

*“Watch your thoughts; they become words.
Watch your words; they become actions.
Watch your actions; they become habits.
Watch your habits; they become character.
Watch your character, it becomes your destiny.”*

Character, it’s who you are! The character education initiative is growing daily in our schools and community. Businesses are displaying the character word-of-the-month on their readerboards, hanging posters in their windows, and modeling good character as they go about their day. Our schools are also doing a terrific job. Principals and teachers across the district are reporting that students are recognizing and responding to the character word-of-the-month.

Instilling good character in our children so that they grow to live good, honest, principled lives demands time and attention. Below are some tips to help you help your child build strong positive character traits. We are asking you to practice them in your every day lives. Working together, we can help make a better tomorrow for our children and our community.

Tips for Building Strong Positive Character Traits

Put parenting first. Good parents consciously plan and devote time to parenting. They make developing their child’s character their top priority.

Review how you spend the hours and days of your week. Think about the amount of time your children spend with you. Whatever time you spend with them, make it quality time.

Be a good example. Children learn best by modeling. Being a good example is probably your most important job.

Develop an ear and an eye for what your child is absorbing. Children are like sponges. Books, songs and the Internet are continually delivering messages – good and bad – to our children. As parents, we must be watchful of the ideas and images influencing our children.

Use the language of character. Children cannot develop a right or wrong compass unless people around them use the clear language of right and wrong.

Discipline with a loving heart. Today, discipline has a bad reputation. Children need limits. They will ignore these limits on occasion. Reasonable discipline is one of the ways human beings have always learned. Children must understand what discipline is for and know that it comes out of parental love.

Learn to listen to your children. It is easy for us to tune out our children. One of the greatest things we can do for them is to take them seriously and set aside time to listen to them.

Get deeply involved in your child’s school. School is the main event in the life of your child. Research indicates that children do best when their parents are involved with their school. Helping our children become good students is another name for helping them acquire strong positive character.

Make a big deal out of the family meal. The dinner table is an excellent place for the teaching and passing on of our values.

Do not reduce character education to words alone. We gain virtue through practice. Parents should continuously model good character for their children. The bottom line in character development is behavior – your behavior and their behavior.