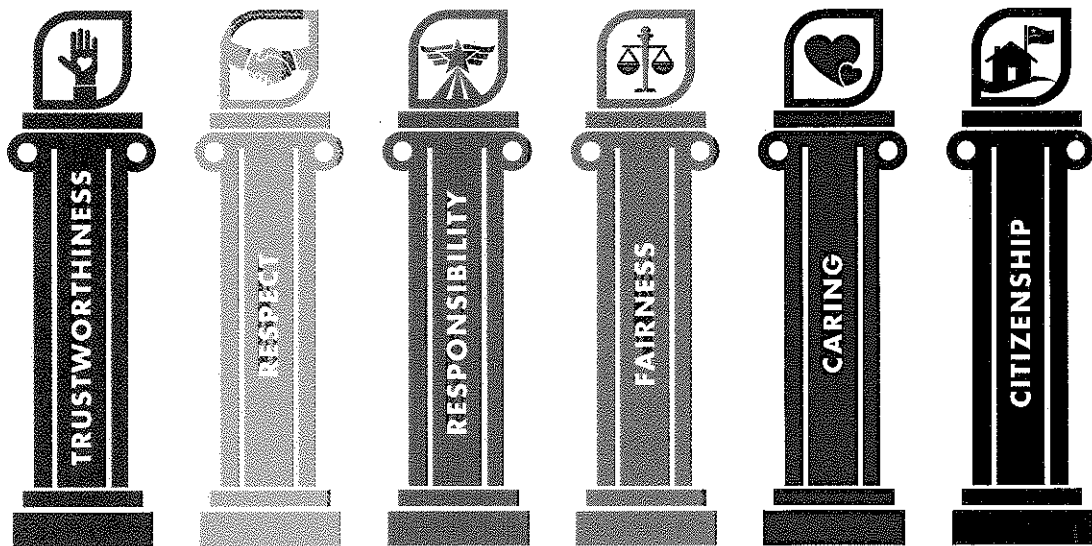


A PARENT'S GUIDE:

The SIX PILLARS of CHARACTERSM



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PARENTING FOR GOOD CHARACTER

Good character doesn't just happen. It is a result of parents who lay a strong foundation of character development. This guide is intended to assist parents in incorporating the Six Pillars of Character into their everyday experiences with their children.

If you'd like to learn more about CHARACTER COUNTS! and the Six Pillars of Character, please visit www.CharacterCountsInIowa.org.

WHAT IS CHARACTER?

- Your character is defined by what you do, not by what you say or believe.
- Every choice you make helps define the kind of person you are choosing to be.
- Good character requires doing the right thing even when it's costly or risky.
- What you do matters, and one person can make a big difference.
- You don't have to take the worst behavior of others as a standard for yourself. You can choose to be better than that.
- The payoff for good character is that it makes you a better person and it makes the world a better place.

THE SIX PILLARS OF CHARACTER

CHARACTER COUNTS! (CC!) is the nation's most widely used framework for character development. CC! is based on consensus values called The Six Pillars of Character: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring & Citizenship.

Although it is agreed that the responsibility for character development lies within the family, CC! asks that families, schools, community organizations, businesses and city government all work together to enhance the environment in which we live.

ABOUT CHARACTER COUNTS! IN IOWA

CHARACTER COUNTS! In Iowa is a project of The Institute for Character Development at Drake University. Through a statewide partnership with the national CHARACTER COUNTS! Coalition, the Institute facilitates a variety of CHARACTER COUNTS! initiatives throughout the state of Iowa, including CHARACTER COUNTS! in schools, communities, sports, workplaces & families.

Download a Spanish version of this guide and learn more about CHARACTER COUNTS! In Iowa by visiting our website:

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A PARENT'S GUIDE TO TRUSTWORTHINESS



TRUSTWORTHINESS

- 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.

WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME

- Watch for trustworthy behavior and show your appreciation.
- If you make a mistake, admit it and don't blame others. Talk about it with your children. Model how a person of character handles making a mistake.
- Talk to your child about times in your life (and listen to theirs) when it has been hard to be honest or keep promises.
- Set family goals. Have each member of the family complete the following sentence and post it where it will serve as a reminder: I will be trustworthy by: _____.

