

# C.A.T.S.

**January 2009**



## **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.*

## **Principals!**

**Are you interested in sessions with your faculty on building character?**

**Call Deborah Hansen at 390-2131 to schedule 30 minute (or longer) workshops on:**

**\*\*Infusing character development into academics.**

**\*\*Building a climate of character in your school.**

**\*\*Lessons in character development delivered through partnership with parents.**



## January:

**\*\*Courage is the ability to overcome fear in order to do what is right, even if it is difficult.**

**\*\*Initiative means to begin or follow through with a plan:**

**Children demonstrate courage and initiative by:**

- 1. attempting something that stretches the belief in their abilities .**
- 2. being willing to offer ideas, even if they aren't accepted.**
- 3. standing up for someone who is being bullied or left out.**
- 4. making friends with others, especially those who are different.**
- 5. making decisions based on fact instead of what is easy or popular.**
- 6. facing up to duty and responsibility.**

### ***Courage Quote:***

***“You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing which you think you cannot do.”***

***Eleanor Roosevelt***

# Building Kids of Character



## Teacher Tips

It takes courage to be a kid today. The pressures from peers are profound, even at very young ages. The media doesn't help with the negative messages bombarding children in the guise of "normal" behavior.

It takes courage for children to behave in ways that make them stand out from the crowd in any way, and this includes the process of making decisions. The STAR method of making decisions takes time and commitment, but it will benefit your students for the rest of their lives:

STOP long enough to think about what you are about to do.

THINK about the choices you have available in this decision, consider the consequences that might occur and then make a choice.

ACT on your choice.

REVIEW what happened. Did your action get you closer to your goals...or farther away? How did your action affect those around you? Would you make the same choice again?

From: Lessons in Character, by Dr. B. David Brooks, Young People's Press, [www.youngpeoplespress.com](http://www.youngpeoplespress.com).

## Parent Tips

*“As adults, we must ask more of our children than they know how to ask of themselves....” Dawna Markova*

Courage and initiative do not mean never being afraid; we can tell our children that there are times to be frightened and to run away from danger.

But they also need to learn how to face and overcome some fears, such as fear of the dark or tackling the fear of speaking in front of their class, for example. Parents can:

**\*\*Coach their children on how to be brave. Give them the language of courage:**

“I know I can do this.”

“I’m afraid but it’s important that I learn how to do this.”

“It’s going to be hard to help my friend, but it’s the right thing to do.”

“My friends might laugh at me for refusing to steal with them, but it’s wrong.”

**\*\*Tell your children how to say “no.” Practice and role play until they are comfortable.**

**\*\*Praise your children for tackling things that you know are difficult or frightening for them. They need this feedback and they need to know that you are aware of their courage.**

**\*\*Share stories of courage in your own life. Children tend to think that adults are never afraid.**

**Check out this free resource: “Helping Your Child Become a Responsible Citizen,” US Department of Education, [www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html](http://www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs.html).**

# Bully Proofing Your School



## *Classroom Meetings*

With all the emphasis on standardized testing and meeting benchmarks throughout the school year, it is easy to believe that anything else is merely too much “on the plate” of schools and classroom teachers.

But we are finding that ignoring community-building in the classroom is creating a dangerous environment for our children as well as staff. Schools with a commitment to a “Bully-Free” zone often begin with teaching children how to relate to one another and how to be responsible for their actions. This is done through regular classroom meetings.

Morning meetings encourage children to be contributing members of the community for the rest of the day. These meetings are effective forums for laying a foundation of social-emotional learning, and can be designed to get the results you want. For example, begin your meeting with positive statements among the children. Go on to specific issues that you have seen causing tension or trouble among some or all of the students. This need only take 15-20 minutes.

In secondary level classrooms, teachers can train students at the beginning of the year to recognize your room as a “Bully-Free Zone” or other designation that fits your setting and students. When one or more students breaks that rule, stop and deal with it immediately as a community. Have a class notebook where students can write about problems that you might not know about. Teach your students the basics of positive conflict resolution and help them process the steps.

Does this take time? Of course, but as the year progresses you will see the students take more responsibility for their actions and for solving these very normal issues as a community.

*By the way....studies show it also increases academic achievement!*

## Character Resources Available in the Duval County Public 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.

**Character libraries were purchased for every school. Check with your media specialist for location. Great for use with “Book of the Month.”**

**Anti-Bullying Curriculum:**

**K-8: “Second Step.” Coming soon!**

**High School: Call 390-2131 to schedule.**

**Trainings for faculty and staff, as well as parent programs, are available upon request!**

**Call now to schedule a 30-minute session on the new anti-bullying law that went into effect in Florida on July 1, 2008.**

## **2008-09 Character Traits by Month:**



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

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