

***C.A.T.S.***

***May 2011***

***Citizenship: Living a Life of Character***



***Character Activities for  
Teachers and Students***

***Duval County Public Schools  
Jacksonville, Florida***

***"The only title in our democracy superior to that of President is the  
title of citizen."***

***Justice Louis D. Brandeis***

***\*\*The Florida state legislature mandates the character traits that  
are covered each year. The order is consistent from year to year for  
ease of planning.***

***Principals!***

***It is that time again....  
Your 2010-11 Character Education  
Action Plan is now due.***

***The Action Plan form can be found  
at the end of this newsletter.***

***Please complete the form and return by fax or school  
mail to Deborah Hansen***

***Due Date: May 15, 2011***

***Call Deborah Hansen at 904-568-0786 if you have  
questions.***



## *Citizenship: Living a Life of Character*

*May is the final month for this electronic newsletter for the 2010-11 school year. The month's trait, citizenship, is a way of encompassing all the character traits of the year. (See listing at the end of this newsletter for all the traits.)*

***Living a life of character** means infusing all of these traits and building kids of character while they are with us each day. We acknowledge that parents and other important adults in a child's life are the first and most important teachers of character, as they should be. The family is the foundational community for young people.*

*However, children are in a different community setting—the school and classroom—for much of their day, and we have the unique opportunity to guide them within those types of communities. Hopefully, we are also reinforcing the tenets that have been found to be important to all cultures, all religions, all people around the globe, things like honesty, respect, responsibility, self-control, patience, kindness, citizenship, cooperation, charity, and tolerance. We can, and should, do this without infringing on any family's religion or unique cultural heritage.*

*This is our goal as “character educators” within our roles as academic teachers: To prepare young people to become educated, contributing members of a democracy, while still respecting each individual within the highly diverse society called the United States.*

*Some books that focus on  
Living a Life of Character:*

*Elementary:*

*Baylor, B., Hawk, I'm Your Brother*

*Brown, M., My Name is Celia—The Life of Celia Cruz*

*Gackenbach, D., King Wacky*

*Martin, C., Summer Business*

*Secondary:*

*Jennifer McKnight-Trontz, The Good Citizen's Handbook: A Guide to Proper Behavior*

*John Sheldon, Wake Up America—Your Alarm is Ringing*

*Web Resources for Teens:*

*Who Will Love America?*

*<http://www.goodcitizen.org/WWLA%20Book/Book%20Home%20Page.htm>*

*Celebration USA: <http://www.celebrationusa.org/>*

*Teacher Tips*



***Communities are the foundation of citizenship.***

***Your classroom is a community.***

***If your classroom is a nurturing place with rules and respect for one another, you are teaching and modeling what it means to be a good citizen.***

***Teachers at all grade levels can build on this concept every day of the school year in some very basic ways:***

- 1. Discuss the meaning of citizenship within the context of your classroom. According to [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com), the definition is the character of an individual viewed as a member of society; behavior in terms of the duties, obligations, and functions of a citizen: an award for good citizenship. Ask them why they should care about each other as members of the class community. What ARE their obligations to each other? To you?***
- 2. Ask students what would happen if there were no rules or laws at home, in school, in traffic, or in specific cases like stealing, attacking someone, etc. Tie this to the requirements for a project you are about to assign them, no matter what your subject area.***
- 3. Involve your students in making classroom rules. This is especially effective at the beginning of a school year. They should include the consequences for breaking the rules. You will find that these rules are followed more closely than if you set the rules for them.***

*4. At appropriate moments in your classroom (especially when students are NOT behaving with good citizenship), invite them to share their own “good citizenship” stories. To get them started, give some examples, such as befriending a new student, collecting canned goods (or other items) for charity, obeying the rules in various contexts (wearing a bike helmet, following rules about crossing at cross walks, etc depending on the age group).*

*5. Generate discussion about beginning a service project for your class(es). Allow the students to decide on the project, perhaps tying it to your subject area in some way. (Science = recycling; Social studies = help with school elections; Math = collecting canned goods and then graphing what they get; Language arts = write poems, stories, plays, raps about citizenship and then performing their work at a local nursing home or veterans’ center.)*

