

# What's a Parent to Do?

## Back to Basics: A Character Education Primer for Parents

You never outgrow the need for good character. Young people need solid standards, and so do their parents. Focusing on the quality of your own character will help you *teach, enforce, advocate and model* the Six Pillars of Character.

**TRUSTWORTHINESS:** Trustworthiness is being honest, telling the truth, keeping promises and being loyal so people can trust you. Trustworthy people don't lie, cheat or steal. They have integrity and the moral courage to do the right thing and stand up for their beliefs even when it is hard to do.

- Don't lie (that is, don't misrepresent facts or opinions).
- Don't deliberately mislead by any means (that means don't conceal, distort, twist or alter facts and don't tell half-truths).
- Don't be devious, sneaky or tricky.
- Don't withhold important information from people who trust you.
- Don't steal anything from anyone.
- Don't cheat, defraud or trick any person or group to get what you want, or to avoid trouble.
- Don't talk behind people's backs, or spread harmful rumors or gossip.

**RESPECT:** Respect means showing others that they are valued for who they are, for their character, not what they look like or what they have. It means treating others the way you want to be treated, never insulting or making fun of others who are different in appearance, ability, race or religion. A respectful person is polite, does not use hurtful language and never uses violence.

- Don't insult, abuse, demean, mistreat or harass others.
- Don't make inappropriate or unwanted comments about a person's race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.
- Don't manipulate or take advantage of other people.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Responsibility is doing what you are supposed to do. Responsible people think ahead, set reasonable goals, control their tempers and always do their best. They don't give up easily, especially when others

are counting on them. They are accountable for the consequences of their choices; they don't blame others for their mistakes.

- Don't blame others for your mistakes
- Don't take credit for other people's work or accomplishments.
- Don't give up.
- Don't neglect your duties.

**FAIRNESS:** Fairness is playing by the rules, taking turns, sharing and listening. Fair people do not take advantage of others. They consider all sides before they decide and don't blame others unjustly.

- Don't take advantage of other people's mistakes or ignorance.
- Don't take more than your fair share.
- Don't let personal preferences, prejudices or other feelings improperly interfere with decisions which should be based on merit.

**CARING:** Caring is being kind, helpful and generous to everyone. Caring people are not selfish; they are considerate and always think about how their conduct affects others. They have compassion and empathy; they are how others feel and they are charitable and forgiving. They do good deeds without thought of reward.

- Don't be selfish
- Don't be mean or cruel.
- Don't be insensitive to the feelings of others.

**CITIZENSHIP:** Citizenship is doing your share to help your family and make your community a better place. Good citizens are good neighbors. They cooperate with others, obey laws and rules, protect the environments, and respect the authority of parents, teachers and others.

- Don't bend the rules
- Don't break the laws.
- Don't be a citizen in name only.
- Don't spoil the environment.
- Don't waste resources or consume thoughtlessly and greedily.

