

Unleash the Greatness in Your Youth



**Powerful,
Character-Building,
Positive
Parenting Activities**

An "I Care" Positive Parenting Workbook



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The “Unleash the Greatness in Your Youth” Workbook

The activities in this *Unleash the Greatness in Your Youth* Workbook are built around many of the foundational concepts and skills your soon-to-be teenager will need. Highly successful individuals share a number of traits in common. Among them are the thinking skills, attitudes, and behavior patterns that represent “character.” This book provides tools for parents like you who want to begin unleashing the potential in their children through the development of their character.

Positive Parenting

Positive parenting strengthens parent/child relationships by engaging young people with the most important teachers they will ever have—their parents. Furthermore, it increases academic achievement and expectations for the future; instills self-esteem and confidence; and reduces behavior problems and school absenteeism.

Character Development

Character development doesn’t just happen, it is primarily learned from role models and significant adults and should be started at an early age. But it can’t stop there. Research shows that even though middle school students may challenge authority from time to time, they rely on their parents for what to do in difficult situations. They are also watching what parents do all the time and notice if parents don’t practice what they preach.

“I Care”

Since its beginning over ten years ago, “I Care” has been committed to three principles: 1.) Focus on character development, which influences all aspects of a child. 2.) Get and keep parents involved, which also impacts all aspects of child development. We do this by communicating the importance of parental involvement. 3.) Making “I Care” a bridge between school, home, and community—better results come from teamwork. Today, “I Care” is used by over a million parents.

“I Care” Positive Parenting and Mentoring Curricula

“I Care” Positive Parenting and Mentoring Curricula are used in over 60,000 classrooms for toddler and pre-K through high school. Activities similar to the ones in this workbook are implemented by parents throughout the school year. Administrators, teachers, and parents have all raved about the results.

Feedback

Feedback is one of the key components to the “I Care” approach. Defining parental involvement as the number of positive interactions you have with your child makes it easy. The *Reflection Log* Activity at the end of each month will help you keep track of your involvement. The other indicator will be the changes you see in your youth. They will be stunning.



How To Use This Book

Practice, Practice, Practice

Read through the month's activities together and decide on the ones you want to do. You can fit them into your schedule at any time. Remember, practice is necessary for a behavior or attitude to become a habit. That's why we provide so many activities for each character trait. In fact, learning theory tells us that it generally takes 21 days of practice before a new habit is acquired. But don't stop with ours! Be creative in developing your own activities as well.

Discuss, Discuss, Discuss

Discuss—not tell, tell, tell—is the rule. All learners need to talk about an idea, using their own words, ask questions about it, and consider it from different points of view to both learn it and understand it more completely.

Monthly Character Traits

There are twelve important character traits, one for each month of the year, spiraling from a *Pillar of Character*. They instill self-esteem, positive attitudes, and self-confidence. Focus on one character trait per month and complete the *Talk About It*, do activities together, get your child involved in service, review the positive message, and complete the reflection activities.

Strengthen Your Understanding

At this age, most youths have personal interests. Thus, one key to motivating them is to help them pursue their interest areas. The activities in this section include: writing, reading, art, music, teamwork, computer work, projects, and performances. No matter what your child's interest or ability, he will find something to interest him. Do as many of the activities as will fit into your schedule, five or more at least each month, to help the learning sink in.

Service Projects

Research shows that youths who spend at least one hour a week helping others are less frequently involved in destructive behaviors and do better in school than their peers. The youths themselves say that volunteering helps them develop leadership skills, learn patience and kindness, and understand what good citizenship is all about. Even though service projects take more time and planning than other activities, they are worth the effort.

Scenarios

Scenarios ask you to imagine what you might do in certain situations. The practice they provide is valuable in preparing a child to make the right decisions in everyday life because he has thought about what he might do ahead of time. When he actually finds himself facing a dilemma, he has a better chance of knowing how to handle it.

Connect! Connect!

At the beginning of each month, have your child look over the section called *Connect! Connect!* It lists films, books, and web sites related to the trait you'll be talking about. Movies can help you start talking about a character trait, and most films are available through video rentals. If the library doesn't have a book he's interested in, they can borrow it for you from another library.



