

TEAM: Teach, Enforce, Advocate, Model

TEACH

Tell children that their character counts — that their success and happiness will depend on who they are inside, not what they have or how they look. Tell them that people of character know the difference between right and wrong because they guide their thoughts and actions by six basic rules of living (the Six Pillars of Character): *trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship*. Explain [the meaning of these words](#). Use examples from your own life, history, and the news.

ENFORCE

Instill the Six Pillars of Character by rewarding good behavior (usually, praise is enough) and by discouraging all instances of bad behavior by imposing (or, in some cases, allowing others to impose) fair, consistent consequences that prove you are serious about character. Demonstrate courage and firmness of will by enforcing the core values when it is difficult or costly to do so.

ADVOCATE

Continuously encourage children to live up to the Six Pillars of Character in all their thoughts and actions. Be an advocate for character. Don't be neutral about the importance of character nor casual about improper conduct. Be clear and uncompromising that you want and expect your children to be trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fair, caring, and good citizens.

MODEL

Be careful and self-conscious about setting a good example in everything you say and do. Hold yourself to the highest standards of character by honoring the Six Pillars of Character at all times. You may be a good model now, but remember, you don't have to be sick to get better. Everything you do, and don't do, sends a message about your values. Be sure your messages reinforce your lessons about doing the right thing even when it is hard to do so. When you slip (and most of us do), act the way you want your children to behave when they act improperly — be accountable, apologize sincerely, and resolve to do better.