

## Teach Your Child the Joy of Giving

There is nothing more refreshing, more inspiring, more wonderful than the smile on the face of someone you have just done something helpful for or when they receive a gift. There is an immense feeling of pride that rushes over us when we have given someone a gift that they might have needed, loved or enjoy greatly. That is primarily why the hit TV show, "Extreme Makeover home edition," is so popular, the show's hosts, volunteers, construction workers, and viewers alike all feel the joy of giving a family the dream of a lifetime.

Offering a hand to someone who needs it, giving away the things we don't use to those who don't have much, and just sending a note of thought to a distant friend or relative. These are the simple ideas of giving, the random acts of kindness such as helping a senior citizen with their groceries, allowing someone in front of you in the grocery store that has one item compared to your many items, or simply picking something up for someone; these are just a few simple things that will show we care.

### Preschool

While it is hard to conduct ourselves as perfectly as we would like with work, bills, responsibilities, obligations and children, we sometimes get lost in the maze of life. Sometimes we just don't want to read a book, or tuck our children in bed at night, if you felt this way you'd be no different than thousands of other parents out there and sometimes it's okay. As much as possible be giving of quality time to your children this will create an atmosphere that encourages children to feel loved, needed and cared for, which will ultimately be a quality they will easily display to others.

Sharing is more than just a great quality to have it really shows that we are giving others. Young children may have a tougher time sharing, especially if they are an only child or are accustomed to playing alone. Encouraging sharing starts with the

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understanding that we are all sharing of ourselves, “Mom shares with you all the wonderful things in life and it feels so nice to share with you, don’t you want to share your toys with others and see your friends play happily.”

### **Main points to address:**

- Model a caring behaviour.
- Spend quality time with your child.
- Encourage sharing.

### **Grades K-6<sup>th</sup>**

A one-on-one talk with children can change more things in a child’s life than anything else would be able to. Think of how special this has made you feel in the past when your role model or mentor took out the time to listen to you and advise (not preach) you on various topics. Ask your children how they feel about others (the homeless, other students, senior citizens, etc.) and listen closely to their thoughts and feelings. Model your thoughts around theirs “I also feel terrible for people who don’t have homes, do you think there is anything we can do to help them?”

If they feel there is, this can take you to your next process of volunteering at homeless shelters, charity events, or other needy organizations. Allow your child to feel as though this was their idea (if they say they would like to then really, it was) and congratulate them on caring enough to take action. Many people can feel bad about certain situations; it’s those who take action that will change the world. Let them know that they are one of those people who could ultimately change the world.

However, we don’t have to stop with the homeless shelters, what about your local community. Did a new neighbor move in? Do you have a senior living alone? If so, make an effort to welcome that new neighbor with a welcome package, make sure they know the area or have information about community resources or other information you have found helpful when you first moved in. Take a meal to that senior living alone and make sure they have someone taking them to the store or

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there doctor's appointments. If not, "normally," a transportation unit is designated for seniors. On the other hand, you can contact local resource centers to see if there are resources that can potentially help seniors in need. You and your child can also get involved with neighborhood events or charity drives locally.

### **Main points to address:**

- Volunteer at local charities and/or events.
- Talk to children about caring.
- Help neighbours or get involved with neighbourhood events.

### **Resources**

Resources that can help you in your venture include:

- Kid Bits - <http://www.kidbibs.com>
- YMCA - <http://www.ymca.net>
- The Case Foundation - <http://www.casefoundation.org>
- Learning to give - <http://www.learningtogive.org>

## Teach Your Child to Be Caring

Compassion and thoughtfulness are two quality traits that everyone should have and display to others around them, their world, environment, associates, family, and strangers alike. That is the idea of caring. It is a value that any parent would like for their child to display. Even though we live in a society filled with fear and sometimes harsh environments, we can teach our children to be caring to themselves and others around them.

As always, everything starts at home. Being a caring parent and community member is the best teaching tool for all parents. Showing empathy and caring encourages empathy and caring in our children. This can be as simple as helping a senior citizen with their groceries, allowing someone in front of you in the grocery store that has one item compared to your many items, or simply picking something up for someone. Other random acts of kindness can be demonstrated to our children to encourage the joy of caring for others.

### Preschool

While it is hard to conduct ourselves as perfectly as we would like with work, bills, responsibilities, obligations and children, we sometimes get lost in the maze of life. Sometimes we just don't want to read a book, or tuck our children in bed at night, if you felt this way you'd be no different than thousands of other parents out there and sometimes it's okay. As much as possible spend quality time with your children this will create an atmosphere that encourages children to feel loved, needed and cared for, which will ultimately be a quality they will easily display to others.