Positive Affirmations

Affirmations are positive sentences that describe what you want your life to be like. You repeat them many times by saying them aloud, thinking about them or writing them down so they go deep into the subconscious mind and affect what you think and do. The more you repeat the affirmation, the more you believe it. It is very important to choose only positive affirmations. If negative thoughts creep in such as, “*I can’t do this,*” replace them with the positive affirmation. There are affirmations for both parents and youths. Repeat them frequently to each other and to yourselves. They can also be hung up where you can see them every day.

Positive Messages

Visual reminders are as helpful for middle-schoolers as they are for toddlers. Post the monthly *Positive Message* where your youth can see it often and go over it together.

Reading Activities

Reading daily is beneficial no matter how old you are. It helps brain development, improves writing skills, increases our knowledge, stimulates our imagination, and gives us pleasure. You might want to designate a family reading time during the week, if not daily, where everyone is reading. Recommended books may be available at your local library. Or, you may purchase a set of 12 books—one for each month—at www.icarenow.com/parents.html. These are appropriate for 6th grade readers. However, some 6th grade readers read far above or below grade level. If your child is one of these, we can provide you with a list of books at his reading level. If you’re not sure what your child’s reading level is, ask his teacher.

Reflection Log

The monthly *Reflection Log* Activity is designed for parents to summarize their positive actions, recognize their accomplishments, and encourage self-initiation of more positive parent/child interactions. Begin thinking about activities they might do in the future.

Tips for Parents

From time to time, we all need a little help with parenting challenges. In this section, you’ll find suggestions for setting expectations, sharing your personal experiences, getting the whole family involved, serving as a role model, and communicating with your young adult. Specific activities and discussion topics are listed for you to choose from.

Message to Student

As children enter adolescence, they’re interested in acting older and winning the approval of their peers. They become more observant and they think more about the kind of person they want to be. The information and questions in this section can help get them thinking about what the trait of the month means and how well they are already using it—or not using it. It also includes suggestions on what they need to develop the trait.



Universal Pillars of Character

- Built on twelve universally recognized pillars of good character with spiraling grade–level character traits to build one behavior on another
- Include the primary behaviors that define each character trait for the repetition that enables transfer of learning
- Include parenting/mentoring, enrichment, reinforcement, visual learning, and reflection activities
- Additional workbooks will soon be available for all the grades listed below

Month	Pillar of Character	6th	7th	8th
January	Motivated	<i>Planner</i>	<i>Focused</i>	<i>Priority Conscious</i>
February	Reliable	<i>Virtuous</i>	<i>Follows Through</i>	<i>Truthful</i>
March	Persistent	<i>Push Personal Limits</i>	<i>Productive</i>	<i>Proactive</i>
April	Peace Keeper	<i>Cooperative</i>	<i>Withstands Peer Pressure</i>	<i>Tolerant</i>
May	Self-Control	<i>Responsive to Feedback</i>	<i>Self-Disciplined</i>	<i>Cautious</i>
June	Caring	<i>Dependable</i>	<i>Empathetic</i>	<i>Generous</i>
July	Responsible	<i>Willing to Accept Blame</i>	<i>Problem Solver</i>	<i>Aware of Consequences</i>
August	Civic-Minded	<i>Humanitarian</i>	<i>Service Oriented</i>	<i>Conservationist</i>
September	Communicator	<i>Express Feelings</i>	<i>Listener</i>	<i>Public Speaker</i>
October	Confident	<i>Positive Thinking</i>	<i>Makes Right Choices</i>	<i>Bold</i>
November	Respectful	<i>Appreciate</i>	<i>Polite</i>	<i>Fair</i>
December	Self-Knowing	<i>Sets Personal Standards</i>	<i>Calm</i>	<i>Thoughtful</i>

A Proven Educational Method



“I Care” follows best strategies of the teaching and learning process described below and has been professionally developed using relevant research.

