

# CITIZENSHIP

## Parent Resource

GRADES  
**6–8**

### What is citizenship?

Citizenship means helping my neighbor, community and nation.

As your child gets older, he or she will have opportunities to make choices that impact the school, community and nation.

#### In grades six to eight, children begin:

- ✓ Developing a sense of pride in accomplishments and awareness of challenges.
- ✓ Gaining an understanding of his or her civic responsibility and how values inform decisions.
- ✓ Understanding there could be a need to help others at school and in the community.

#### Below are ways you can help your child learn, practice and demonstrate citizenship:

##### ASK FOR EXAMPLES

Volunteering can foster a sense of responsibility and pride in your community. It strengthens the community when everyone works together. Ask your child how he or she can demonstrate good citizenship through volunteerism.

##### EXAMPLE

For example, your child can organize a cleanup event at the local park or beach to build leadership skills and benefit the community.

##### DISCUSS THE QUALITIES OF A GOOD LEADER

Discuss with your child the qualities of a leader from American history such as a U.S. President or a Founding Father. Ask your child to think about the qualities he or she shares with this leader. How can your child further develop these qualities?

HELPING YOUR CHILD UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF CITIZENSHIP WILL PREPARE HIM OR HER TO CONTRIBUTE TO AND TAKE PRIDE IN OUR COMMUNITY AND NATION.

#### SKILLS TO CONSIDER PRACTICING WITH YOUR CHILD:



Identifying the importance of informed civic responsibility in positively affecting your local community and nation.



Discussing ways a leader can build the trust of individuals and groups through honesty and responsible decision-making.



##### ACTIVITY TO DO WITH YOUR CHILD

Visit the Volunteer Florida website ([volunteerflorida.org](http://volunteerflorida.org)) and explore the various resources and information about volunteerism. Click on "Volunteer Services," then "Find Volunteer Opportunities" to check out different opportunities in your local community. Consider a way you can volunteer together!

# CRITICAL THINKING & PROBLEM SOLVING

Parent Resource

GRADES  
6–8

## What is critical thinking and problem solving?

Critical thinking and problem solving means gathering information to think through and determine the best solution.

As your child gets older, he or she will need to continue developing critical thinking and problem solving skills to be successful in school and life. He or she can use these skills to make responsible choices, accomplish goals and maintain positive relationships through effective communication, collaboration and conflict resolution.

### In grades six through eight, children begin:

- ✓ Becoming more independent.
- ✓ Identifying the importance of pursuing goals as a group.
- ✓ Analyzing information to form and share opinions.

**Below are ways you can help your child learn, practice and demonstrate critical thinking and problem solving skills:**

#### DEVELOP A PLAN OF ACTION



Discuss with your child why it is important to remain focused on solutions until a problem is solved. Develop a plan of action or consider different options that result in acceptable outcomes to help solve a problem.

#### DISCUSS HOW CRITICAL THINKING CAN BE USED



Discuss ways that critical thinking can be used to pursue common goals as a team or group. When trying to decide on the goals, have your child look at the advantages, disadvantages and potential solutions.

**WORKING WITH YOUR CHILD TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF CRITICAL THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING WILL HELP HIM OR HER TO BECOME CONFIDENT, INDEPENDENT AND SUCCESSFUL.**

### SKILLS TO CONSIDER PRACTICING WITH YOUR CHILD:



Identifying a goal as a family and ways to work together to achieve this goal.



Making a pros and cons list to consider various outcomes when faced with a new challenge or situation.



#### DINNER TABLE CONVERSATION STARTER

In school, students learn about the scientific method. Explain to your child how, like a scientist, he or she can generate hypotheses to problem solve. How could the scientific method (observation, hypothesis, prediction, experiment and analyze data) help your child solve everyday challenges?

# EMPATHY

## Parent Resource

GRADES  
**6–8**

### What is empathy?

Empathy means understanding how and why others think, feel and act.

