

# Unleash the Greatness in Your Child



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

An "I Care" Positive Parenting Workbook



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## Introduction

### The “Unleash the Greatness in Your Child” Workbook

It’s during the early years that children begin to develop foundation skills upon which later learning will be built. By teaching and practicing these skills with your child, you are laying the groundwork for success. The activities in this *Unleash the Greatness in Your Child* Workbook are built around many of the foundational concepts and skills your child 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 workbook provides tools for parents like you who want to begin unleashing the potential in their children through the development of their character during the early years.

### Positive Parenting

Positive parenting strengthens parent/child relationships by engaging children 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.

### Early Learning Skills

*Learning skills* are primarily learned from role models and significant adults. A list of the twelve early learning skills upon which the “I Care” approach is based is found on pages iv and v, along with the behaviors that define them.

### “I Care”

Beginning over ten years ago, “I Care” is committed to communicating with parents the importance of their involvement with their children and helping them improve their parenting skills. Today, “I Care” is used by over a million parents.

### “I Care” Positive Parenting & Mentoring Curricula

“I Care” Positive Parenting & Mentoring Curricula are used in over 35,000 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 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 child. They will be stunning.



## How To Use This Book

### Practice, Practice, Practice

Practice is necessary for a behavior or attitude to become a habit. That's why we provide so many activities for each early learning skill. 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. If a child can talk about an idea using his own words, ask questions about it, and consider it from different points of view, he will both learn it and understand it more completely.

### Parenting Activities

Carefully read through the month's activities. Designate a visible location to place the positive message and post the activities (refrigerator, message board, etc.). The activities can be done while walking or riding in the car, at the breakfast table, at bedtime, on weekends, and in other situations where you and your child are together. Take advantage of the "teachable moments" and read to and with your child daily.

### Monthly Early Learning Skills

There are twelve important early learning skills, one for each month of the year. They instill self-esteem, positive attitudes, and self-confidence. Focus on one early learning skill per month and complete the associated parenting, enrichment, reinforcement, positive message, and reflection activities.

### Parenting Pledge

The *Parenting Pledge* is an affirmation from the parent to the child that the early learning skills will be practiced and reinforced. Display it in a visible location. (See page vii.)

### Child's Pledge

The *Child's Pledge* is an affirmation from the child to the parents. Have your child repeat it often until it is committed to memory. Display it in your child's room. (See page ix.)

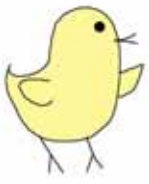
### Enrichment Activities

The *Enrichment Activities* will get your child excited and motivated about learning. The activities are designed to enhance your child's skills in reading, writing, constructing, designing, recognizing, visualizing, making patterns, and communicating.

### Positive Messages

The monthly *Positive Message* should be displayed in a visible location to help your child





maintain focus on one early learning skill while you, as a parent, provide reinforcement actions.

### Reinforcement Activities

These *Reinforcement Activities* will give parent and child multiple opportunities to manipulate and model the behaviors associated with each early learning skill during the month.

### Reading Activities

The recommended books and reading activities support the child's literacy development and reinforce the monthly early learning skills. These books may be available at your local library or they can be purchased in a set of 12 at [www.icarenow.com/parents.html](http://www.icarenow.com/parents.html). Other books that reinforce the month's skill focus may be used if the recommended books are unavailable.

### Reflection Activity

The monthly *Reflection Activity* is designed for parents to summarize their positive actions, recognize their accomplishments, and encourage self-initiation of more positive parent/child interactions.

### Positive Parenting Practices

The timeless positive parenting practices at the end of each month's activities were used as a guide to develop the "I Care" Positive Parenting Workbook. They serve as models for effective parent/child relationships.