Sharing is more than just a great quality to have, it really shows that we care for others. Young children may have a tougher time sharing with others, especially if they are an only child or are accustomed to playing alone. Encouraging sharing starts with the understanding that we are all sharing ourselves, "Mom shares with

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you all the wonderful things in life and it feels so nice to share with you, don't you want to share your toys with others and see your friends play happily?"

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- Spend quality time with your child.
- Encourage sharing.

### **Grades K-6<sup>th</sup>**

A one-on-one talk with children can change more things in a child's life than anything else would be able to. Think of how special this has made you feel in the past when your role model or mentor took out the time to listen to you and advise (not preach) you on various topics. Ask your children how they feel about others (the homeless, other students, senior citizens, etc.) and listen closely to their thoughts and feelings. Model your thoughts around theirs, "I also feel terrible for people who don't have homes, do you think there is anything we can do to help them?"

If you feel there is something you can do, the next step may actually be volunteering at homeless shelters, charity events, or other needy organizations. Allow your child to feel as though this was their idea (unless it really was their idea!) and congratulate them on caring enough to take action. Many people can feel bad; it's those who take action that can change the world. Let them know that they are one of those people who could ultimately change the world.

However, we don't have to stop with the homeless shelters, what about your local community. Did a new neighbor move in? Do you have a senior living alone? If so make an effort to welcome that new neighbor with a welcome package, make sure they know the area or have information about community resources or other information you have found helpful when you first moved in. Take a meal to that senior living alone and make sure they have someone taking them to the store or

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their doctor's appointments. If not, "normally" a transportation unit is designated for seniors. On the other hand, you can contact local resource centers to see if there are resources that can potentially help seniors in need. You and your child can also get involved with neighborhood events or charity drives locally.

### **Main points to address:**

- Volunteer at local charities and/or events.
- Talk to children about caring.
- Help neighbours or get involved with neighbourhood events.

### **Resources**

Resources that can help you in your venture include:

- Parenting Orange County - <http://www.parentingoc.com>
- The Raise foundation - <http://www.theraisefoundation.org>

## Teach Your Child Proper Eating Habits

Sit up straight, elbows off the table, don't chew with your mouth open, and don't talk with your mouth full. You remember the old master rules of the table? It seems as though the majority of those rules on etiquette have flown out the window and replaced with busy families not always eating together at the dinner table or making sure those proper eating habits are implemented on a regular basis.

Proper eating habits can begin at a very young age for your child and if introduced early on, will stay with your child for the remainder of their lives. Even if they are not introduced early on you can still teach your children how to eat properly by following some basic steps per age group.

### Preschool

Preschoolers love tea parties and what better way to teach table manners than while having a tea party. "To make this tea party real, let's talk about how those who have tea parties act at the table." Go over with your child the basic rules for proper etiquette at the table.

- Sit up straight at the table
- No elbows on the table
- Sip, don't gulp
- Don't stuff your mouth too full
- Don't chew with your mouth open
- Don't talk with your mouth full

If you have a preschool boy, instead of a tea party have a cooking party. Use the same type of technique as the tea party and go over the same rules when having a real cooking party.

As well as your party fun, while eating dinner with the family these rules can be discussed and talked about. Ask them how they feel about the rules, which ones they feel are gross or which one they think is proper.

**Main points to address:**

- Have a tea party or a cooking party
- Talk about proper eating habits during family dinner

**Grades K-6<sup>th</sup>**

There is something great about a real dinner party. Ask a few family members to come over and participate in a real dinner party, having your child as the host. This is a great way to implement proper habits when around others as well as proper hosting techniques. At this point, you can have your child help you set the table properly and understand the differences in silverware. You can also go over the favorable rules, as listed above, as well as where the napkin should go (unfolded on their lap) and using politeness during a dinner party. Go over other valuable instructions such as:

- Always thank the cook once they have finished eating
- Burping is not a compliment to the cook
- Stay at the table until they are completely finished eating
- Sitting up straight at the table
- No double dipping. Instead place a small amount of dip on their plate

Allow your child to serve the appetizers to the guests when they show up and take orders of drinks for the guests, if you have a choice. Once dinner is getting ready to be served, instruct your child to pull out the seats for each of your guests.

**Main points to address:**

- Have a real dinner party with close family.
- Teach them proper table settings and the difference in silverware.
- Have them act as the host for the party.

## Teaching Your Child Quality Characteristics

### Resources

Resources that can help you in your venture include:

- Education - <http://www.education.com>
- Indie Parent - <http://www.indiaparenting.com>

If you're teaching kids about [health](#), it's probably a good idea to include a lesson on [health insurance](#). Teach them how to search for [affordable health insurance](#) and we'll help you find it. Our [insurance quotes](#) are the best in the business. Keep your kids informed and keep your family in good [health](#)!