Positive Psychology

The focus of psychology has traditionally been on what’s wrong with people and how to fix them. Recently, however, some psychologists have begun to look at the strengths and virtues in people that make them happy and protect them from mental illness and depression. They believe that if traits such as courage, optimism, kindness, hope, honesty, and perseverance can be developed in young people, they will grow into happy adults who make a positive contribution to society. “I Care” is a pioneer in the development of positive, character–building curricula and workbooks.

Three Essential Learning Conditions

These have been identified by cognitive psychologists and embedded into the workbook: reception, availability, and activation.

1. Reception—Advanced organizers focus the child’s attention on specific activities.
2. Availability—Parents can take advantage of the “teachable moments” and insert parenting activities into the home schedule at any time.
3. Activation—When parents role model the character traits and ask questions such as those provided in the pre–planned activities, they are activating the child’s cognitive assimilation of the trait.

Open-Ended Questions

An open–ended question is one that requires some thought to answer. It usually begins with “why,” “explain,” “what do you think about . . .,” or “what if . . .” It allows room for more than one right answer and encourages more details, more analysis, and more creativity. This is especially important to adolescents who are self–motivated.

As you discuss some of the activities, you have an opportunity to praise your child for the effort he puts into his thinking, even if you might not completely agree with his ideas. Remember that this is the age at which young people are trying to find out what they believe. As much as they are aware of their own changing bodies and feelings, they are also becoming more concerned with the feelings and rights of others. Whether they will admit it or not, they listen to what you say and carefully watch what you do.

Connected to Real Life

Adolescents really like to be doing things and not just thinking or talking. That’s one reason they respond so well to activities that relate to their own experiences. Let them interact with peers or get them involved in helping others. When they see how traits like self–control, setting standards, or honesty make them more successful in everyday life, these traits are more likely to become life–long attitudes and behaviors.



What Are Adolescents Like?

Knowing some of the changes your adolescent will experience, as well as the attitudes and behaviors he might display, will help you keep the lines of communication open with him. Here are some of those behaviors your adolescent may begin to exhibit:

Intellectual Growth

- Begin thinking more about the future
- Try using humor, such as sarcasm, more in conversation, pointing out inconsistencies in what people say and do
- Have more curiosity about the world (though they may be disinterested in traditional learning)
- Develop new interests (but may not stick to them)

Social Growth

- Seek out peers with whom they have things in common to increase their sense of security
- Want more freedom and power to make their own decisions and resent when they don't get them
- Withdraw from physical affection in the family (though they still want and need it)
- Talk back to adults more as a way of asserting their independence

Moral Growth

- Identify more with the underdog and disadvantaged, desiring to improve their situations
- Begin forming their own opinions of right and wrong that may differ from those of the family
- Are still dependent on parental guidance because logical reason is not fully developed
- Begin questioning social conventions and the way things are done

Emotional Growth

- Focus on themselves and how others see them
- Feel self-conscious about the physical, social and emotional changes they are undergoing
- Experience mood swings which they don't understand
- Make decisions based on desire to fit in rather than whether or not they are the best decisions

Physical Growth

- Go through rapid and uneven growth spurts that make them self-conscious
- Have periods of sleeplessness and restlessness due to changes in hormones
- Need physical activity to channel increased energy and restlessness
- Can be awkward and uncoordinated because of uneven growth

Getting to Know Each Other—Again



As children enter adolescence, it's not unusual for a parent to think: "Who is that in my son's body?" or "This isn't the same girl who lived here last week." Keeping up with all the changes that are taking place will help you stay connected with your son or daughter and make it easier to communicate. We suggest that before you begin working on any of the activities in this workbook, you spend a little time getting acquainted with the person your child is becoming. The questions below can help you get started. Talk them over with your child and encourage detailed responses. Answer a few of them yourself. Listen and learn. Afterward, use what you learn to modify activities to your child's interests and abilities.