### 12 Early Learning Skills

**Learning Words**—*Showing, telling, and identifying*

**Listening**—*Paying attention and following directions*

**Loving Books**—*Describing pictures and wanting to be read to*

**Curiosity**—*Pulling things apart and putting them back together*

**Fitting In**—*Sharing and playing together*

**Motor Skills**—*Jumping, running, and dancing*

**Social Skills**—*Sharing, playing, and talking with others*

**Making Decisions**—*Returning objects to location and following directions*

**Identify Feelings**—*Showing where it hurts, giving, and sharing*

**Creativity**—*Making new things*

**Feeling Good**—*Smiling and showing excitement*

**Learning**—*Identifying objects and things*



# "I Care" Positive Parenting Workbooks

- Built on twelve universally recognized learning experiences/skills that lead to good character development.
- Includes the primary behaviors that define each learning experience with repetition to enable transfer of learning
- Includes Parenting/Mentoring Activities, reinforcement books, rhymes, and hands-on activities.

Objectives	Outcomes
Expand parent's and caregiver's role in the development of language literacy and character development.	Children will have additional support for their development in the areas of oral language development, listening skills, print awareness, and enrichment of activities.
Communication for Effective Parenting	Parents will enjoy learning, talking, and interacting with their toddlers. Using everyday experiences, parents will learn how to enhance and expand their child's verbal capabilities.
Encourage children's language development, associations, language formulation, grammar, and interactive skills	Children will have more reinforcement from home to enrich both language and character development through: language associated with play, music, and rhythm; rhyming; storytelling; imagination; listening; conversation; giving and getting information.
Build Children's Knowledge and Thinking Skills	Through the parenting activities and reflection process, efforts to build children's vocabulary will be more successful because parents will have more engaging, challenging, and exciting things about which to communicate.



## 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.***

### Advanced Organizers

The *Message to Parents* is provided for introducing the month’s early learning skill.

### 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 early learning skills and ask questions such as those provided in the pre-planned activities, they are activating the child’s cognitive assimilation of the skill.

### Repetition, Repetition, Repetition

Long-term memory is enhanced by the number of times a child mentally manipulates a skill. “I Care” provides varied repetitions of each early learning skill over an extended period of time. Learning theory tells us that it generally takes 21 days of practice before a new habit is acquired.

### Use of Questioning Strategies

Most of the “I Care” Activities are written in the form of open-ended questions.

### Connected to Real Life

Children are able to respond to activity questions (passive activity) utilizing their own experiences, and when activities involve doing something (active activity), children carry out the activity within a familiar environment that is part of their daily lives.

### Substantive Conversation

Research shows that a child must talk about an idea or skill using his or her own words, ask questions about it, and look at it from multiple points of view for it to be assimilated to the point that the skill transfers into automatic behavior response. The “I Care” Workbook has built-in opportunities for all these kinds of conversations.





## "I Care" Positive Parenting Pledge

I Pledge To:

*Help My Child to Learn Words*

*Help My Child to Listen*

*Help My Child to Love Books*

*Help My Child to be Curious*

*Help My Child to Fit In*

*Help My Child to Develop Motor Skills*

*Help My Child to Be Social*

*Help My Child to Make Decisions*

*Help My Child to Understand  
and Identify Feelings*

*Help My Child to Be Creative*

*Help My Child to Feel Good  
About Himself or Herself*

*Help My Child to Learn*



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



## "I Care" Positive Child's Pledge

I Pledge To:

*Love My Parents*

*Listen to My Parents*

*Learn from My Parents*

*Read to My Parents*

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

## Parenting Activities

### Message to Parents

*Your toddler needs to feel loved and a part of the family and community.*

#### 1. LANGUAGE

##### What's Your Name?

Often children are given nicknames or pet names. Many times this is the only name he ever hears before starting school. Teach your toddler his full name. Practice, practice, practice.



#### 2. DISCOVERY

##### It Doesn't Fit

Hold up old baby clothes and show your toddler how much he has grown. Allow your child to try to fit in his old baby shoes. Compare the baby shoes and the shoes he currently wears. Trace both shoes onto paper and talk about the difference.