## Teach Your Child the Value of Discipline

There isn't one child in this world who receives punishment and turns around to thank you for your adequate attention to detail and for going through the trouble to make sure they grow to be law abiding citizens (if you have one, I'd love to hear about it). Yet, children will understand the reasons behind your punishment and the value of discipline if you simply sit down with your child and talk to them. Does that sound hard to believe?

It's true; with a little patience and comprehensive talking with your child, they will ultimately understand the value of discipline. It is also a very important attribute for children to have, when children realize how important boundaries are and why rules are set out they rearrange their thought process on the way they act as well as knowing the only reason discipline is implemented is to save them. Even though for most parents discipline can be an emotional rollercoaster, it is imperative to the child rearing years. Here are some tips to help you explain to your children the value of discipline.

### Preschool

Children in the preschool age are ready to test the boundaries of parents; actually all children of any age will do this, but for the most part these are the years where children are setting self boundaries that will last throughout most of their youth. This is a great time to sit down with your child and explain to them your expectations of their behavior and the consequences that follow for defying the rules. "I know you don't always like to share, but it is very important you learn to and if I hear you are not sharing mommy (or daddy) will have to punish you for breaking the rules." You can always explain to your child that it is not something you like to do, but for them to grow up to be respectful and able to follow rules, you have to discipline.

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You can emphasize specific behaviors your children display or just talk to them about behaviors that are normally mirrored in children such as:

- Not listening
- Fighting
- Not sharing
- Being mean
- Not eating their dinner
- Lying
- Mocking, etc.

Children who see other children misbehave can benefit greatly from the experience. Without being rude or inconsiderate, point out a child that is behaving badly in a store or in the public. Ask your child how that makes them feel and if they think that behavior is good or bad. Talk about how these behaviors might make a parent feel, offer your thoughts on how you might feel if you were that parent.

### **Main points to address:**

- Explain to your child what you expect from them and why.
- Point out other children's behaviours and talk about that.

### **Grades**

**K-3rd**

What is it about discipline that makes it important? Ask your young elementary school child this question and listen attentively to their answers. What about those behaviors on TV, do you think those children are acting appropriately? Just like when you are out in public and you see a child who misbehaves ask your child how this kind of behavior makes them feel and how they feel when they know they have broken the rules. Talk openly to your child about your childhood experiences and the things that happened to you as a child and the lessons you learned through those experiences.

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If there was no discipline, how would children grow up acting? This is a great question for children to really think about, imagine if they could do anything they wanted, the zoo would be our world. Rules are meant to keep children safe and healthy, how many children would have electrocuted themselves had the rule of not sticking things in a light socket been enforced? These are just a few topics you can discuss with your child to help them understand the importance of discipline.

### **Main points to address:**

- ☑ Talk about the way children act on television.
- ☑ Explain how various behaviours can hurt children.

### **Grades 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>**

As children grow, so does the maturity of their minds. If implemented, children will begin to understand graciously the value of discipline and why their parents go through the stress of making sure those rules are followed. Give examples of children whose lives were terribly hurt from not following the rules of their parents, filter through stories online and in the news and talk about those stories with your children. How do those stories make your child feel? Ask them and talk openly.

Ask your child about children in their school who misbehave and how they feel about those children. How do the staff and teachers at their school see those children? How does your child want to be seen?

Teaching children the value of discipline is all about talking to your child; if not they won't thank you for that discipline until they are well into their adult years and have children of their own. You'll get that thank you regardless, but for them to react in a positive manner about discipline make sure you talk to them, point out children who don't follow rules, talk about their feelings about those children, discuss your experiences and show success stories of adults who were forced to follow rules.

### **Main points to address:**

## Teaching Your Child Quality Characteristics

- Explain your reasons for discipline & be honest.
- Talk about how they want to be seen and how they feel about others who misbehave.

### **Resources**

Resources that can help you in your venture include:

- About our kids - <http://www.aboutourkids.org/aboutour/articles/discipline.html>
- Parenthood - [http://www.parenthood.com/articles.html?article\\_id=9736](http://www.parenthood.com/articles.html?article_id=9736)
- Values Parenting - [http://www.valuesparenting.com/values/self\\_discipline.php](http://www.valuesparenting.com/values/self_discipline.php)

## Teach Your Child Time Management

Although time management has been greatly associated with people in the work force, children can still benefit tremendously from this offset of organizational skills. Teaching your child the benefits of time management will provide your children with a comprehensive tool that will help them throughout their lifetime. In a time where after school activities overlap with personal, family and social time, unnecessary stress or tension can accommodate your child's atmosphere if they do not have time management skills. By initiating time management skills with your children, you can eliminate these and other preventable conflicts.