- What are some of the problems in the world that you would change if you had the power to do so? Why is that so important to you? What about the problems in our community?
- There's nothing like talking to someone in person to get to know them. Imagine you have the opportunity to spend an hour with anyone in the world. Who would it be? Why that person? What would you ask him or her?
- Do you think your interests have changed in the last few years? In what ways? Do you like the same kinds of music and movies? How about friends? What do you think caused you to change?
- Thinking about the future, what three things would you really like to do well?
- What careers would you like to know more about? Why do they interest you?
- If you were being interviewed for a summer job that you really wanted and you were asked to describe the things you do really well, what would they be?
- Pick a city that you'd like to visit—one you've never been to before. What are the things that you would like to do there?
- What would you like people to understand about you that they don't seem to?
- What are the things that make you sad, happy, confused, curious, and mad?
- Picture yourself about to receive an award for your latest book. What is the book about?
- What is your favorite musical group? Relative? Place to visit? Color? Memory?
- For a school project you will be working on a video about homeless people. What job would you want—such as planning, directing, interviewing, or photographing?

Source: *The Interest-a-Lyzer*, Joseph S. Renzulli, Creative Learning Press



Talking with Your Adolescent

One recent survey of young teens showed that 75% were worried about getting along with their parents. One of the most important things parents can do to assure a good relationship with their adolescent is to listen when he talks, respect his opinion—even if they don't agree with it—and include him in making decisions. The following topics are ones that adolescents and teens want to talk about with their parents:

Family decisions: Adolescents are very observant. They know when something's up. Whether it is planning a vacation or planning a divorce, they want to know about it. Talk with them about family plans. Discuss pending decisions, ask for their input, and explain your position, especially if it concerns them.

Sensitive issues: Adolescents are curious and sometimes confused about their changing bodies and feelings. They're encountering topics about which they may need guidance. Don't try to protect your adolescent from issues you think he's too young to understand, or issues you might not feel comfortable talking about, like sex, drugs, or alternative lifestyles.

You: What you think and feel, as well as what you experienced when you were young are all interesting to your child. They're especially interested in the life challenges you had at their age and how you dealt with them.

What's happening in the world: Current events are thrust upon us from the television screen and the computer screen 24/7. The tone in which much of it is reported creates concern in adolescents who don't have all the facts or don't realize that just because an event is being talked about all the time, it's not necessarily a common occurrence. Discuss their concerns and help them find answers to their questions.

The big whys: Adolescents are beginning to think beyond what happens to why it happens. Why is there so much hate in the world? Why do people think only about their own needs and wants and not about others? Your answers to these kinds of questions may be based on your religious beliefs or what you believe about people. Whatever your beliefs, share them with your child.

Them and their future: If you are really interested in what your child likes, thinks, and does, she knows it. She also knows when you're not interested, and that makes her feel less worthy. Talk with your child about the things she likes to spend time doing. Talk about her friends. Discuss some of the things she will encounter when she goes to high school and what her thoughts are about a career and how she wants to live her life.

Source: www.teentouch.org

Recommended Resources



Parents Do Make a Difference: How to Raise Kids With Solid Character, Strong Minds, and Caring Hearts, by Michele Borba

Michele Borba is a national expert on building children's self-esteem, achievement, and motivation. In this book she focuses on the role of parents in character development, helping them understand some of the foundational behaviors necessary for their child's success. Included is advice on how to encourage these behaviors, suggested activities, resources for parents and children, as well as lots of examples.

Building Moral Intelligence: The Seven Essential Virtues that Teach Kids to Do the Right Thing, by Michele Borba

In this book, Michele Borba takes the foundational behaviors she discussed in *Parents Do Make a Difference*, and examines each one in greater depth. She provides a test for parents to assess their children on these behaviors, suggests activities, and advises parents to make sure they are providing a moral example that they would want their children to follow, or in other words, watch their own behavior.

The Power of Positive Talk: Words to Help Every Child Succeed, by Douglas Bloch with Jon Merritt

This book starts out by explaining how words can shape the way children behave, both good and bad. Using lots of examples the author illustrates what positive talk is and how children can use it in the situations they encounter—for instance, learning, athletics, or peer relationships. For each situation, he gives an example of negative self-talk and how to turn that around with positive affirmations. With the user-friendly format, you can find suggestions at the spur of the moment without having to wade through pages of text.

