

# RAISING KIDS WITH CHARACTER™

Why not change the world?





## Change the World.

You have given birth to a unique and special little person. With so many paths your child can take, you have the incredible privilege of helping them change the world someday.

This booklet explores the core qualities of a happy and fulfilled person who really makes a difference:

**honesty, peace, respect,  
kindness, creativity and  
hopefulness.**

You care for your little one's basic needs. And you are the best person to give your child the vision and skills needed to change the world one day.







## Raising an Honest Child.

Many children think honesty means you “don’t tell a lie” — and that is definitely part of it. But honesty is much more than not lying. An honest person is someone with integrity. Someone who is able to build good relationships, steeped in trust, with family, friends, classmates and ultimately in the world around them.

### Praise the Truth.

Today, look for an example of your child telling the truth, however small. When you find it, hold your child and thank him for being honest. Tell your children how proud it makes you when they are honest. This will make them want to do it again.



## Set Them Up for Success.

One of the keys to honesty is providing opportunities for children to be good and tell the truth. If you know your child did something wrong, don't ask directly. This can lead to lying out of shame or fear of getting in trouble. Try rephrasing instead.

### EXAMPLE:

Instead of asking: *"Did you eat the cookie?"*

Rephrase to: *"Since you ate that cookie, we've had enough sweets for today."*

By rephrasing, you don't put your child in a position to lie.



## Honesty Must Also Be Kind.

Kids are often "brutally honest," saying whatever comes to mind. But, since honesty is more than just truth, we must teach our kids how to filter properly. Simply telling the truth all the time doesn't build character. Sometimes it is best to stay silent.

**Honesty is learning to filter what we say through a lens of love.**

**Is it true?**

**Is it kind?**

**Is it helpful?**

## Share Your Story.

Kids benefit from hearing your personal stories of honesty. It's good for them to see that you understand this can be hard sometimes and that you make mistakes, too. Try sharing about a time when you wish you had been more honest. Or tell about a time when you were honest and even though it was hard, it felt good.





## Raising a Peaceful Child.

Peace is more than just being quiet. It is about finding inner calm in all situations. Peaceful children are happier and more confident. They are also more stable in difficult times. Peaceful children always begin with a peaceful home!

### Embrace the Routine.

For children, change can feel unknown and stressful. Giving them a daily routine brings comfort and stability. Routine can simply mean having regular times to eat, play, nap, take a bath and go to sleep.

The more established the daily routine, the more your child will feel peaceful, settled and free. **One of the most important “routines” to build into your day is quiet time.** For younger kids, this usually means naps. For older children, it might be time alone in their room, coloring or reading. Set aside a time every day for quiet time. Protect this time fiercely!



## Designate a “Peaceful Place.”

Kids need an outlet when they have to calm down. Create a peaceful space in your home for your kids to retreat to when they need to find peace. Don’t make it a “time-out chair,” just a place to escape to for peace and calm. Model using the peaceful place. Show them that you need space to quiet yourself, too.

## Use Breathing Exercises.

Many of us (*especially parents!*) go all day, even all week, without a moment’s peace and quiet. Taking quiet moments to yourself is one of the most important steps to a peaceful home. Your home can’t be peaceful if you aren’t peaceful.

Close your eyes. Place both feet on the ground. Begin to calm yourself. Let your muscles relax. Loosen your shoulders. Slow your breathing. Now, take two deep breaths, holding each breath and slowly blowing out. Release all the stresses and difficulties you are carrying. Take in the peace and quiet of the moment.

## Bring Quiet to Noisy Situations.

Families are filled with noisy, chaotic, and downright unpeaceful moments. In these times, parents are tempted to fight noise with noise. However, yelling will never minimize chaos.

Try these strategies instead:

- Get down on eye level
- Whisper, use a soft voice
- Send child to their “peaceful place”
- Ask questions about their feelings







## Raising a Respectful Child.

Respect is not just about being polite or teaching children to say “please” and “thank you.” It is about seeing how special other people are and acting out of love. Children who learn to respect others ultimately earn the respect of those around them.

### Appreciate Your Child’s Uniqueness.

Teaching your child respect starts with embracing their special qualities. No child is a clone or “mini-me.” What are your child’s unique talents and interests? Share your answers with your child.

One way my child is special is:

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Something I really love about my child is:

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## Speak Well of Your Kids.

Self-worth is one of the greatest strengths a child can possess. A child who knows his worth is more likely to see the good in others. Reflect your child's goodness back to him by looking for opportunities to praise good behavior. Try not to vent about your child to others.

### EXAMPLE:

Instead of saying: *"He never listens to me!"*  
or *"She always fights with her brother."*

Focus on the Positive: *"He put the whole puzzle together."*  
or *"She did something so kind for me."*

## Keep Calm and Carry On.

All children make mistakes. We all do. But dealing with disrespect is stressful. Your child has to be calm, but you do, too.

**YOU:** Make an action plan for calming down. Maybe use the breathing exercise in the last section. Make sure you are in the right frame of mind before you handle disrespect.

**YOUR CHILD:** Remove your child from the stressful situation (*even if it means going home or taking a time-out*). Understand their reasons for misbehavior. Ask your child in a calm way what she was feeling when she was disrespectful.

## Family Conversations.

Ditch the cell phones and have family time or family dinner together. Talk about your day and listen to each other. Learn to be the family who gives loving, undivided attention. Try some conversation starters:

*"If you could have dinner with any famous person, who would it be?"*

*"If you could have any superpower, what would you choose?"*

*"What was the best part of your day today? The worst?"*

## Give Your Full Attention.

Giving your undivided attention shows your child she is important to you. Reading together does this and teaches valuable learning skills. Set aside a few minutes a day to read with your child. Try holding her on your lap, look her in the eye and pause to ask questions along the way.