In this busy world, children are not capable of balancing all the essential activities of school, home and social commitments. The more efficient we teach children to use their time the more productive in school they will become. As all the skills we teach our children through the growing years they will continue to use this skills throughout their lives. Therefore, as a side of time management we should also be teaching our children how to use our time wisely.

These concepts might be difficult for some children to grasp, persistence and understanding will go a long way in helping your child reach this goal.

### Preschool

Start your preschooler out with a large calendar that she/he can reach; it should be hung in an office, dining room or in the kitchen area. Somewhere where you can both sit and talk about various concepts of time with the calendar close by. When you are explaining the concept of time management to young children, it's also a great idea to have a clock and a stop watch around. "The clock tells us what time it is. When we think about the things we have to do we have to be aware of how long these things take."

## Teaching Your Child Quality Characteristics

Now show your child the clock, "Eight o'clock is your bedtime, so if you want a book read to you in the evening you have to be ready for bed earlier and to find out how earlier we have to time ourselves reading a book." With the stop watch in hand and set to time you, read a book with your child and stop the watch once you are finished. Show your child the time on the stopwatch. "See there it took us four minutes to read that particular book, so you know you have to be ready for bed five minutes before your bed time to have a book read to you at night."

This is just one of many ideas that will give you and your young children an advantage over learning time management. You can also do the same procedure with running errands, cleaning, taking a bath, going to a movie or out to dinner, or any other job or activity that is completed.

### **Main points to address:**

- Keep a large calendar hung where your child can see it.
- Go over the calendar schedule with your child.
- Talk about the concept of time and how long various tasks take.

### **Grades K-3<sup>rd</sup>**

Now that children have the basic concept of time and how timing yourself on various objects works, you can talk to them about the time of day and how many projects can fit into one work day, or in your child's case, play day.

Purchase your child an academic student calendar, these calendars usually begin in the month of August (when school normally starts) and run until July the following year. This is a great way to get them involved in writing their schedule down and keeping their tasks organized.

If they have a school project, book report or major project in school this is the perfect opportunity to show your child how long something takes and using good

## Teaching Your Child Quality Characteristics

time management. Have them write down when the project was assigned to them and when the project is due. Have them write down, between the time it was assigned and the time it is due, portions of the project to be completed. Therefore, if they have a book report due and they have two months to complete the project they should have half the book read in two weeks, the other half in three-four weeks, the outline the report the following week, the first draft the following, etc. Be sure to see them through this assignment with encouragement and praise for completed tasks.

### **Main points to address:**

- Be sure they have a calendar for school.
- Go through the calendar with your children every week to be sure they are writing everything down.
- Have them include family activities and birthdays.

### **Grades 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>**

If you have a child that is involved in sports, extracurricular activities, groups and clubs, taking on too much can be easy to encounter and tough when everything comes to a boiling head. Talk to your children about how taking on too much could have an adverse affect on each one. It is appropriate for children to expand their knowledge and to be involved in various things they enjoy, but taking on too much only creates a negative effect.

You should also have a student academic calendar for children in this age group and complete the same types of tasks as provided above.

### **Main points to address:**

- Explain to your child the concept of taking on too much.
- Go over your child's calendar with them.

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### Resources

Resources that can help you in your venture include:

- SuperMom Tips - <http://www.timexsupermoms.com>
- Family Education - <http://school.familyeducation.com>
- Time Management Skills - <http://www.timemanagementgoals.com/>
- Free Time Management Library - <http://www.managementhelp.org>

## Teach Your Child How to Set Goals

Every year children are whisked off to school on the very first day to, more or less, learn about the coming year; what they will be learning that year, how they will be taught, what is expected of them, and the goals of the classroom as a group.

Goals are simple, they're not complex, and that is the goal of this piece. Goals are made multifaceted by the world we live in; they are made to be something that will "someday" be obtained. This is an inaccuracy these are actually long-term goals. If you asked just three people, what are your goals? They will probably tell you of something they are reaching for that could take years, even a decade. Because of this complexity, society has added the word "short-term" to "goals" just to clarify the difference.

With children simple is better, of course, therefore we will be discussing short-term goals throughout this piece, because when children learn the simple things the complex stuff just won't seem so complex anymore. And the more adequate they are to develop short-term goals the simpler it will be for them to set out, develop and obtain short term goals.

### Preschool

Preschoolers, although they are not overwhelmed with school schedules, homework and school related activities, can set up goals that can be reached in the house. By giving children tiny little goals, "Right now our goal is to get dressed and get ready for the day." Breaking goals up into everyday activities will teach children a goal setting routine. Once they have completed each task give them a small celebration, even if it's just "Great job, you completed that goal well."

