



the family values toolkit

For Children Ages 8 to 10

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

Responsibility is the value that enables us to take care of ourselves, our families, our friends, and the greater community. Being responsible means that others can rely on us to do what we've promised. For kids, taking responsibility may mean doing something difficult or tedious, like studying for a test or doing family chores when they'd rather go out with friends. Or it could take moral strength--such as saying no to drugs. Ultimately, being responsible benefits us all--in terms of health, relationships, work, and building a better world.



What Can Parents Do to Nurture This Important Value?

First, Set Goals:

Hold kids accountable, and emphasize the value of caring for other living things.

Children in later elementary school generally have the cognitive ability to plan what needs to be done and generate solutions. This kind of problem-solving helps kids become accountable for their actions. Children start to grasp that they have a responsibility to groups to which they belong--family, school, community, team, and house of worship. Increasingly, they can be asked to take responsibility for others--which may mean walking a younger child to her classroom, helping a classmate with a math problem, or bringing in cookies for a bake sale.

Next, Take Action! Try These Activities:

- ✓ **Play "Spider Web."** Get a ball of twine, and have family members form a circle on the floor. Explain that if everyone does their job, they can make a beautiful "family spider web." Hold the end of the twine, and toss the ball to another family member. He or she holds the end, and tosses the ball to someone else. Keep this up until you've spun a web in the middle of your circle. Talk about what would happen to the web if anyone failed to hold their end tight.
- ✓ **Pick out a pet with your child, and teach him or her how to care for it.** Start with simple things, like feeding, and gradually increase your child's responsibility to include tasks like walking a dog, giving medication, and brushing its coat. Emphasize the value of caring for another living thing, and stress your pride in seeing your child follow through on his or her responsibility.
- ✓ **Don't do tasks for your children that they can do for themselves.** Responsibility is linked to feeling competent.

Then, Report Back!

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

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