



Mountview Road School



Counselor's Corner: March 2021

Character Education Theme of the Month is: Responsibility

Teaching kids about responsibility isn't easy -- but what part of parenting is? It can take years and lots of practice. Here are some tips that may help while raising a responsible child who then grows into a responsible adult.

Start Young. You can't suddenly spring responsibility on a teenager and expect they will know how to follow through. Imagine your high school daughter calling you at work with the complaint: "Mom I'm hungry. When are you coming home?" You say: "Make a sandwich!" She replies: "I'll just wait for you." Handing out responsibility to kids needs to start early.

Let Them Help You. Don't grumble and mope when it's time to do housework. Smile and invite your child to help (even if they make the job take longer). It's teamwork, precious time with your child and a lesson that will one day send them off into the world with the ability to sort lights and darks!

Show Kids the Way. Play to a child's skill level. First, you can demonstrate how to complete small tasks. If your son wants a snack, show him where the apples are and how to wash one off. Make responsibilities age-appropriate and even use the word "responsibility", when informing your child about the tasks you expect him to complete on his own.

Praise Them. Kids love to help. They want to help. To them, chores don't feel like work. Keep up positive vibes by offering specific praises for actions. "Thank you for emptying the garbage in your room!" Children will develop a sense of ownership for any repeated action.

Manage Your Expectations. When you ask a five-year-old to make her bed, it may still be lopsided. Don't criticize. Don't fix it! Recognize a job well done. The next time you make your own bed, show her how you do it.

Avoid Rewards. At least at first. There's a time and place for rewards and allowances, but being responsible isn't it. While a reward chart can be effective for some kids, others respond just as well to praise, spending time with you and feeling the boost in their self-confidence. Save rewards for tasks that go above and beyond what you expect to be your child's normal household responsibilities.

Provide Structure and Routine. Kids thrive on order. Instead of offering rewards to get them to meet responsibilities, set up a morning routine with a positive end result. Your son must brush his teeth, eat breakfast and get dressed before watching TV. (Notice TV is not being offered as a reward -- it's just the result of finishing the routine.) And he should be able to complete the routine in any order that works for him.

Teach Consequences. Learning to take care of his things also helps a child develop a sense of responsibility for his actions. Parents are afraid to let kids suffer, be sad or angry, but if we always solve children's problems, he/she will not learn to be responsible as they grow up. If your daughter has to pack her bag for school each day and forgets her basketball sneakers, then she won't get to practice that afternoon. As much as you want to bring her sneakers to her, don't! Hopefully she'll be more cognizant of remembering her responsibilities next time.

Did you know? When children are invited to participate, they feel valued. They will take these good feelings and learn to take ownership of their home and feel pride in maintaining it.



Important March Dates/Events

- **March 16:** Mrs. Marrese's Kindergarten Class Superkids Dress Up Day
- **March 18:** Mrs. Conte's Kindergarten Class Superkids Dress Up Day
- **March 19:** Mrs. Padavano's Kindergarten Class Superkids Dress Up Day

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