



*Civil Behavior
Getting to the Heart
of the Matter*

Heart-to-Heart

Making Civil Behavior an Accepted and Expected Part of Our Lives



Teaching Responsibility and Self-Regulation

...be responsible for your own behavior

...be honest and relied upon to make wise choices

Civil Behavior in Action

School Rules

The *Washington Way*, Carpenter's RESPECT Rules, and Emerson's Code of Conduct are examples of behavioral expectations that have been established for students in our schools. Responsibility is built as students use these guidelines to direct their behavior.

Leadership Opportunities

Students learn responsibility by taking on leadership roles within their school setting. Serving on Safety Patrol or Student Council, Student Government, and in other roles as peer tutors, building recyclers, buddy students, peer mediators and in service learning projects provides real world situations in which others must depend on the students involved.

Developing responsibility and the ability to self-regulate emotions and behavior are important skills that children need in order to be successful in school and throughout their lives. When children realize they have choices for their words and actions, choose to do the right thing, follow through on commitments, and accept consequences for their actions, they are learning responsibility. Being responsible not only contributes to the positive image others have of us, but also increases self-esteem. Others know they can rely on us, and we know that we are trustworthy.

How can you help your child develop responsibility? Developing responsibility is a process that slowly emerges when parents learn to let go while supporting their child's sense of independence and self-control. The following tips may help:

- Establish daily or weekly chores and responsibilities for your child.
- Help break down tasks - make a list or visual picture of steps if necessary.
- Develop habits/routines that lead to responsible behavior (for example, put homework in the same spot everyday, follow a schedule to complete a task, use an assignment notebook).
- Make agreements with your child and expect him or her to follow through.
- Provide new freedoms and choices when your child demonstrates he is ready for them. Start small and build in natural rewards.
- When things go wrong, help your child take responsibility for her part and make a plan with her to do things differently next time.
- If you give an allowance, help your child take responsibility for the money and learn money management skills along the way. Where will the money be kept? How much will be saved, spent on himself, or donated to help others?
- Discuss how you fulfill your own responsibilities and model responsible behavior for your children.

MORE HELP FOR PARENTS

*How to Help Our Children Develop
Good Judgment, Integrity, and
Other Essential Virtues*
by Thomas Lickona

*Raising Self-Reliant Children in a
Self-Indulgent World: Seven
Building Blocks for Developing
Capable Young People*
by H. Stephen Glenn

*Helping Your Child Learn
Responsible Behavior*
by Edwin and Alice Delattre,
US Dept. of Education, 1993

Dear Advice Lady,

My sixth grader is disorganized and forgetful. Last week, he called from school asking me to bring him the social studies homework he had left at home. He said his grade could be lowered if he did not hand in the homework on time. What should I have done?

Concerned Parent

Dear Concerned Parent,

Our natural reaction as parents is to help our child, especially when we believe something bad (lowered grades) could happen. By delivering the missing homework, you deprived your child of an opportunity to learn from natural consequences. While learning from our mistakes can sometimes be painful, the lessons learned are usually not forgotten. Let your child know that by not rescuing him, you fulfilled your responsibility as a parent and that you have faith in him that he can learn from his mistake and not forget his assignment again.

The Advice Lady