*The possibilities are endless once you highlight and then nurture the connections between citizens and their communities.*



*Parent Tips*



*Building good citizens means parents modeling and then reinforcing the family's coherence as a community first.*

*Next, a democracy relies on an educated citizenry. Here are the actions that parents can take to reinforce their child's participation in their school community as a place of learning.*

*These are the attitudes that must be instilled in children from the time they can understand our voices. They must become the soup of life for children as they grow and the head off to their first day of school. They may sound exceedingly basic but we may be at a time when we need to get "back to the basics."*

- 1. School is a place for learning.*
- 2. We have free public education in this country, which is NOT the case in many other countries. Attendance is also mandatory.*
- 3. The primary purpose of going to school is to learn to read, calculate, think, and accumulate knowledge for your future. The reason is so you will be educated enough to participate in society in positive, productive ways.*
- 4. Our democracy demands an educated citizenry. Without an education, you will be open to negative forces and influence spawned by ignorance, which means society as a whole will suffer from your ignorance.*
- 5. Each member of the family has a job to do. Your job is school.*

*6. You must attend school every day it is in session, unless you are ill.*

*7. You are expected to follow the rules at school.*

*8. As in nearly any job, you have a supervisor. Yours is called “the teacher.” This person is to be shown respect. If there is a problem between you and a teacher, speak to her/him after class to try to resolve the issue.*

*9. Proper comportment (behavior) at school is required. This means appropriate dress (non-revealing, clean, and in good repair), moderated tone of voice, courteous language and non-aggressive behavior toward your classmates and all adults you come into contact with.*

*10. You are expected to do all work to the absolute best of your ability. Ask questions when you don’t understand something. You will NOT understand much of what is presented, which is normal and why you are on the job in the first place.*

*11. You will be required to do some of your work at home. This, too, is part of your job, and the work must be completed regardless on other activities like sports, dance, or play.*

*12. Let me know in a timely manner if you need supplies for your job.*

*This is tough work for parents. It takes courage and fortitude. But this is what is necessary to educate our children as members of a citizen democracy: Hard work, discipline, and a foundational respect for education.*

***Bully Proofing Your School***



*One of the hardest issues for students is knowing how to help someone who is being bullied. The power of the bystander—also sometimes called the Upstander—can be an effective tool in ending bullying, but kids fear retaliation if they step in to help.*

*Children of all ages can be taught the following simple tips to become an Upstander:*

- 1. Go and stand next to the person being bullied.*
- 2. Tell the person bullying that he/she needs to stop.*
- 3. Walk away (don't run) with the person being bullied.*
- 4. Stay close to that person for a while: eat with him/her in the cafeteria, walk in the halls together, play on the playground together.*
- 5. None of this means you must become best friends. You are helping protect someone who needs it at the time. You might need to the same assistance some day. You are being a good citizen!*

*Students can also be taught The Dignity Stance when they are bullied by another student:*

- 1. Stand up tall and straight, shoulders back. Let students know that they will probably feel afraid inside, but they must ACT as if they are strong and tall.*
- 2. Make eye contact with the person bullying them.*
- 3. In a calm, FIRM voice, say something like, "I want you to stop talking to me that way." Don't yell, and try not to get emotional.*
- 4. Walk away. Don't run!*
- 5. If you feel that you are in danger or you have tried this before with the person bullying, find an adult to tell. This is NOT tattling! Your safety is the most important thing. If the adult you tell is not helpful, tell another one until you find someone to take you seriously. Don't give up!*



*Welcome to Your Resources  
for Character Education in Duval County Public Schools.*

*Florida Statutes require that all schools in the state provide  
a character development program in all grades, K-12.*

*However, the most important reason for teaching children positive character is encompassed in our job as educators: To prepare our students to be positive, productive members of society.*