PARENTS CAN PROMOTE TRUSTWORTHINESS

- Model the behavior you want to see in your child and acknowledge their good behavior when you see it.
- Be clear about your expectations; expect your child to do what they say they are going to do and to be honest with you.
- Provide for basic needs on a consistent basis (love, proper nutrition, healthy activities, reading for enjoyment, faith development, etc.).
- Develop family rules and consequences. Explain them ahead of time and then use the consequences in a consistent way.
- Model relationships that demonstrate honesty, integrity, promise-keeping and loyalty.
- Develop a calm, emotionally responsive and stable home environment with a proper balance of freedom and structure.

FOR YOU TO CONSIDER

Is there harm in a little white lie? Here's one way to decide. If upon learning of the lie, would the person lied to thank you for caring or feel betrayed or manipulated?

TO HELP YOU TEACH THE SIX PILLARS

Focus Area: Children's Books

Most books you already read to or with your child can be discussed using the Six Pillars of Character. For example, discuss with your children how the character in the book demonstrated honesty, or how was a character reliable?

"Even the best liars tell the truth most of the time."

-Michael Josephson
Founder, CHARACTER COUNTS!

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO RESPECT



RESPECT

- 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.

WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME

- During mealtime each day, have each family member name a good trait for each person at the table. For example: "Dad is a good storyteller." By focusing on what each person does well, you are appreciating their unique abilities.
- Set family goals. Have each member of the family complete the following sentence and post it where it will serve as a reminder: I will show respect for others by: _____.

PARENTS CAN PROMOTE RESPECT

- Model respect and expect your children to treat you and others in a respectful way. Make a list of ways to show respect in your home.
- Treat each youngster as equally as possible recognizing that children may have different needs. Help your family understand that you provide for their needs and that sometimes that means not everyone gets the same thing.
- Embrace diversity and cooperation with individuals that are ethnically and culturally different.
- Respect privacy unless suspicious behaviors necessitate otherwise.
- Talk to your child about the differences between "treating everyone with respect" and admiring them.

FOR YOU TO CONSIDER

The "Rule of Universality": Do only those acts which you are willing to allow to become universal standards of behavior, applicable to all people in similar situations. Ask yourself, "If everyone did it, would it be a good thing?"

TO HELP YOU TEACH THE SIX PILLARS

Focus Area: Movies

Many movies provide a rich content to have character discussions with your children. But, selecting the right movie, watching it together and discussing it is very important. One resource for parents is "Teach With Movies", a CC! partner organization. For more information, visit www.teachwithmovies.org.

"Sir, I will treat you as a gentleman,
not because you are one, but because I am one."

-Thomas Jefferson

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO RESPONSIBILITY



- Do what you are supposed to do.
- Persevere. Keep on trying.
- Always do your best.
- Use self-control.
- Be self-disciplined.
- Think before you act. Consider the consequences.
- Be accountable for your choices.

WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME

- Give your child a chore to do. Teach them how to do it again and give them a deadline to complete it, then expect your child to be responsible in doing the task. Thank them after they do it.
- With your child, establish a regular method for him/her to complete homework and have what is needed for school.
- Set family goals. Have each member of the family complete the following sentence and post it where it will serve as a reminder: I will show that I am responsible by: _____

PARENTS CAN PROMOTE RESPONSIBILITY

- Give youngsters tasks at home to accomplish.
- Focus on effort and a positive attitude rather than over-emphasis on outcome.
- Applaud courageous decisions where the pull to the wrong thing was avoided.
- Take ownership for mistakes.
- Develop high expectations and link consequences to poor choices.

FOR YOU TO CONSIDER

Everything we do makes a difference. What we say and what we do starts a chain reaction that affects the lives of others. Choosing NOT to choose is a choice.

TO HELP YOU TEACH THE SIX PILLARS

Focus Area: TV & Video Games

In 1996, a typical child watched 25,000 hours of television before his or her 18th birthday. Judging how much television and what shows are best for your family is one of the largest responsibilities of current parenting.

Consider these suggestions:

- Decide upon the amount of TV/video games you allow.
- Watch with your child, discuss what you see and hear on TV and ask questions that encourage the child to think about what he or she is watching in terms of the Six Pillars.
- Explain the purpose of commercials.
- Limit the amount of violence watched and discuss violence with him or her.
- Turn the TV off after the programs you have selected are over.
- Set a good example. Limit adult TV time, too.

"A child is the only known substance from which a responsible adult can be made."

-Anonymous

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO FAIRNESS



- 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.

WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME

- When you hear, "It's not fair!" ask your child to define what is unfair about the situation. Usually when you hear this, it means your child didn't receive something he/she thinks was deserved or an expectation hasn't been met-whether real or imagined.
- Discuss the question "Does fair mean equal?" with your child. Talk about situations in school, home or the community where the answers may sometimes be "yes" and sometimes "no".
- Set family goals. Have each member of the family complete the following sentence and post it where it will serve as a reminder: I will show fairness by: _____.