#### In grades six through eight, children begin:

- ✓ Demonstrating effective and respectful communication skills and strategies.
- ✓ Identifying the perspectives, circumstances and experiences of others.
- ✓ Applying active listening in order to respond with empathy.

#### Below are ways you can help your child learn, practice and demonstrate empathy:

##### DISCUSS EMPATHY IN LEADERSHIP

Discuss how important empathy is in leadership roles. Ask your child when he or she has seen a leader demonstrate empathy. Continue the discussion with your child to talk about instances when the leader did not demonstrate empathy.

##### THINK OF OTHERS

Discuss what it means to “walk a mile in someone else’s shoes.” Your child can practice empathy by discussing what it would feel like to be in a different person’s situation.

BY PRACTICING EMPATHY,  
YOUR CHILD WILL IMPROVE  
COMMUNICATION SKILLS  
AND LEARN TO REFLECT,  
OBSERVE AND THINK  
ABOUT HIS OR HER OWN  
BEHAVIORS.



#### SKILLS TO CONSIDER PRACTICING WITH YOUR CHILD:



Responding with empathy in a variety of contexts and situations.



Describing the importance of empathy, kindness, honesty and trust in building and sustaining relationships.



##### ACTIVITY TO DO WITH YOUR CHILD

Think of a situation where you and your child can work together to help someone. For example, your child can donate clothing or other items to a charity, help a neighbor or collect canned goods for a local food bank. Discuss how you are showing empathy by helping in the community.

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# GRATITUDE

## Parent Resource

GRADES  
**6–8**

### What is gratitude?

Gratitude means being thankful and sharing appreciation with others.

#### In grades six to eight, children begin:

- ✓ Understanding how attitudes and thoughts can influence behavior and affect others.
- ✓ Learning how to positively interact and respond to external influences.
- ✓ Demonstrating how gratitude can foster lasting relationships.

#### Below are ways you can help your child learn, practice and demonstrate gratitude:

##### IDENTIFY WAYS TO EXPRESS GRATITUDE

Encourage your child to identify different ways he or she can express gratitude towards someone. For example, volunteering at a local community event, paying attention to and expressing appreciation for others' skills and helping a neighbor or family member.

##### TAKE TIME TO REFLECT

Take the time to reflect on the ways you have expressed or received gratitude today.

LEARNING TO FOSTER AND EXPRESS GRATITUDE WILL HELP STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS, BUILD CHARACTER AND IMPROVE RESILIENCY.



##### SKILLS TO CONSIDER PRACTICING WITH YOUR CHILD:



Focusing on small daily interactions that build character in the community and at school. For example: greeting others, holding the door for the person behind you or saying please and thank you.



Discussing the importance of taking good care of one's belongings as an act of appreciation for all he or she has been given.



##### ACTIVITY FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILD

Help your child write thank you cards or emails to those who are helpful or supportive in his or her life. This could be a family member, teacher, friend, school leader or coach.

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# GRIT

## Parent Resource

GRADES  
6–8

### What is grit?

Grit means working consistently towards long-term goals and persevering even when things are hard.

As your child gets older, he or she will probably face situations where grit is needed to keep working toward reaching goals, despite setbacks.

#### In grades six through eight, children begin:

- ✓ Becoming more independent.
- ✓ Gaining more responsibility as members of clubs or sports teams.

#### Below are some ways you can help your child learn, practice and build grit:

##### START THE CONVERSATION

Talk about a time when you had to use grit to reach a goal and describe your sense of accomplishment. By sharing your perspective, your child will gain an understanding of the importance of grit and what it feels like when you reach your goals.

##### ASK YOUR CHILD

Ask your child to describe an individual who has overcome challenges to reach a goal. This could be someone he or she knows, a historical figure or a modern-day famous person. What do you admire about this person? How did this individual overcome setbacks and demonstrate grit?

##### IDENTIFY CHARACTERISTICS

Encourage your child to identify a time when he or she “stuck with” an activity or project rather than quitting. What strategies did he or she use to overcome challenges? What was the outcome?

