide the best possible model to your kids of what a person of character says, does, and believes. Share your reflections with your kids and always show them that you too are striving to be an ethical person.

Parenting will be the toughest job of your life but also the most rewarding. Building a child's character takes time and effort, but we know character counts — and your kids are counting on you.

For more information about how the Six Pillars of Character can work in schools, visit our website at CharacterCounts.org or call **800-711-2670**.