PARENTS CAN PROMOTE FAIRNESS

- Create a democratic family environment by providing opportunities for each family member to provide input on appropriate family topics and decisions.
- Embrace the uniqueness of each family member without making comparisons of specific areas of competence.
- Consistently apply pre-determined rules. Make expectations clear and predictable.
- Advocate and help others who are impacted by adversity.
- Involve children in developing rules they are to follow.

FOR YOU TO CONSIDER

The Key to Fairness: Pre-established rules, consistently applied.

TO HELP YOU TEACH THE SIX PILLARS

Focus Area: Music

Music, whether on the radio or CDs, can be a wonderful source of entertainment and education. As a parent, you need to be clear about your rules and expectations regarding what is appropriate music for your child. With upper elementary through high school youth, you need to listen to what they are listening to, review the lyrics and discuss the character of the artists. Music videos can be highly suggestive and sometimes inappropriate for young viewers. Your role as a parent is to monitor what your child is viewing and listening to, and then determine if the lessons being taught through music are the ones that match the values you want your child to have. For resources on children's music, visit www.childrensmusicweb.com.

"It is not fair to ask of others what you are not willing to do yourself."

-Eleanor Roosevelt

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO CARING



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

WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME

- Declare this month as “Caring Month” and find ways to show caring: anonymous notes, small chores done as a surprise, etc.
- Do something as a family that shows caring for someone in need. Take your children along with you when you volunteer.
- Set family goals. Have each member of the family complete the following sentence and post it where it will serve as a reminder: I will be caring by: _____.

PARENTS CAN PROMOTE CARING

- Give each youngster time, attention and affection.
- Encourage awareness and expression of feelings.
- Consistently ask how behavioral choices impact the feelings of others. Help him or her to see the relationship between their actions and the feelings of others. Do not tolerate your child doing or saying things to intentionally hurt anyone.
- Encourage cooperation and helpful behavior.

FOR YOU TO CONSIDER

“They may not remember what you said, but they will always remember how you made them feel.”
-Carl Buehner

TO HELP YOU TEACH THE SIX PILLARS

Focus Area: Service and Volunteerism

Promote compassion and inspire caring in your family through opportunities to help others in need: in your home, neighborhood, school, community, state, country or world. Often children will notice people in need and feel very strongly about helping them. For ideas, visit the Family Cares Program at www.pointsoflight.org.

“A candle loses nothing by lighting another.”

-Anonymous

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO CITIZENSHIP



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

WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME

- Practice citizenship in action: be informed. Model how to “stay up” on current events by reading the paper or watching television news, attending local meetings of importance and talking about issues as a family.
- Have a family plan to regularly protect and conserve resources. For example: recycle, plant trees, don't litter.
- Set family goals. Have each member of the family complete the following sentence and post it where it will serve as a reminder: I will be a good citizen by: _____.

PARENTS CAN PROMOTE CITIZENSHIP

- Develop a family mission statement that includes service to others.
- Encourage extra-curricular activities that promote cooperation and good team-work.
- Encourage volunteerism and service-learning on a consistent and constant basis. Provide opportunities for children to reflect on their service: talk about or draw pictures about what they did, how it felt and why it matters to help others.
- Allow opportunities for reflection by writing, reading, and discussing the importance of social responsibility and global awareness.

FOR YOU TO CONSIDER

Being a citizen comes with rights, duties and privileges. With every right comes the responsibility to exercise it in a fair manner and to help fellow citizens do the same.

TO HELP YOU TEACH THE SIX PILLARS

Focus Area: The Internet

The internet is a valuable tool for our society, but it also brings increased duties for acting as a responsible citizen within the new global community. Your child needs your guidance to maximize the benefit of the internet as a tool for education and communication while staying responsible and safe. As a parent, you should know what sites your child is visiting, who they are emailing or instant messaging, and what email they are receiving. Installing a spam filter and privacy filters will help protect your child from solicitation. For more information, visit Media Technology for Parents at www.pta.org.

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil
is for good people to do nothing.”

-Edmond Burke

**LEARN MORE AT
CHARACTERCOUNTSINLOWA.ORG**

Materials for this guide were provided by the Institute for Character Development at Drake University and Mark J. Britzman, Ed.D., NCC, CCMHC, South Dakota State University.

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