

C.A.T.S.

September 2008



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.*

September:

****Cooperation: The willingness to work together for a common goal.**

A child demonstrates that he/she is cooperative by:

- 1. working with others, even if he/she may not agree with the majority.**
- 2. contributing in a meaningful way to a group effort.**

Cooperation Quote of the Month:

“It is through cooperation rather than conflict that your greatest successes will be derived.” Unknown

****Citizenship: The status, rights and duties of a citizen, especially of a particular country.**

A child demonstrates good citizenship by:

- 1. participating in classroom and family projects and events.**
- 2. being willing to help make their neighborhood and community better.**

Citizenship Quote of the Month:

“The first requisite of a good citizen ...is that he shall be able and willing to pull his own weight.”

Theodore Roosevelt

Building Kids of Character



Teacher Tips

Engage your students in a discussion about community or school projects. Point out as the discussion progresses that not everyone in the class agrees which project is most important. Guide in them in rules for respectful dialogue in which they all cooperate by taking turns and listening to one another. Use the words “cooperate” and “cooperation” as often as possible.

Next, ask them to choose a project that will benefit the community or school in some way and adopt it for the month. Point out that good citizens are willing to sacrifice time and energy to make the community better in some way for everyone.

Carry out the project with the students in leadership positions as much as possible. Suggest they explain to other classrooms how cooperation leads to building a better world for all citizens.



Parent Tips

Being a good citizen “requires using one’s mind, voice, and actions.”

Sarah A Smith, Brigham Young University

Parent can cultivate good citizenship all three aspects:

Our minds:

- 1. Bring a newspaper into the house, even if it’s only once a week. Read it together and discuss the issues with your children.**
- 2. Teach your children to consider other viewpoints, and to do so with respect.**
- 3. Help them list the pros and cons of each view, along with the consequences of each.**

Our voices:

- 1. Model constructive, positive discussion.**
- 2. Write letters to the editor to voice your opinion. Share the experience with your children.**
- 3. Vote, and take your children with you.**

Our actions:

- 1. Involve your children in service projects, beginning at home. Assign chores to your children that contribute to the family.**
- 2. Encourage your children to become involved in activities at school, including leadership positions if possible.**



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.



“Bullying takes so many forms that, frankly, it’s hard to recognize all the time. But it’s very important for us to deal with this.” Michael Hanson

There are some steps that can be taken to set the stage for a Bully Proof School:

1. Make a commitment as a faculty and staff that bullying will not be tolerated and action will be taken when it occurs.
2. Convey that message explicitly to ALL your students early in the school year, including what the consequences will be if it occurs.
3. Implement a reporting system that includes specific steps for follow up when an incident is reported. Make sure children know that they can report anonymously.
4. Provide training for ALL children (and faculty) on what bullying is and how to assist when it occurs.
5. Weave a foundation of positive character development into the fabric of your school: **Respect for one another; a responsibility to the school community to do the right thing; self-control and anger management techniques; caring and empathy for one another; trusting that help is available and will be forthcoming; and a commitment to bettering the school community.**
5. Make sure parents are informed about your program and get them involved as much as possible.
6. Reteach and reinforce all year!

If you need assistance, call 390-2131 to schedule training for faculty and staff at your school.

Character Resources Available

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:



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

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Parents Building Kids of Character

As parents, what potentially uncooperative behaviors should we examine in ourselves, knowing that our children are always watching and learning from us?

- Do we drive as if the roads belong to us, and other drivers are merely in our way? Or do we allow others to merge into traffic and change lanes as needed, and refrain from tailgating as a way of intimidating others to get out of the way, for example?
- Do we allow others to finish speaking without interrupting, even if we disagree with their point of view?
- Do we feel that we must force our personal views on everyone around us or are we able to discuss issues calmly and without personal attacks?
- Do we sometimes view requests for assistance as an inconvenience, and hold to the attitude that “It’s not my job or my responsibility?”
- Do we speak negatively of our child’s teachers and their school in front of our children?
- Are we rude to service personnel in stores and restaurants, treating them with the attitude that we are “above” them in some way? Are we willing to wait our turn?
- Are we willing to follow the will of the majority, even if our position wasn’t the one chosen? This is the foundation of our democracy.
- Do we offer small courtesies to those around us, including strangers? Holding a door open for someone behind us rather than letting it close in his face takes being aware of people and being willing to cooperate so that society operates smoothly and with a degree of kindness and civility.
- Do we behave in ways that are in the best interests of everyone, or do we operate solely on what is convenient for us as individuals? Making a U- turn in the middle of the street might be convenient but it isn’t safe for anyone else who might be on the scene at the time.

Using these examples, we can see that we sometimes expect our children to be cooperative and behave with respect, but we’re not role modeling that same standard. All research proves that actions speak much louder than words, so it is imperative that parents begin with their own positive examples for their children.

We need to ask ourselves if we are truly willing to behave cooperatively, even when it's inconvenient, uncomfortable, or unprofitable. We cannot hope to become a kinder, gentler society without everyone, adult and child alike, cooperating to achieve that goal.