

C.A.T.S.



Character Activities for Teachers and Students

Duval County Public Schools Jacksonville, Florida

*“To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a
menace to society.”*

Theodore Roosevelt

***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.*

August:

****Responsibility:** The trait of being accountable to someone for something; taking charge of one's conduct.

A child demonstrates that he/she is responsible by:

1. doing schoolwork regularly, without constant supervision or force.
2. accomplishing tasks at home without reminding or punishment.

Responsibility Quote of the Month:

“Be the change you want to see in the world.” Mahatma Gandhi

****Attentiveness:** Characterized by being watchful, aware, alert, awake.

A child demonstrates attentiveness by:

1. being aware of his/her responsibilities and to those around him/her.
2. attending to those duties.

Attentiveness Quote of the Month:

“The first duty of love is to listen.” Paul Tillich

Building Kids of Character



Teacher Tip

The language we use in building kids of character is critical. Use the words “**responsible**” and “**attentive**” as many times as you can this month and attach the words to specific positive behavior by children.

If possible, get some inexpensive “chips” or other tokens to have on hand. When a child is observed behaving in a **responsible or attentive** way, press it into the child’s hand and express your appreciation for his/her “**responsible**” or “**attentive**” behavior. Allow the child to keep the token as a reminder of his/her **responsibility or attentiveness**.



Parent Tips

Children must be taught responsible behavior by being given tasks to do that are age-appropriate:

**** Toddlers can be responsible for picking up their toys at a designated time each day.**

**** School age children can be taught early that attending school and doing well is their job. It is their responsibility to the family, just as parents and guardians have responsibilities to the family.**

**** Teens can be expected to earn their own spending money (in ways that will not interfere with school).**

**** Children can be taught that we are all responsible for each other: Families, neighbors, and communities. Service to any group is our responsibility as members of the group.**

Bully Proofing Your School

Building children of character is the foundation to creating a school in which all students and staff are safe from physical, emotional, and psychological harm every day.



**** A school that intentionally teaches children to be responsible and attentive has taken a huge step in preventing bullying.**

**** Students and teachers who are “watchful, aware, alert, and awake” will be able to identify bullying when they see it.**

**** Students and teachers who feel a responsibility to one another and to their school will not bully each other or will report bullying.**

**** Teachers, administrators, and staff model positive character for their students by not engaging in bullying themselves.**

**** Teachers and others who have been trained to deal with bullying behavior are building a school that is safe from harm for all.**

Character-Based Curricula Chosen by the Duval County Schools

Elementary Curriculum: *“Mini-lessons for Maximum Character.”* Can be found on RiverDeep and in school media centers.

Secondary Curriculum: *“Connect with Kids,”* including *“Grab and Go”* mini-lessons. Can be found in media centers.

Anti-Bullying Curriculum, K-8: *“Second Step.”* Check with your media specialist.

District in-service workshops are available for all grade levels on request by calling Deborah Hansen, Project Coordinator, Character Education at 904-568-0786 or email debrhan48@comcast.net.

2008-09 Character Traits by Month:

August:	Responsibility/Attentiveness
September:	Citizenship/Cooperation
October:	Fairness
November:	Patriotism
December:	Kindness/Caring
January:	Courage/Initiative
February:	Respect/Tolerance
March:	Honesty/Trustworthiness
April:	Self-Control
May:	Patience

Parents Building Kids Who Are Attentive

Information flows around us today at the speed of light. We are bombarded with sound all day long, including everything from television, to music, to computers, to video games. Even the noise from traffic seems to be louder around us, as larger and wider systems of roads come closer and closer to our homes. Is it any wonder that the sound of our voices is being drowned out amidst all this confusion?

Our children are growing up in the middle of all of this noise, and it's up to us as parents to model the art of being present with one another. This means truly listening to one another and to practice being quiet sometimes. We seem to have the need to fill up every minute of every day with motion and activity, at the expense of just being with each other and enjoying one another as members of a family. If we don't practice it in front of our children, how can we expect them to nurture their own family in the future?

So, let's look at ourselves first, and find ways as parents to model being attentive in the true sense of the word, *“Marked by or offering devoted and assiduous attention to the pleasure or comfort of others,”*

- Most meaningful communication is non-verbal. It is important to look at one another when carrying on a conversation. Is the facial expression matching the words? What about the person's posture? Does it signify an attitude of calmness or tension?
- Related to this is the willingness to observe one another to keep tabs of how life is going for each member of the family. Watch for signs of agitation or withdrawal from the family unit, and keep the lines of communication open.
- Truly listening to one another means more than waiting for the other person to stop talking so that we can begin talking (usually about ourselves). It involves being anxious to hear what our spouse or other family member is saying if only because it's important to them.
- Remember all the noise we discussed earlier? Practice silence for 5 seconds after the other person stops talking. We tend to jump in too quickly without giving due thought to what we're going to say, just to be saying something.
- Make it a habit to perform small kindnesses for each other every day, such as bringing in the newspaper, making a cold drink, or getting the coffee ready for morning. This attentiveness speaks volumes about our importance to one another, without any noise whatsoever!
- Speak with respect to your spouse and other family members. This form of positive attention is important in every situation, both in public and within the home. Remember that your children are watching and learning from your behavior.
- Related to this is the ability to disagree with one another with a respectful attitude. Our society seems to have lost the will to accept a differing opinion.

Listening to another opinion with respect does not have to mean that you agree with that opinion. It merely means you are being attentive and respectful to someone else's right to have it.

- Be attentive to your child's education. Schedule a conference with the teacher(s) near the beginning of each year to show everyone involved, including your child, that this part of your family's life is important.
- Make time for family outings and activities, even if the children aren't enthused about them at first. Rather than sit and watch television or play video games as a form of relaxation (and yes, this means Mom and Dad!), walk to the park together and play as a family. Children crave this attention from their parents or other meaningful adults, even if they aren't aware of it themselves.
- Be careful about the amount of information input and noise that surrounds your family in your home. Is the television on from morning to night, even if no one is watching? Is the volume up to its maximum level when your children (or you) play video games? This constant feed of data and noise dulls our senses and makes it difficult to pay attention when it's truly necessary, such as in your child's classrooms.

It's important that we don't lose touch with one another as all this noise surrounds us. A parent's attention and positive role modeling are some of the greatest gifts we can give our children, and it's the only way to insure that they will be attentive to their own families in the future.

“If we don't model what we teach, then we're teaching something else.”