*Fitting In*

## Parenting Activities

### 3. PHYSICAL

#### It's Time to Clean

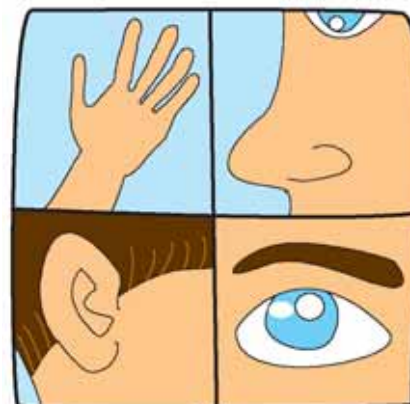
Teach your toddler that every family member has responsibilities. After your child has finished playing, he needs to put things away. Play the "pick up" game. Look to find out what needs to be put away, then say, "I see something red that needs to be put away. Do you see it? Please put it in the toy box." Go through all the colors of items until everything is in its place.



### 4. SENSORY

#### Good Night

Make bedtime a very special time for your toddler. Read his special books, sing a special lullaby using your toddler's name, hug and give your child a good-night kiss. Tell your toddler daily that you love him. *Time for Bed* by Mem Fox is an excellent bedtime or snuggle-time book.





### Fitting In

## Parenting Activities

### 5. READING

#### My Reading Nook

Purchase books for your child. Allow him to select some of the books he likes. Prepare a special area where your child can read and look in books. It may include a special chair, pillows, favorite stuffed animals, and special blankets. Be sure your toddler has an area to properly store his books.



### 6. ART

#### That's Me!

Assist your child in drawing a picture of himself. Write his name on the self-portrait and place in a visible location. Tell your child how unique he is and that there's no one else like him. Share some of the funny and special things he has done. Let him know that he has a very special place in the family.



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*Fitting In*

## Parenting Activities

### 7. PLAY

#### "Simon Says"

Play the game "Simon Says" with your child and other family members or friends. Play the game as long as the toddler shows interest.



### Positive Parenting Practices

- Say "I love you" to your child every day. The beginning and end of the day are perfect times to say these words. Add a bear hug and a butterfly kiss.
- Give your toddler a special job to do. Explain to him that he is the only person allowed to do it. Choose something he can do successfully. Thank and compliment him for getting the job done.