WHY Do They Act That Way? . A Survival Guide to the Adolescent Brain for You and Your Teen, by David Walsh

Some of those frustrating behaviors we see in adolescents are brain-based. This book explains those changes going on in the adolescent brain so that parents can understand, communicate with, and stay connected to their kids. Numerous illustrations show why moodiness, quickness to anger and to take risks, miscommunication, fatigue, territoriality, and other familiar teenage behavior problems are so common.

Helping Boys Succeed in School, by Terry Neu and Rich Weinfeld

Compared to girls, more boys drop out of school and fewer boys go to college. This book provides parents and teachers with ideas for channeling boys' interests, keeping them involved in school and home, and helping them deal with some of the unique social and emotional problems boys face. It includes advice to boys from other boys, strategy checklists, and case studies that illustrate what works.

"I Care" Positive Parenting Affirmation

I Pledge to Teach My Youth How to Be:

Motivated

Reliable

Persistent

A Peace Keeper

In Control of Self

Caring

Dependable

Civic-Minded

A Communicator

Confident

Respectful

Self-Knowing

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Tear out this page and display the Parenting Pledge on the other side in a visible location.

"I Care" Positive Youth's Affirmation

I Pledge to Be:

A Planner

Virtuous

A Role Model and Push Personal Limits

Cooperative

Responsive to Feedback

Dependable

Willing to Accept Blame

A Humanitarian

A Role Model and Express Feelings

A Positive Thinker

Appreciative

A Role Model and Set Personal Standards

Copyrighted Material

Tear out this page and display the Youth's Pledge on the other side in a visible location.

What's It All About?

Feedback is information about what we do or say. It is important for building any relationship and getting jobs done because we need to tell people what is working or what isn't working. "*I don't think that's the right box. It won't fit through the door*" is feedback. So is "*I can't hear you when you talk so quietly.*" Feedback isn't about whether we are a smart or good person.

To improve, we sometimes need to know what we've done wrong or how we can get better, so it's important to take the feedback that people give us and use it to improve instead of getting mad because we think they are criticizing us.

Message to Parents

- ◇ At this age, your child is beginning to think rationally and weigh the pros and cons of a situation or decision with greater understanding. His brain hasn't developed this ability to its full capacity. That won't happen until he is in his early twenties, but it begins in adolescence. As a result, he can take information such as feedback and use it to change his behavior. For instance, he can begin to understand that he can influence what people think of him by how he acts.

You may have heard the saying, *Experience is the best teacher*. Sometimes you need to let your child feel the feedback of experience. When you know your adolescent is making a mistake, don't rush in to fix it (unless it's a question of safety). Pick the important issues—constant feedback can become nagging and criticism.

Message to Student

A way to really grow is to know what we need to improve. Feedback can help us figure it out. Getting a "C" on a test is feedback that says, *You need to study more.* Applause after scoring a soccer goal is feedback that says *Keep up the good work.* When someone tells you you've done something wrong, do you feel attacked? When you get good feedback, you need to let your brain take over your emotions and say, *"That's good to know. Thanks!"*

How Am I Doing?

Ask yourself the following questions:

- ◇ When you get an assignment back from the teacher and she said you made some mistakes, do you look over the mistakes so you don't make them again, or do you feel mad and embarrassed and throw the paper away?
- ◇ Have you ever gotten feedback that helped you? What was good about it? What did you do about it?

Making Some Changes

How To Develop This Trait

Receiving Feedback:

- ◇ Take a deep breath if you start to get nervous. Smile and look the person in the eye.
- ◇ Nod your head. That doesn't mean you agree with them; it means you are listening.
- ◇ Pay attention to the information, not how you feel about it.
- ◇ Ask for more information if you're not sure what the person is saying.
- ◇ If you disagree, say, *"I'd like to tell you what I think."* Then, explain calmly.
- ◇ If someone is dumping on you, don't interrupt; that starts an argument. Just listen and say, *"Thank you for telling me."*

