



# MONTHLY PARENTING TIP FROM THE ACFC

September 2009



## Teaching Our Children Life Skills From the Wise

*I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided, and that is the lamp of experience. I know no way of judging of the future but by the past. – Edward Gibbon*

Throughout history the family has been the nucleus of our daily lives and activities. In past times, several generations of the family resided in the same household or same community. Grandparents and aunts and uncles were a part of children's upbringing and helped form their view of themselves and the world. Traditions and values were passed learned and passed on. In today's hectic society, however, interaction between children and their grandparents and older relatives has greatly diminished. Children no longer hear the tales of how their grandparents "walked three miles, through three feet of snow to get to school." It's difficult for them to understand these senior citizens' attitudes towards savings and doing without. Today's children are growing up in a different time, but it's important for them to understand the past. Knowing where their roots began can give them a high sense of worth, a better understanding of the world around them, and an appreciation for the things they take for granted today.

There is a lot of talk today about character. What is character and what factors influence a person's character? Character is the sum total of beliefs, attitudes, and values, as well as the integrity to do the right thing even when you can get away with doing the wrong thing. Since the opportunity for high-risk behavior is so prevalent these days, it often comes down to a matter of attitude and values on the part of youth. "Core" values are those values that are fundamental to our personalities and highly resistant to change. They are often formed during childhood through many experiences and frequent reinforcement. Reinforcement from their grandparents and other relatives is an important part of these "core" values. What are some of the positive core values that can help our children develop the character to make wise decisions later?

- Courage            Respect
- Cooperation      Responsibility
- Hard Work        Wisdom
- Humor             Honesty
- Perseverance    Compassion
- Love

In the Active Parenting classes, we have an activity where we ask parents to write a letter of encouragement to their children. This same activity is a great way for grandparents and other relatives to share their own experiences; the choices they made, and the paths they took that created the family as it is today. Many of them came here from other countries, or experienced time of war and depression. Setting time aside for children to sit and listen to these stories can be a great way to reinforce positive values, build a sense of continuity and strengthen relationships. Another option that will appeal to today's high-tech kids is for them to help family members record their stories. There are journals available for recording one's life and history that can also become a shared project. Make this a family project that everyone can experience and create a legacy that can be passed down for generations to come.

**Learn more about the traits for success and other ways to develop courage, responsibility and character in your children by joining an Active Parenting Online Group. This six-week, video-based interactive class is being offered free to CWA represented employees in DE, MD, PA, NJ, VA, WV, Washington, DC or can be purchased at a discounted rate for non-CWA represented employees.**

**Visit [ACFCcares.com](http://ACFCcares.com) for more information and to register for the next available group.**