#### SKILLS TO CONSIDER PRACTICING WITH YOUR CHILD:



Identify strategies to manage challenges and setbacks.



Explain strategies and skills needed to assess progress and maintenance of a challenging personal goal.

HELPING YOUR CHILD  
BUILD GRIT NOW  
WILL HELP THEM  
UNDERSTAND  
THAT THEY CAN  
ACCOMPLISH  
ANYTHING WHEN  
YOU WORK HARD.



# HONESTY

## Parent Resource

GRADES  
**6–8**

### What is honesty?

Honesty means telling the truth.

As your child gets older, honesty will continue to be a valuable characteristic. It is important for your child to learn how to be honest and to communicate in a respectful, kind and truthful manner.

#### In grades six through eight, children begin or continue:

- ✓ Discussing how character is shaped by attitudes, decisions and actions.
- ✓ Learning to understand and navigate complex situations.
- ✓ Establishing supportive and lasting friendships.

#### Below are ways you can help your child learn, practice and demonstrate honesty:

##### CREATE A SPACE TO MAKE MISTAKES

Create a space for children to be able to make mistakes and learn from them. Discuss with your child the importance of owning up to mistakes and practicing honesty when it is difficult.

##### DISCUSS CHOICES AND OUTCOMES

You want your child to come to you and tell you if he or she did something wrong, is in a difficult situation or is experiencing peer pressure. Emphasize that you will always help your child no matter the mistakes they make, and discuss different choices and possible outcomes for any current challenges your child may be facing.

BY ENCOURAGING YOUR CHILD TO BE HONEST, YOU CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE HONESTY IS PRACTICED, EXPECTED AND APPRECIATED.

#### TOPICS TO CONSIDER DISCUSSING WITH YOUR CHILD:



Describe the importance of empathy, kindness, honesty and trust in building and sustaining relationships.

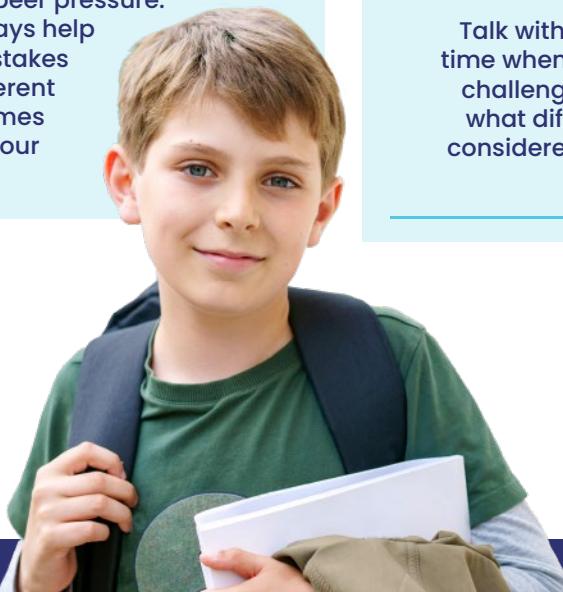


Discuss ways a leader can build trust with individuals and groups.



##### DINNER TABLE CONVERSATION STARTER

Talk with your child about a time when being honest was a challenge for you. Describe what different choices you considered and the outcome.



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# MENTORSHIP

## Parent Resource

GRADES  
**6–8**

### What is mentorship?

Mentorship means giving or asking for support, guidance, training or expertise.

As your child gets older, he or she will begin to understand how mentors can help him or her achieve his or her goals.

#### In grades six through eight, children begin:

- ✓ Understanding how learning from a mentor leads to personal growth.
- ✓ Developing a sense of responsibility through supportive interactions with others.

#### Below are ways you can help your child learn, practice and demonstrate mentorship:

##### DISCUSS MENTORING CHARACTERISTICS

Looking to effective leaders as mentors can help your child develop strong leadership skills. Discuss with your child the characteristics of a strong leader or mentor, and ask your child to identify a leader or mentor who exemplifies these characteristics. How can your child display these characteristics with others?

