



the family values toolkit

For Children Ages 3 to 4

This Month's Featured Value Is: **Courage**

Courage is the willingness to take action despite fear of failure or negative outcomes. This essential quality gives us strength to face the challenges both great and small that confront us in our daily lives.



What Can Parents Do to Nurture This Important Value?

First, Set Goals:

Give your children emotional strategies and skills that will help them continue to confront difficult challenges in the future.

Like younger children, preschoolers demonstrate courage by taking on new physical challenges. They'll summon all their inner strength, for example, to ride down the big slide at the playground or hang unassisted from the monkey bars. But children this age also begin to confront fears that are less tied to the physical world. Their growing cognitive ability, which causes them to picture imaginary threats, also helps them overcome fear.

Next, Take Action! Try These Activities:

- ✓ **Help your children use words** when they're afraid, e.g., "It must be scary when that big dog comes up to lick your face and he's as tall as you are!" Talk about how it's OK to be afraid of some things (mean animals, the ocean during high tide), but some things that seem scary won't hurt them ("I think that particular dog is just showing you that she loves you!").
- ✓ **Have your child bring their doll or teddy bear to a doctor's appointment** and ask the doctor to pretend to give a shot to the toy first. Children this age work out many fears in pretend play, and comforting their doll can help them learn to be brave.
- ✓ **Try the "Fear-a-lizer."** This unique, hands-on activity will have your children literally crushing their fears! Adapted from the book "Playwise" by Denise Chapman Weston and Mark S. Weston, this idea starts with a rolling pin, markers and soda crackers. First, write down your child's fears on a cracker. Now brainstorm qualities your child has that could combat these fears. (For example, "adventurous," "outgoing," "quick-thinking.") Write these down on a piece of paper, then tape the paper around the rolling pin. The "fear-a-lizer" is activated when your child crushes the fears (crackers) with the positive qualities (rolling pin)!

Then, Report Back!

Share your stories of success, your challenges, and overall experiences with others in our community @

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