Tips for Parents

Being Role Models

- ◇ Practice giving feedback as a family. Make it a learning time. Gather everyone together and say, *“We can all learn from each other. Each person think of one thing he can tell the person sitting next to him that will help that person do something better; for instance, throwing a softball, washing dishes, answering the phone, being on time, keeping promises”*—anything that is helpful and not hurtful.
- ◇ You have many opportunities to give feedback to your child:
 - Following up after you have assigned him a job
 - Going over a homework assignment
 - Sharing what his teacher said after a conference at school
 - How his attitude affects the whole family
 - Pointing out how he can improve his basketball or hoop shot

Talking It Over

- ◇ Practice with your child positive ways to respond to feedback; for example: *“Thank you.” “Can you give me more details?” “That’s helpful feedback.” “How do you think I could do it better?”*
- ◇ Share with your child some ways in which feedback has been helpful to you in the past.
- ◇ Discuss with your child how comfortable—or uncomfortable—you each are asking for and getting feedback.
- ◇ Discuss with your child the following sayings:
 - *“Would you rather learn from a mistake or keep making it over and over?”*
 - *“Feedback is the breakfast of champions.”*—Ken Blanchard

Strengthen Your Understanding

Parent Instructions: Relate the following story to your child: *Allison was having a difficult time with her math. At her teacher's suggestion, she started keeping a record of her mistakes. Each week, she wrote down errors she seemed to keep making over and over. After three weeks, she was ready to discuss the mistakes with her teacher.* Discuss what information your child can use as feedback to improve some area of his life. For example, mistakes made when playing his favorite sport, grammar errors made on written assignments, or why he seems to feel angry when someone tells him to do chores.

Parent Instructions: Read *Ghost in the Tokaido Inn* by Dorothy Hoobler and Thomas Hoobler with your child. Discuss the kinds of feedback the Seikei got from different people and how he reacted to it.

Parent Instructions: Encourage your child to make up a form that will help him think about how to use the feedback he gets. It might include questions like:

- ◇ What was the feedback?
- ◇ Have I heard anything like that before?
- ◇ What did I do well?
- ◇ What do I need to improve?
- ◇ How am I going to improve?

Strengthen Your Understanding

Parent Instructions: It is said that Thomas Edison knew 1800 ways *not* to make a light bulb. Christopher Columbus thought he had discovered the East Indies. History is full of people who had failure. Some gave up. Others used failure as a lesson and kept improving. It's the same with feedback. The key is what we do with it. Discuss with your child examples of people who turned failure into success. Other examples are Walt Disney, who was told he never had any good ideas, and Abraham Lincoln, who went into the Black Hawk War as a captain and came out as a private.

Youth Instructions: Make a list of all the kinds of feedback you can think of. Keep adding to it during the month. Talk with your parent(s) about which kinds of feedback you each find most helpful, as well as which kinds make you feel uncomfortable.

Parent Instructions: With your child, think of examples of feedback and criticism for each of the situations below. What's the difference between the two? How would you feel if someone gave you the feedback? How would you feel about the criticism?

- ◇ You're late getting to school because you forgot to put your permission slip in your backpack and had to run home to get it.
- ◇ Jane called Shawn "stupid," which really upset him.
- ◇ Your brother ate your favorite piece of chicken, although it's not his favorite.

Strengthen Your Understanding

Youth Instructions: Keep a journal for the month, writing down all the different kinds of feedback you have gotten and what it means to you. Examples might be from a sports coach (“*I need to practice my jump shot*”), papers the teacher returns (“*I am creative, but I need to work on my spelling*”), what your friends say (“*they enjoy spending time with me*”), people’s body language (“*Josh keeps away from me because he’s embarrassed by what happened last week,*” or “*Dave smiles a lot. I think he’s starting to feel comfortable in middle school*”), how difficult it is to get up in the morning (“*I’m staying up too late*”). There is an endless source of feedback all around us.

Youth Instructions: Although the words “good job” aren’t really feedback because they don’t tell us what we did well, we like hearing them. With your parent(s), make a list of as many different ways of saying “good job!” as you can think of. Create a poster with them and hang it up for the family to see.

Parent Instructions: Feedback can come in many forms. After reading *The Landry News* by Andres Clements, talk with your child about the different kinds of feedback in the story and how people reacted to them.