You don't have to stop at the dressing routine, you can continue on with other simple daily goals, "what do you want to do today? What is your goal for today?"

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Reinforce the thought of what someone one wants to do is actually a goal. Although not everything we want can be a goal, it has to be something we can actually obtain ourselves. Like if someone wants to live forever or their parents to live forever there is actually nothing we can do to obtain these goals. Therefore, living forever is a wish but is not actually a goal.

### **Main points to address:**

- Set small daily goals with your child.
- Reinforce the thought that what someone wants to do is actually a goal.

### **Grades K-3<sup>rd</sup>**

When your children get to this age group, it is a good time to go over with them the ability to set realistic goals, develop an outline for those plans and oversee your child's progress on those projects. The outline can be as simple or as complex as your child's age and maturity, but it should give them a better understanding of developing their goals.

The outline should include the goal, the timeframe of the goal and ways to complete it. Let's say they have a project to do for school. The goal would be to complete the project in sufficient time. How to obtain the goal will be to break the project up into smaller "short-term" goals. Say the project is a state research report. The first goal is to get the research material, the second will be to write an outline, the third to write a first draft, the fourth to write the report, the fifth goal will be to edit and fact check, and the final will be to fix the report or rewrite from the errors.

Be sure to check with your child for progress and encouragement, but allow your child to complete these goals without "holding their hand" throughout.

### **Main points to address:**

## Teaching Your Child Quality Characteristics

- Go over an outline with your children.
- Check your child's progress consistently.

### **Grades 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>**

This is a great age group to teach about the difference of short-term goals and long-term goals. Short-term goals are goals that can be accomplished in a short time limit. While long-term goals can take months to many years to accomplish, just as your child's desired occupation when they grow up would be considered a long-term goal.

Have your child create a long-term goal, that can either be obtained in the next few months or a year. Whether that is to improve on various subjects in school or better themselves in a sport or learn a new language. Whatever their goal may be have them write a goal plan, similar to a goal outline, but a goal plan also includes resources and ways to achieve their goal. Moreover, it is encouraged to talk to your children and have them add setbacks that can occur while obtaining your goals in their plan. These setbacks can be disruptive to the overall plan of the goal, therefore creating plans for dealing with setbacks should be included with your child's goal plan.

Identifying their goal, developing a plan and creating an action plan for those goals will help them to obtain their goal and will encourage them to use goals for future success throughout their lives.

#### **Main points to address:**

- Teach your children about long-term and short-term goals.
- Consider the setbacks of the goals and outline different ways of dealing with them.

#### **Resources**

Resources that can help you in your venture include:

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- Kids Goals - <http://www.kidsgoals.com/>
- Activity Village - <http://www.activityvillage.co.uk>
- Kid's Health - <http://www.kidshealth.org>

## Teach Your Child Self-Respect

Self-respect can be explained as knowing that you are valuable and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. Self-respect leads to having positive self-esteem, which ultimately controls our success, happiness and how well we will develop emotionally throughout our journey. Although you can take this in a totally different negative direction if you have too much self-respect, too much self-esteem, or are more or less conceited.

Teaching our children self-respect begins with the way we treat our children from the beginning of their lives. From the moment our children are born we are molding them in the direction they will ultimately land once they reach the age of four or five.

Will they have a good personality? Have low self-esteem? Have high self-esteem? Be productive? Be over confident? As parents of newborns these are just some of the questions we are interested in about our children.

Would you believe me if I tell you it is all up to us parents? Information for developing a baby's personality with that of their natural born personality can be found in the resource link at the end of this article. (See \*Kids Development & \*Parenting; your babies personality in the resource section.)

Although genetics play a role in the way our children develop, the environment in which our children reside, the type of attention babies receive and the way parents interact with their children play a much larger role on the personality and personal qualities children inherit while they are growing.

### Preschool

Even if your preschooler has already developed his/her personality there are a few simple things you can do to help increase your child's self-esteem. Children who

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receive respect will learn to have self-respect. Offering your children unconditional love is just one way children begin to feel as though they are worth being loved. There aren't too many parents out there who don't offer this to their children, but sometimes children don't always understand this trait unless it is pointed out to them.

Such as when they do something wrong, "Although I have grounded you for hitting your brother (or whatever the child has done) I want you to know that I don't believe that you are a bad person and I love you no matter what you do. It's not you that I am upset at, it was the action that you have done that I'm upset at." This is important for children to understand that they are not "bad" when they do something wrong. Constantly sharing with your children this simple, yet important speech will back up your unconditional love for them.

### **Main points to address:**

- Share your unconditional love for them.
- Explain that a wrong behaviour does not make them "bad".
- Allow children to do things on their own.