##### IDENTIFY WAYS TO MENTOR OTHERS

Ask your child how he or she can mentor others. The roles of mentorship include guiding, serving, building trust and cooperation. For example, tutoring other students, supporting a teammate during practice, or giving helpful advice to a younger family member.

**HELPING YOUR CHILD UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF ASKING FOR HELP AND HELPING OTHERS CAN POSITIVELY IMPACT HIM OR HER NOW AND IN THE FUTURE.**

#### SKILLS TO CONSIDER PRACTICING WITH YOUR CHILD:



Identifying the importance of volunteerism and mentorship in positively affecting the community and nation.



Discussing the importance of taking constructive feedback from mentors and applying this feedback to his or her life.



##### ACTIVITIES FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILD

Explore local mentorship opportunities with your child. Examples of this may include mentorship programs within the community or peer tutoring.

Have your child create a list of goals he or she wants to accomplish for the school year. Discuss what role a mentor can play in helping your child achieve these goals.

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# PERSEVERANCE

## Parent Resource

### What is perseverance?

Perseverance means continuing to try even when things are hard.

As your child gets older, it is important for him or her to continue to develop the perseverance to achieve his or her goals.

#### In grades six through eight, children begin:

- ✓ Identifying strategies to manage challenges and setbacks.
- ✓ Recognizing alternative ways to achieve goals.
- ✓ Understanding that continuous learning leads to personal growth.

#### Below are ways you can help your child learn, practice and demonstrate perseverance:

##### ASK YOUR CHILD TO SHARE

Ask your child to share an experience that was challenging. Next, have your child reflect on why accomplishing his or her goal was challenging. Discuss how he or she can approach a future goal to achieve a desired outcome.

##### WRITE A LETTER

Work with your child to write a letter to his or her “future self” about overcoming an anticipated or past obstacle. Encourage your child to explain how he or she persevered through the challenge.

BY ENCOURAGING YOUR  
CHILD TO PERSEVERE,  
YOU ARE HELPING HIM  
OR HER DEVELOP THE  
NECESSARY SKILLS TO  
ACHIEVE HIS OR HER  
GOALS.

#### SKILLS TO CONSIDER PRACTICING WITH YOUR CHILD:



Strategies and skills needed to assess progress and maintain a challenging personal goal.



Identifying the importance of perseverance and problem-solving when facing difficulties.



##### ACTIVITY WITH YOUR CHILD

Ask your child to identify a role model and research their accomplishments as well as the challenges or setbacks they faced. Look for examples of ways this role model demonstrated perseverance.



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# RESPONSIBILITY

## Parent Resource

GRADES  
**6–8**

### What is responsibility?

Responsibility means owning my actions, using good judgment and practicing self-control.

As your child gets older, it is important for him or her to continue to develop responsibility by taking ownership of his or her life. It is also important that your child acknowledges that he or she is accountable for the choices he or she makes.

#### In grades six to eight, children begin:

- ✓ Understanding the importance of following laws and rules.
- ✓ Considering multiple perspectives when making a decision.
- ✓ Working towards attaining personal goals.

#### Below are ways you can help your child learn, practice and demonstrate responsibility:

##### RESEARCH LAW AND CONSEQUENCES

Ask your child to share about laws in the community and consequences for not following them.

###### EXAMPLE

For example, why are there traffic lights and speed limits? What would happen if drivers disregarded the laws?

##### REFLECT ON RESPONSIBILITIES

Have your child reflect on responsibilities he or she may have when starting high school.

###### EXAMPLE

For example, learning how to drive, joining a club or organization or joining a team. Have your child write down these responsibilities and how he or she can prepare for and complete them.

#### SKILLS TO CONSIDER PRACTICING WITH YOUR CHILD:



Developing healthy responses to negative peer pressure.



Following through on commitments and obligations to others.