Strengthen Your Understanding

Youth Instructions: Check out the book reviews by kids on www.amazon.com. Select “books” where it says “search” and type in the title *Ghost in the Tokaido Inn* next to it. When you scroll down on the page that comes up, you’ll see three reviews written by kids. This is a kind of feedback that helps people decide if they want to read a book. After reading *Ghost in the Tokaido Inn* yourselves, decide if you each agree with the reviews.

Parent Instructions: Have your child write reviews of all the books he reads this month. Search the title of the book on www.amazon.com like you did in the activity above. As you scroll down the page, you’ll come to a section called “Customer Reviews.” Click the words “Write an Online Review.” On the next page that comes up, click “Use Our Kids’ Review Forum” and then follow the directions for putting the review on the web site. Also on that page are “Review Guidelines.” Ask your child to read and explain them to you (putting them in his own words will help him understand them). He and his friends will enjoy seeing his review online!

Service Opportunities

- ◇ Young children love to learn from older kids. Do you know any boys or girls who could use your help? Perhaps they need extra encouragement in their school work or just someone to listen to them read. Ask your parents or teachers to help arrange for you to spend some time each week with a younger child. Practice what you will say to encourage them and how you would give them feedback to improve when they need it.
- ◇ We can't improve if we don't know what's wrong. That's why businesses ask for feedback from their customers. What have you seen in your community that needs to be improved? Is there litter in the public park? Are animals running loose in the streets and yards? Have you noticed a dangerous intersection that needs a stop light? Write a letter to the person or organization that can do something about it. If you don't hear from them, write another or get some friends to send letters, too.

Scenarios

What Would I Do in This Situation?

Your teacher has assigned a 4-person team to work on a project that will be 50% of your grade for the next quarter. One of the team members has missed both times you have met after school, even though he promised to be there. What feedback would you give your team member and how would you say it?

Your teacher just returned a writing assignment that you worked really hard on. She told you that your story was very creative, but your sentences weren't well-written. How do you feel about that? What will you do as a result of the feedback?

Connect! Connect!

Media/Video

- ◇ *The Greatest Game Ever Played*: Find all the different kinds of feedback in this super movie, including the ways that a 10-year old caddy helps Francis become a champion.
- ◇ *October Sky*: This is the true story of Homer Hickam, a coal miner's son who was inspired by the first *Sputnik* launch to take up rocketry against his father's wishes. After seeing the movie, ask your child to point out what was feedback to Homer and what was criticism.
- ◇ *Groundhog Day*: This is a fun family movie in which the main character is a bossy snob who lives the same day over and over again until he finally accepts the feedback he's given and changes his ways. Talk with your child about why some people just don't respond to normal feedback.

Books, Web Sites, and Other Resources

- ◇ **Book of the Month:** *The Landry News* by Andrew Clements: Cara Landry is the quiet new kid in school, until she publishes her own newspaper, called "The Landry News," in which she writes about fellow teachers and students. The people who read the news are shocked to learn how others perceive them, and seek to improve themselves for the better.
- ◇ *Absolutely Normal Chaos* by Sharon Creech: Mary Lou Finney grudgingly begins writing a journal as an assignment for school. Would anything interesting ever happen to her? Begin your own journal. It is a way of giving yourself feedback.
- ◇ www.puffrock.com: By clicking "Journals and Magazines," you'll find "Creative Kids." Go to the home page and check out "Write On." Not only do they publish stories, poems, and book reviews, they also publish your opinion on things that interest or upset you.
- ◇ www.stonesoup.com: *Stone Soup* is another magazine that publishes the work of 8–13 year-olds. You can see their book reviews by clicking "Writing," then go to "Book Reviews." Check out the stories and artwork, too.

Positive Message

“
*Criticism is something
we can avoid easily by
saying nothing, doing
nothing, and being
nothing.*
”

—Aristotle

Reflection Log

Summarize your child's positive interactions during the month and reward yourself for a job well done.

Child's Name _____ **Date** _____

Name of Parent(s) _____

Record the number for each of the following questions in the box on the right.