### **Grades K-3<sup>rd</sup>**

Children need to feel as though their feelings, thoughts and opinions are important to their family or those individuals around them. This will help children maintain the self-respect that they need to succeed. Listen attentively to your child's feelings and thoughts on family matters, issues at school or situations with friends. More important is your understanding as a parent that their feelings are substantiated. "I can understand why you would feel that way about what your friend said, you have every right to feel that way. I remember when I was a kid and..." Share your insight about situations you may have had that were closely related to what your child is telling you.

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When children are talking to you about something that is very serious to them, be sure to be at eye level with your child and that you have eye contact with them. If you are constantly watching the clock or other objects while they are talking they will begin to feel as though their words or feelings don't even matter to their parent, so how could they matter to someone else? Speak in the same manner when you are addressing your child about a situation that is important to him. Look him straight in the eyes with sympathy and understanding.

### **Main points to address:**

- Take your children's feelings seriously.
- Listen and speak to your child with eye contact on their level.

### **Grades 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>**

If there is one thing children begin to need as they grow it is their privacy and respect of their belongings. With society the way it is today parents have a hard time allowing children to have their own privacy and to give them the respect of their belongings. Until you do not trust your child or you have very strong beliefs that they are doing something that could cause harm to themselves or other children allow them the benefit of the doubt and have their own privacy.

Respecting your child's belongings can begin with parents not snooping through their children's belongings, again unless you have reason to believe that something is going on that can harm your child.

All children have special qualities they possess, perhaps they are very organized and tidy or they get straight A's on their report cards. Expose these qualities with a treat, a dinner date or a special night held just for your child. "I'm really proud of how hard you have worked on your grades and I wish to give you a dinner date for all your hard work and being so responsible. I want to show you how proud I am of you."

### **Main points to address:**

## Teaching Your Child Quality Characteristics

- Respect their property and privacy.
- Find and expose their qualities.
- Share your feelings and attention.

### **Resources**

Resources that can help you in your venture include:

\* Kids Development - <http://www.kidsdevelopment.co.uk/PersonalityDevelopmentBabies.html>

\* Parenting; your baby's personality - <http://www.parenting.com/parenting/baby/article/0,19840,647376,00.html>

## Teaching Your **Child How to Be Creative**

Creativity is the ability to see things in a different light, to view the world in a distinct and personal way. Many people visualize creativity as a talent; in contrast creativity is a thought process whereas talent is a special skill we have personally. Creativity can be taught whereas talent is something we are born with.

Whether we are creative ourselves, or just know that we want our children to be creative individuals, it is an important trait for our children to capture. Learning creativity as a child will help them in their adult life, especially if they are professionals who work in the industry of business, economics, industrial and graphic design, science, engineering and the arts.

### **Preschool**

Create an atmosphere for preschoolers that encourage creative activities and thoughts. Prepare their bedroom or play area in a way that encourages creativity, keep coloring devices and paper handy and easily accessible. Keep a variety of artistic materials; clay, play dough, music, books, blocks, legos, and other creative toys within the reach of the child.

Incorporate role playing and storytelling in everyday activities. For example while you are eating animal crackers, have your child pick an animal cracker, name the animal, eat the cracker then imitate that animal. Or while you are traveling, make up a short story about an item you see on the road or side of the road. For example: You see a tire sitting on the side of the road, you can make something up about that tire. "I imagine that tire came from a car that was going too fast down the road and when the man pulled over to the side to fix his tire he realized that going so fast will make him lose his tires. So he never went too fast on the road again."

### **Main points to address:**

## Teaching Your Child Quality Characteristics

- Create an atmosphere that encourages creativity
- Have a variety of artistic and creative materials accessible to your child
- Incorporate role playing and storytelling in everyday activities

### **Grades K-3<sup>rd</sup>**

With young school-aged children, creativity will be developing rapidly. This is the time they will begin problem solving on their own; this is a great time to encourage creativity. Encourage them to review alternative ways of problem solving by evaluating the problem, think of a variety of solutions and figure out which is the best way to execute the solution. For example; If Michelle at school does not want to be your child's friend anymore (and this happens more times than you can count on both hands at feet at this age) then give three or four alternative methods to solve this problem and have your child execute the one that is the best choice.

This is also a good time in your child's life to begin to relax your parental controls, don't let go of the reins or allow your child to make all the decisions, but begin to give them more options and allow them to help you with establishing rules and regulations for their age. As adults we sometimes tighten our parental control, which can diminish the self-confidence that is an important attribute of the creative spirit.

### **Main points to address:**

- Offer them the ability to help provide the rules and regulations of the household
- Give them an opportunity for free self-expression, without negative or demeaning judgment
- Encourage them to evaluate their problems, review a variety of options to solve the problem, and figure out which option is the best to execute.