#### ACTIVITY FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILD

Talk with your child about current chores. What responsibilities has he or she been given in the household? Take inventory of which chores have been completed and which have not. If the chores have not been completed, discuss the consequences and how it impacts the household. Make connections to adult responsibilities such as voting, taking care of family members, paying bills, etc.

BY TEACHING YOUR CHILD TO BE RESPONSIBLE, YOU ARE HELPING HIM OR HER POSITIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO THE FAMILY, SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY.

# RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

Parent Resource

GRADES  
6–8

## DID YOU KNOW?

People make about 35,000 decisions **EVERY DAY!**

Responsible decision-making means thinking about all options and outcomes to make the best choice.

In grades six through eight, children begin:

- ✓ Gaining additional responsibilities at home and school.
- ✓ Spending more time with friends.
- ✓ Considering future career paths or areas of study.

### DISCUSS DIFFICULT CHOICES

Discuss a time when you had to make a difficult choice.

#### EXAMPLE

Your friend told you that you should not invite another student to the lunch table. You know this other student will have no one to sit with. You would like to be kind to the other student, but you do not want your friend to be mad.

### TALK ABOUT LONG-TERM GOALS

Describe how responsible decision making impacts long-term goals.

#### EXAMPLE

You have a goal of graduating from high school with good grades. Consider some responsible decisions starting in middle school that will help you achieve this goal. Some examples include a consistent study schedule and limiting screen time.

AS YOUR CHILD GETS OLDER, HE OR SHE WILL HAVE TO MAKE MORE DECISIONS. TEACHING YOUR CHILD HOW TO MAKE RESPONSIBLE DECISIONS WILL HELP HIM OR HER BE PREPARED WHEN SITUATIONS ARISE AS A TEEN OR ADULT.

SKILLS TO CONSIDER PRACTICING WITH YOUR CHILD:



Demonstrate responsible decision-making that considers multiple perspectives.



Identify healthy responses to negative peer pressure.



### DINNER TABLE CONVERSATION STARTERS

Describe a decision you made this week. Did you consider multiple perspectives when making your choice? Did you reach your desired outcome? Are there any changes you would make next time you are faced with similar circumstances?

How can the decisions you make now impact your future goals (e.g., college, career or military)?

# SELF-AWARENESS & SELF-MANAGEMENT

Parent Resource

GRADES  
6-8

## What is self-awareness and self-management?

Self-awareness and self-management means to understand and govern our thoughts, actions and impact on others.

As your child gets older, he or she will continue to develop self-awareness and self-management skills by recognizing how one's thoughts and ideas influence choices and impact others.

In grades six to eight, children begin:

- ✓ Monitoring progress toward attaining a personal goal.
- ✓ Understanding the importance of perseverance when facing difficulty solving a problem.
- ✓ Identifying healthy responses to negative peer pressure.

Below is a way you can help your child learn, practice and demonstrate self-awareness and self-management skills:

### DISCUSS PEER PRESSURE

Discuss with your child the differences between negative and positive peer pressure and how to respond to situations.

#### NEGATIVE PEER PRESSURE

Examples of negative peer pressure include, cheating on a test, excluding a classmate from a social activity or saying negative things about someone else to impress others. Some responses to negative peer pressure could include walking away or seeking advice from someone you trust on how to handle the situation.

#### POSITIVE PEER PRESSURE

Peer pressure can also be positive and help you make good choices. For example, motivating teammates during practice and showing kindness in class.



SKILLS TO CONSIDER PRACTICING WITH YOUR CHILD:



Identifying how continuous learning leads to personal growth.



Recognizing how small and large decisions can have an impact on others.



### DINNER TABLE CONVERSATION STARTER

Discuss with your child ways that he or she can have a positive impact on others. Ask your child how he or she interacts with peers in the classroom, organizations and teams. Additionally, ask how he or she can improve self-awareness and self-management in school, at home and in the community.

BY GAINING SELF-AWARENESS AND LEARNING SELF-MANAGEMENT,  
YOUR CHILD WILL TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN MONITORING AND ADAPTING HIS OR HER BEHAVIOR.