A. How many of the workbook activities did you do with your child?

B. How many positive recognitions about your child did you receive from teacher(s)?

C. How many positive recognitions did your child receive from family members, friends, etc.?

D. How many positive recognitions did your child receive from you, the parent(s)?

Positive Activities

D. Record five self-initiated positive activities you did with your child that were not in this month's workbook activities.

1.

2.

3.

4.

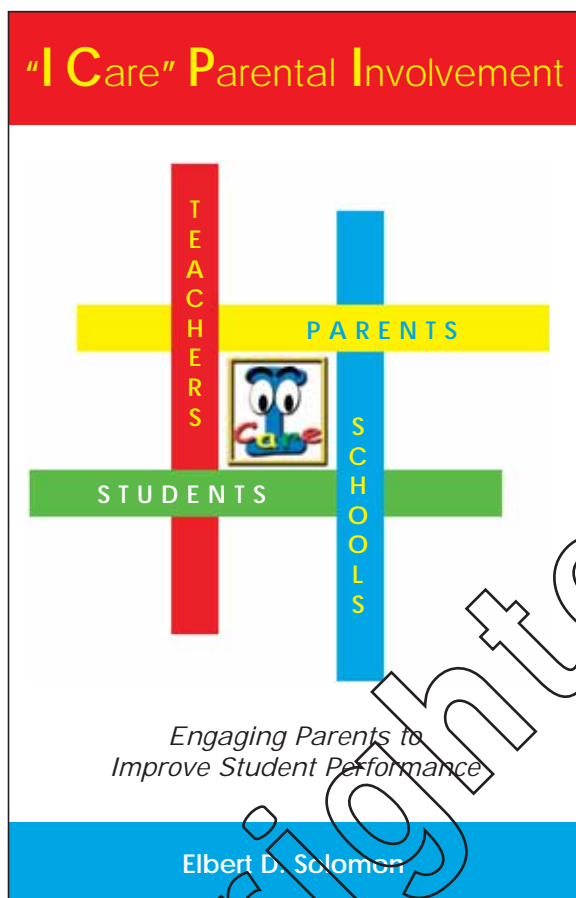
5.

50 Ways Parents Can Say "I Care"

1. Post & Discuss Positive Messages
2. Attend Teacher/Parent Conferences
3. Take Family Portraits
4. Post Affirmation Pledges
5. Eat Meals Together
6. Post Daily Schedule
7. Assign Chores
8. Make Scrapbooks Together
9. Cook Meals Together
10. Award Certificates
11. Watch Movies Together
12. Visit Theme Parks
13. Volunteer at School
14. Read Books to Each Other
15. Attend Family Events
16. Give Parties for Special Occasions
17. Schedule Board Game Nights
18. Visit the Zoo
19. Help with a Class Project
20. Monitor TV Programs
21. Attend Parenting Workshops
22. Send Get Well Cards to Friends & Family
23. Lunch with Mom
24. Lunch with Dad
25. Encourage Hobbies
26. Attend Sport Events
27. Attend Local Theatre
28. Provide Enrichment Activities
29. Schedule Ice Cream Socials
30. Visit the Library
31. Go Shopping Together
32. Attend Friends' Events
33. Help with Homework
34. Post a Child Affirmation Pledge
35. Enroll Child in Book Club
36. Go Fishing Together
37. Go Skating Together
38. Encourage Creativity
39. Discuss Child's Day
40. Praise Good Efforts
41. Say *I Love You* Often
42. Write Notes to Recognize Achievement
43. Document Positive Activities
44. Talk About Positive Activities
45. Role Model Desired Behaviors
46. Support Extracurricular Activities
47. Schedule Family Nights
48. Attend Community Events
49. Help with School Projects
50. Set Limits

"I Care" Parental Involvement Book

"I Care" Parental Involvement—Engaging Parents to Improve Student Performance, by Elbert D. Solomon, is full of research-based, field-tested implementation practices and measurement tools and introduces an innovative curricular approach to parental involvement that will delight parents, teachers, and students. More importantly, it will improve student performance, help parents to initiate more positive activities with their children at home, and enable educators to get beyond the difficulties of involving parents. Available in English and Spanish.



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S & H @ \$5.00 or 10% (whichever is greater)	\$5.00
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