### **Grades 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>**

## Teaching Your Child Quality Characteristics

Encouraging your school-aged children to discover diverse activities in and out of school will help develop critical-thinking skills, which is important to the creative pursuit. School-aged children become bombarded with homework, school sports or other activities. In particular, theatre activities, whether in-school or out of school, should be encouraged. Many local organizations for the arts can help you find a place for your child in their programs, even if your child is shy and does not feel comfortable acting in a play they can always provide other services for the stage play such as lighting, decorating, sound, costume, narrating or a variety of other duties. It is important to offer creative avenues, but it is also important not to push or pressure your child into these activities. Give them time to develop the motivation to pursue them themselves.

It is also important to allow your child the freedom of expression, allow them to be the individuals they are by giving them the ability to wear the clothes and items of their liking. Although I wouldn't allow them to get tattoos at the age of 12, there have to be set regulations as to what, but do allow them to express themselves in the unique being that they are.

### **Main points to address:**

- Encourage your child to be a part of extra curricular activities in and out of school, join the choir in school, and sign up for a local play out of school.
- Allow your child the freedom of expression, allow them to wear the clothes they want without the fear of rejection or judgment from his parents.
- Don't push them into anything they don't want to do, but encourage them to join diverse groups to learn other skills.

### **Resources**

Resources that can help you in your venture include:

- Creative Child Magazine- <http://www.creativechildonline.com>
- Preschool Education Online - <http://www.preschooleducation.com>

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- US Regional Arts Organization - <http://www.usregionalarts.org/index.htm>

## Teach Your Child the Basics of Cooking

Children enjoy baking with their parents, especially when parents are baking the good stuff; brownies, cakes, cookies, pies, etc. yet what happens when it's time to cook? The kitchen is usually cleared. Many parents don't bother teaching their young children how to cook, they usually wait until they are in high school and have to be self-sufficient. Yet, teaching the basics of cooking at an earlier age will not only help to make the teaching time run smoother, it will also help children gain other skills that you never thought cooking could do.

The first thing you'll want to teach your children, of any age, about cooking is the safety of handling raw foods. Have them keep the following rules enforced while they are in the kitchen:

- Keep their hands clean. Every time they handle food, they should wash them thoroughly with soap and water.
- Keep raw foods and cooked foods separate, this will ensure safety from bacteria when it's time for dinner.
- Never lick their fingers after handling food, ever.
- Foods need to be cooked in the proper temperature.
- All raw foods, vegetables, and fruits must be washed before eating or handling.
- If you are working with a gas stove be sure clothing, hair and other flammable materials are at least five feet from the flame.
- Keep flames to a minimal when cooking.
- Steer clear from all oven top pans with grease and boiling water in them, be sure they understand never to reach for or grab the handle of pots on the stove.

These safety precautions should inform your child of the dangers of cooking in the kitchen, not to scare them but to make them aware of the things that can be harmful to themselves and other family members if the rules are not followed properly.

## **Preschool**

Children at the preschool stage are not able to follow recipe directions, which are a great learning tool for children; therefore, the best activities to include your preschooler in are those that require washing, especially the fruits and vegetables or shucking of the corn, stirring and cleaning and setting the kitchen table.

Although preschoolers cannot read the recipes you can help them with the basic math measurement concepts by reading to them the measurements needed for a certain ingredient and showing them the measurement on the measuring cup. "We need two cups of milk; here is where the two cup line is. So we will have to fill this cup up to here on the measuring glass."

Allow your children to pour and stir. Throughout the cooking process, you can pick them up to show them how the stove makes the food boil and cook.

### **Main points to address:**

- Make sure they understand safety precautions.
- Allow them to stir and help to measure ingredients.
- Continuously show them the process that is taking place inside the pans.

## **Grades K-6<sup>th</sup>**

When you are cooking with younger children who cannot read they can either use the pictures to guide them or you can read the instructions and they can mix, measure and pour. Allowing your children to be hands on is the best way to teach them how to cook. That's really when they learn the most when they don't think they are learning anything at all.

For children who know how to read having them read the ingredients and the instructions are a great way to get them to understand the basic concept of using

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ingredients and instructions to create a masterpiece. Sometimes to help them understand the use of seasonings you can give them a taste of the food before the seasoning and then after.

Find Kid Friendly recipes that you can cook together:

- Kraft Foods: <http://www.kraftfoods.com/kids-recipes/>
- Kids Health: <http://kidshealth.org/kid/recipes>
- Very Best Baking: [http://www.verybestbaking.com/recipes/kids\\_recipes.aspx](http://www.verybestbaking.com/recipes/kids_recipes.aspx)
- Just Kids Recipes: <http://www.justkidsrecipes.com>

### **Main points to address:**

- Make sure they understand safety precautions.
- Allow to read the recipe and give you the instructions if they can read.
- If they can't read allow them to do the mixing, pouring and stirring.
- Find fun, kid friendly ingredients that you can cook together.

