



Character traits are those that help us to be cooperative, productive members of our families and our community. Positive character traits help us to respect ourselves and others. Character makes each of us a better person “on the inside,” which affects us as individuals, but it also impacts our families.

Families play a crucial role in character development. Children cultivate their core values by observing the behaviors and character of the people in their families. These values begin to develop early and are enhanced and strengthened over time. It’s important as our children move into adolescence that they begin to adapt the values they have learned from their families to their own lives. To do that, they need to be able to identify those traits that are important to their value system. Use this character check-in to begin the conversation about character with your family.

Family Character Check-In

1. What are character traits? Character traits are all the aspects of a person’s behavior and attitudes that make up that person’s personality.
2. Most character traits fall into 6 categories—trustworthiness, fairness, respect, caring, responsibility and citizenship. As a family, make a list of character traits that you think are important. If you are having trouble, use the internet to do some group research.
3. Reflecting on the list of character traits that your family created and answer the following questions.
 - What jobs do the people in our family have and want to have in the future?
 - What character traits from the list are important for someone in that job? If you think of additional traits that aren’t on the list, add them.
 - What character traits are important to our family? Members of your family may answer this question differently. Discuss those differences making sure to respect everyone’s opinions.
 - What can we do to strengthen our family’s character traits?
 - Do we need to focus on developing some traits we aren’t demonstrating?
 - Can we enhance some traits we already use?
 - Can we find ways to model, encourage or practice these traits in our family that will help us to be more productive outside of our family?

How are we doing? Put a star on the calendar in 3 weeks. As a family, review the questions you answered in the last section. Are we making the changes we talked about? Are there additional ideas for activities in developing traits of our family’s character? Have we done those things or made any changes that we want to celebrate? Vote on ideas of ways to celebrate our successes (i.e. movie night, restaurant night, breakfast for dinner night, family crafts, etc.).

NOTES

TEENS SAY THEIR PARENTS ARE THEIR MOST RELIABLE SOURCE WHEN TALKING ABOUT NOT USING ALCOHOL