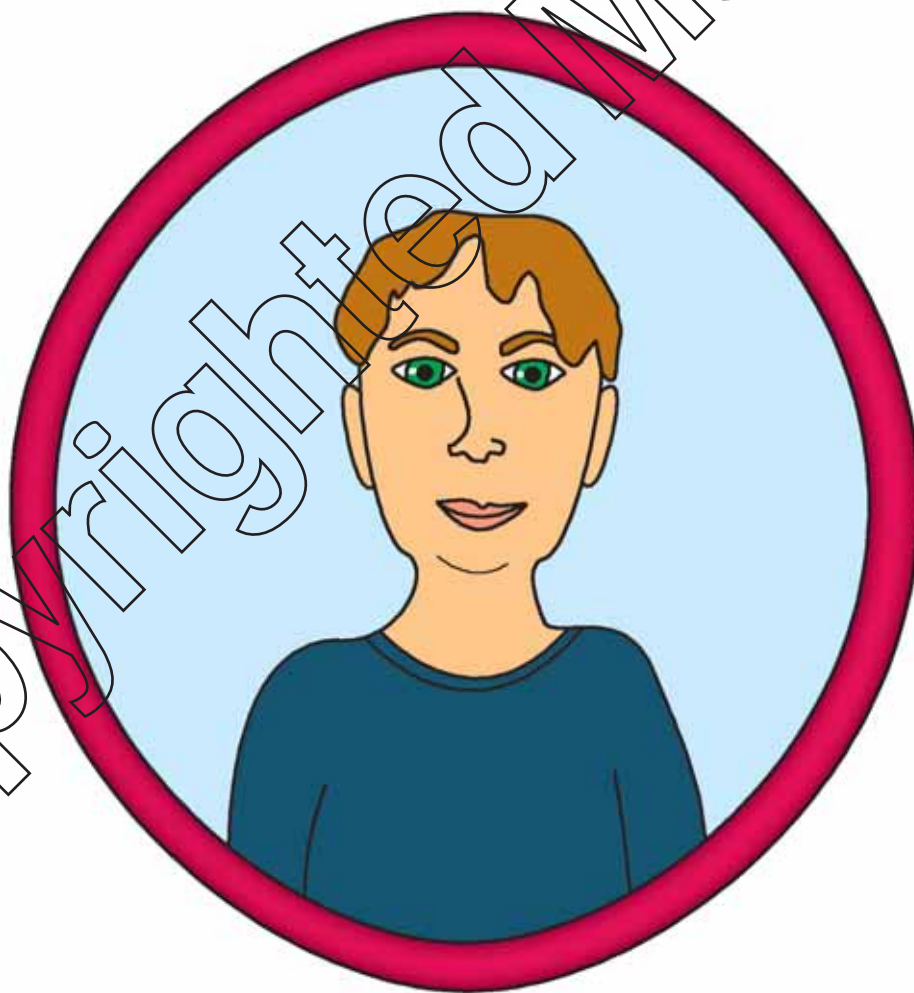


### Fitting In

## Enrichment Activity

### Activity 1: Do You See What I See?

Ask your child to look at himself in the mirror. Encourage him to tell what he sees. You may need to probe to get information. Who do you see? Tell me about your eyes. How does your hair look? What are you wearing?"; etc. Next, you should look in the mirror and tell your child what you see while looking at him and then describe yourself. Ask your toddler to draw a picture of you and you should draw a picture of your toddler. Label each picture. Tape them to the mirror in the bathroom for everyone to see.







*Fitting In*

## Enrichment Activity

### Activity 2: Making Memories

Make cut-outs of your child's hands and feet. Trace around your toddler's hands and feet on thin cardboard or construction paper. Cut them out. Add them to the family photo album. Label them with your toddler's name, age, and the date. Talk about ways to use your hands and feet to help others.