### **Resources**

Resources that can help you in your venture include:

- The Food Network - <http://www.foodnetwork.com>
- Just Mommies - <http://www.justmommies.com>

## **Teach Your Child to Love Reading**

A book is more than just a story; it's a magical journey that takes the mind through the creative land of the writer. In addition, reading a book can stimulate the mind in more ways than watching a television program or playing a video game ever could. Yet, with the increase in cable network television, movies, video games and computer games, children are spending less and less time reading and more time getting lost in technology's slush pile.

In fact in a study conducted by the Harry J. Kaiser Family Foundation concluded the following, children living in "heavy" TV households are more likely to watch every day (77% v. 56%), and to watch for longer when they do watch (an average of 34 minutes more a day). They are also less likely to read every day (59% v. 68%), and spend less time reading when they do read (6 minutes less a day). In fact, they are less likely than other children to be able to read at all (34% of children ages 4-6 from "heavy" TV households can read, compared to 56% of other children that age).

The study indicates that watching television has a significant effect on the interaction of family, reading, and schoolwork. Therefore, we have put together some great ideas to help you get your children on the reading wagon, so they will always make time to read.

### **Preschool**

Allow your children to see you enjoying a book, newspaper or other reading material. Just as so many things that are important for children to see us parents doing, lead by example. For the good stories that you read (and age appropriate) tell your child the stories enthusiastically. Just simply give a short synopsis, even books you read as a child or in the past can make children want to read, "Oh I read this great book about..."

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Share bedtime stories with your children nightly. Read as many fairy tales and creative stories as possible. Make each story fun with a personal touch, if you are reading short stories make each character's voice different. This will bring the story to life for your child and make the story an intimate adventure for you and your child.

### **Main points to address:**

- Allow your children to see you read.
- Give your child a synopsis of the story you are reading or have read in the past.
- Share bedtime stories often.
- Make it fun.

### **Grades K-3<sup>rd</sup>**

When children begin school, they begin having weekly visits to the school library. For each book they bring home have a family book-report night. Just like playing charades, gather the family, some popcorn and the book. Have the children act out the book or orally tell the story of the book they read, each family member should also share a book report from books they are reading or have read in the past. This age, with so many new and exciting things with school and friends, children become overwhelmed and reading begins to take a back seat to everything else. Encourage your children to read more often, yet don't push reading on them or force them to read. Sometimes at this age it's best to share a story together, have your child read one page and you read the next. See who can make the funniest way of telling the story or who has the deepest voices while telling the story. This will make the adventure that much more interesting.

To encourage sight words and help children recognize them use labels around the house to help them along with their reading. Place labels on doors, windows, couch, wall and various other items and have your child read them every time they walk past them.

**Main points to address:**

- Put together a family book report night.
- Encourage reading don't push it.
- Encourage reading with labels around the house.

**Grades 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>**

The adventures are just beginning for children in this age group; 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade is when the chapter books are introduced. There's no book in the world like a chapter book, be sure to have plenty of these books around for your child. You can find plenty of these types of books at book fairs, book bazaars or you can use book-trading sites such as:

- <http://www.paperbackswap.com>
- <http://www.readitswapit.co.uk>
- <http://www.whatsonmybookshelf.com>
- <http://www.swaptree.com>
- <http://www.titletrader.com>

Make visiting the library a family tradition that is worked into your family schedule once a week or once a month. Allow your children to bring home their favorite choice books, but only allow them to take out two at a time, unless they need reference material for school, when children have too many books to read from the library they begin to feel overwhelmed with books and normally end up not reading any of them.

At this age after being involved in so many books, children have a tendency to have great creativity and thoughts about stories and characters. Sit down with your child to write your own story together, allow them to come up with the idea and you simply add to it. This is a great project for parents and children. You can even get

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the story published through your local printing shop or print it out yourself with a publisher program and staple your masterpiece together.

### **Main points to address:**

- Make sure you have plenty of books around the house.
- Visit the library consistently, either every month or week.
- Help them write and publish their own books.

### **Resources**

Resources that can help you in your venture include:

- Reach out and Read - <http://www.reachoutandread.org/>
- National Network for Child Care - <http://www.nncc.org/Parent/8ways.read.html>
- Scholastic - [http://www.scholastic.com/familymatters/read/age3\\_5/click.htm](http://www.scholastic.com/familymatters/read/age3_5/click.htm)

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