## Raising a Kind Child.

Anyone can be nice to those who are easy to love.

But genuine kindness is courageous. It is recognizing goodness even when it is difficult. And kindness is contagious. Children learn that if they are kind to others, most often others will be kind in return.

### Practice Perspective-Taking.

Children are born empathetic, but they can easily lose that in this me-centered world. Help your kids practice stepping into other people's shoes by discussing emotions and feelings of those around them.

*Ask, "How do you think he feels?"*

Be especially understanding of those who seem harder to love. Try to see the good in them and give the benefit of the doubt.

*Say, "It seems like she might be having a tough day. We have tough days too, sometimes, don't we?"*

## Good Gossip.

Gossip has a way of bringing negativity into our lives. Reverse the cycle by practicing “good gossip” with your kids. Whisper kind things about others you encounter to your children throughout the day. This will teach them how to speak well of others.

Point out when others are kind:

*“Wasn’t Grandma thoughtful to buy you that?”*

*“Did you see that boy help his little sister in the park?”*

Compliments can be given both alone with your child or with the other person present. Everybody loves to hear something nice said about them.

## Give Responsibility.

Kindness is linked to selflessness. Children who help around the house learn to care for others. Give your child small jobs to practice being a helper. Be sure to thank them.

Write one way you can give your child more responsibility this week:

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## Have Courage and Be Kind.

Kindness is not always easy. But children feel happiness when they perform even small acts of kindness.

Encourage your child to:

- Comfort their crying sibling
- Talk to a “lonely child”
- Include others, even those they don’t like so much
- Share their snack or toy with others







## Raising a Creative Child.

Creativity is not just about artistic ability. We all have a creative streak. We all possess the ability to make something new and valuable. And developing your child's creativity is a life skill that can help them problem-solve and find the good in situations despite life's stresses.

### Let Children Lead.

Parents are often tempted to manage or control the way children do things, especially if the child appears to be doing things wrong. But for children to be truly creative, they must have confidence in their own ideas. Avoid the tendency to always change the way they do things.

#### EXAMPLE:

Instead of saying:

*"Elephants aren't purple! Don't you want to use grey?"*

Rephrase to:

*"I love how you used different colors for the elephant — what made you do that?"*

## Be OK with Mistakes.

Fear of failure is damaging to both creativity and confidence. Some children have a hard time trying new things that they are not “good at.” But children learn more from trying and experimenting than from success.

Praise their efforts.

*“It took a lot of courage to try something new. I’m proud of you!”*

*“This looks hard. Maybe we can do it together.”*

*“Learning new things with you is fun!”*

Teach your children it’s OK to make mistakes, sometimes even laughing at yourself when things go wrong. Things don’t have to be perfect all the time.

## Don’t Be Overly Critical of Yourself.

With children, so much of their learning is “caught” not “taught.” Parents can be great at praising and complimenting their kids, but sometimes run out of that positivity for themselves. And children hear it and imitate you. Avoid being overly critical or negative about yourself. Even if you are still praising your children, any negativity will eventually rub off and impact them. Love yourself like you love your kids!

## Replace Technology with Creativity.

Technology has many benefits. But when used too much, it can negatively affect imagination and creativity. Try substituting screen time with creative play time. At first, you might have to help your kids come up with activities.

Tell your child a story about when you were little.

Start a silly story for your child to finish:

*“Once I had a purple cow who loved to eat marshmallows...”*

Take pans and spoons out of the kitchen and start a band. Make a fort out of pillows and blankets. Paint a picture with a blindfold on.

Try thinking of a few activities you can do:

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## Raising a Hopeful Child.

Many people feel saddened by the world today. They see divisions and a lack of goodness all around them. But remember, every generation has been tempted to think that their world is harder than the past. And that kind of thinking can be self-defeating. If you want to help your child be a world changer, raise them to be hopeful.

### Spend Time with Your Child.

When parents spend time with their kids, a healthy bond forms and your child is more likely to be hopeful. We all have such busy lives, but find a few minutes every day to just be with your child (no distractions). It might be reading, coloring, exploring outdoors or playing with them. Find your own way.

Identify some favorite ways to be with your child:

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## Make Plans.

If you want your child to feel hopeful about the future, make plans and see them through. Plans don't have to be big or expensive. Things like going to the park, visiting grandma or getting a book from the library are fun activities a child can look forward to. Start with small plans. But make sure you always, always follow through!

## What I Love/What I Hope.

Help your child think positively and look forward to the future by spontaneously making lists. You can do these any time — in the car, at a restaurant, waiting in line. Help your child think about three things they love about their day so far and three more things they hope to do soon.

## A Hopeful Bedtime Habit — **Highs, Hurts, Hugs.**

Cuddle with your child and review the day. See if you can get extra “highs” as you work on hopefulness.

### **HIGHS**

Ask your child, *“What was the best part about your day today?”*

### **HURTS**

If a difficult day, ask your child,  
*“What was a sad part of your day today?”*

### **HUGS**

Give your child a hug.  
*Tell them you will always love them through good and bad.*





It's almost never too early to start building character in your children. Your 18-month-old can learn to put down her toy and waddle over to help a hurt or crying toddler. Your 3-year-old can learn to smile and say "hi" to your elderly neighbor.

**At all ages, kids can learn to do small things with great love.**

This booklet includes some time-tested strategies to raise a child with the vision and skills to ultimately one day change the world.

