



Monthly Parenting Tip from the ACFC

April 2023

The Power of Volunteering

As parents, we want our children to become the leaders of tomorrow and to thrive in the democratic society in which we live. Our goal is to develop the character traits in our children that they will need to succeed and the courage to persevere when life gets tough. Community involvement provides the ideal framework to teach our children the importance of five essential character traits for success and confidence; courage, responsibility, cooperation, respect and self-esteem. Learning to accept responsibility, keep commitments, cooperate with others and problem-solve are all a part of volunteering and serving the needs of others. Let's explore each of these character traits in more depth.

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Choose from four available courses:

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- **Crossroads of Parenting & Divorce:** For divorced and divorcing parents

Continue your experience as an "active" parent by reviewing what you learn in the class in your accompanying parent guide. Each guide contains additional information, activities, and worksheets to help you practice what you learn.

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- **Courage** - It takes great courage to resist peer pressure, to stand up for oneself or for others and to think independently. From the French word *coeur*, meaning heart, courage is a person's inner strength. When life gets tough, those with the courage to persevere are more likely to succeed. When volunteering, children many times experience the courage of others who face difficult times and develop an understanding of inner strength that they may not see in their usual everyday activities.
- **Responsibility** – Responsibility is the ability to recognize one's obligations, to know right from wrong and to accept the consequences of one's decisions. What better way for a child to learn responsibility than to make a commitment to start and finish a project that benefits others who need help.
- **Cooperation** – A child who learns to live and work cooperatively with others has a much better chance to succeed. Cooperation is fostered through problem-solving and planning, which requires effective communication and a spirit of mutual-respect and participation. In many volunteer situations, children have to learn to cooperate and interact with people from all walks of life. What a wonderful opportunity to learn to accept other views and to work toward a common goal.
- **Respect** – The concept of mutual respect is a cornerstone of life in a democratic society, particularly one that includes a lot of diversity. To treat others respectfully, and to expect them to treat you the same, makes way for the free sharing of ideas that eventually solve problems and create a better society for us all. Mutual respect is also the cornerstone of volunteer projects and community service.
- **Self-Esteem** – Children who believe they are worthwhile human beings, with talents and dreams that are worthy of respect, have the best chance of thriving. Giving of one's time and energies to those in need can be a powerful way to develop positive self-esteem in our children.

Community involvement can also be the instrument for developing the **skills** for success:

- Leadership
- Negotiation
- Goal setting and motivation
- Creative thinking and problem solving
- Communication (listening, speaking, and writing)
- The ability to learn

With so much to offer, what are you waiting for? Why not start now to find a community service project the whole family can do? You can find options in your area at [VolunteerMatch.org](https://www.volunteermatch.org).

To learn more about effective parenting skills, visit the Active Parenting Online Video Library. These helpful videos are offered free of charge by the ACFC in partnership with Active Parenting. Guidance and help are available for parents of children of all ages. To access the Online Video Library, go to the **ACFC website**, click on the Active Parenting tab, and follow the instructions on how to view the videos.