*The character traits for 2010-11 are as follows:*

- *August: Responsibility*
- *September: Respect for authority, life, liberty, and personal property.*
- *October: Cooperation*
- *November: Patriotism*
- *December: Kindness*
- *January: Racial, ethnic, and religious tolerance.*
- *February: Charity*
- *March: Honesty*
- *April: Self-control*
- *May: Citizenship: Living a life of character.*

*The DCPS district has supplied the schools with a diverse selection of materials to meet this mandate. The monthly newsletter can help you meet the requirement for character education through its tips for teachers and parents.*

- *The elementary character education curriculum, [Mini-Lessons for Maximum Character](#), is found on*

*RiverDeep. (Please look under “Courses” under the Instructional Organizer tab.)*

- *The secondary curriculum, **Connect with Kids**, is a complete set of lessons by trait, accompanied by video clips. Check in your media center.*

- ***Additional Resources***

***Workshops:***

- 1. Infusing character into your school climate and your classroom.*
  - 2. Bully prevention through character development.*
  - 3. Parents building kids of character (available to PTA and other parent groups).*
  - 4. Early release mini-workshops on the above topics.*
- Training for bus drivers using the Foundations model.*
- 5. Peer mediation programs/mediator training.*
  - 6. Sessions for bus drivers that service your school! Put together a team to work cooperatively with the drivers.*
  - 7. Fighting Fair for Families.*

*Please call **Deborah Hansen, Coordinator**, at 904-568-0786 to discuss or schedule any of the above, or email her at [debrhan48@comcast.net](mailto:debrhan48@comcast.net)*

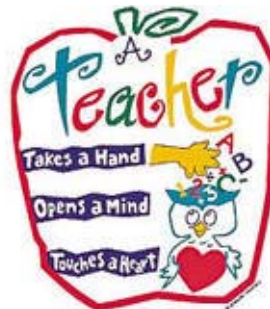


*Character libraries were purchased for every school in the district. These libraries consist of approximately 150 books of all genres and should be in your media center.*

*Use these books to support your “Book of the Month” program!*

*Contact Information:*

*Deborah Hansen  
Coordinator, Character Education  
Duval County Public Schools  
[debrhan48@comcast.net](mailto:debrhan48@comcast.net)*



**The Comprehensive Plan for Character Education  
Duval County Public Schools  
Jacksonville, Florida**

**“To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society.”—Theodore Roosevelt**

**Action Plan 2010-2011**

**Please complete and FAX to Deb Hansen @ 390-2585 by May 15, 2011.**

**1. Indicate all of the Character Education resources listed below that you have used, or are using, during the current school year:**

- a. \_\_\_\_ **“Mini-Lessons for Maximum Character”**: Elementary Character Education curriculum.
- b. \_\_\_\_ **“Connect with Kids”**: Secondary Character Education Curriculum.
- c. \_\_\_\_ **The Character Connection with Literature** (secondary)
- d. \_\_\_\_ **CATS: Character Activities for Teachers and Students**, monthly electronic newsletter.
- e. \_\_\_\_ **First Coast Parent** magazine, parent article, (also available in CATS newsletter).
- f. \_\_\_\_ **Character library** (media centers).
- g. \_\_\_\_ **ISSP, “Lessons in Character”** materials.
- h. \_\_\_\_ **“Character Begins at Home”** parent materials (media centers).
- i. \_\_\_\_ **Learning for Life**, (elementary only).
- j. \_\_\_\_ **Peace Education Foundation** materials, including Peer Mediation.
- k. \_\_\_\_ **Character Counts** materials
- l. \_\_\_\_ **Other: Please specify:**

**2. Have you hosted a faculty/staff training on Character Education during the current school year?**

yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Do you have at least one bulletin board in your school that is designated for Character Education?**

yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Do you have a faculty/staff member that is responsible for the Character Education program at your school?**

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_ If “yes,” please give that person’s name:

**5. Do you have other character-based programs in place that you would like to list here?**

**Principal's Name:**

**Principal's Signature:**

**School Name:**

**Date:**

**FAX the completed form to 390-2585 or send it via school mail to Deborah Hansen, #3001, 4th Floor, Safe/Healthy Schools.**

**Thank you for your time and continued support.**