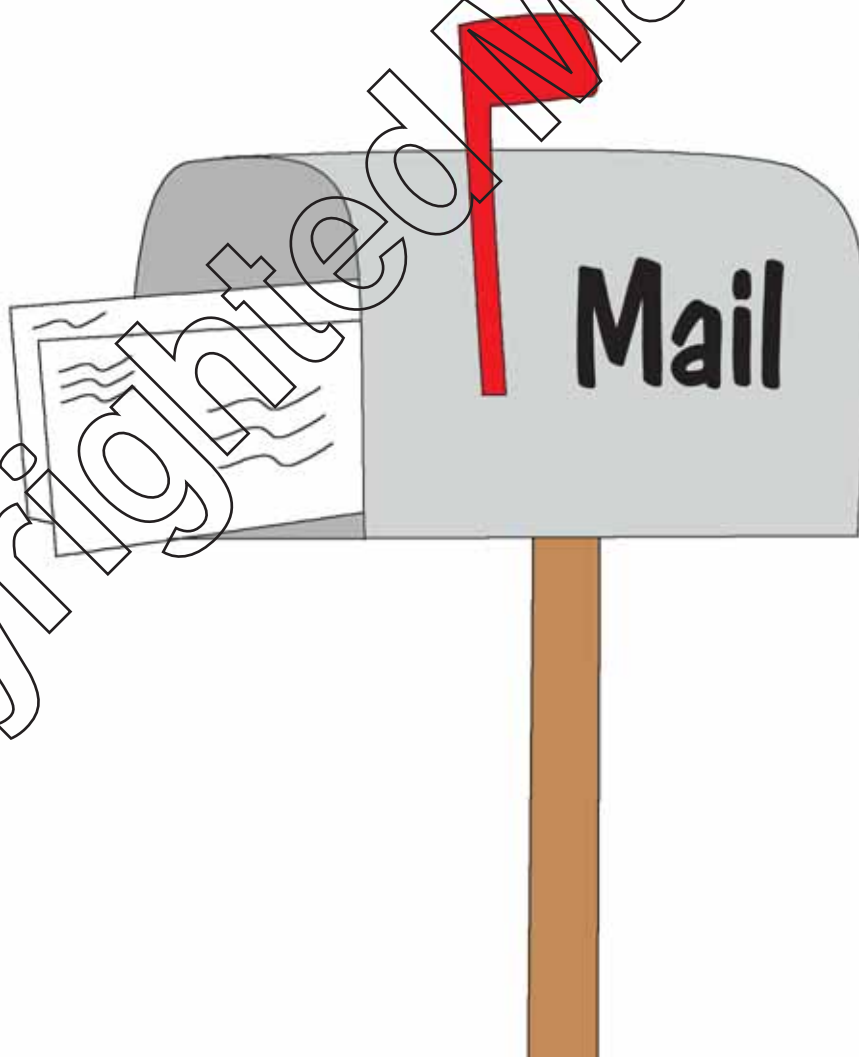


*Fitting In*

## Enrichment Activity

### Activity 3: Letter Writing

Use junk mail and let your toddler play postman by mailing the letters in shoe boxes around the house. Write a letter dictated by the toddler to a friend or relative. Include a picture your toddler has drawn or colored. Mail it.



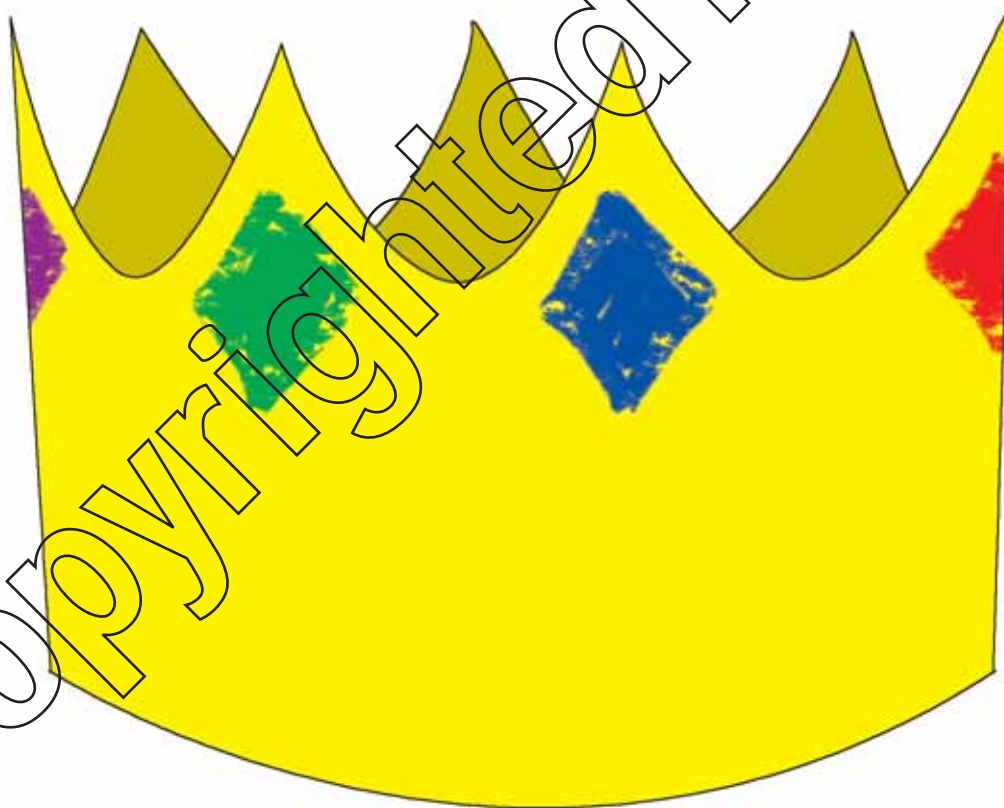


*Fitting In*

## Enrichment Activity

### Activity 4: King for a Day

Help your child feel special by making him “King for a Day.” Measure your child’s head by using string or yarn. Cut strips of construction paper about 5 inches wide to fit around your child’s head. The bottom should be straight. Make the top with pointed ends. Attach the ends. Crown your toddler “King for a Day” for being obedient, helping out at home, to cheer him up, or just to help him feel special. Encourage your toddler to crown other family members and share the special feeling.





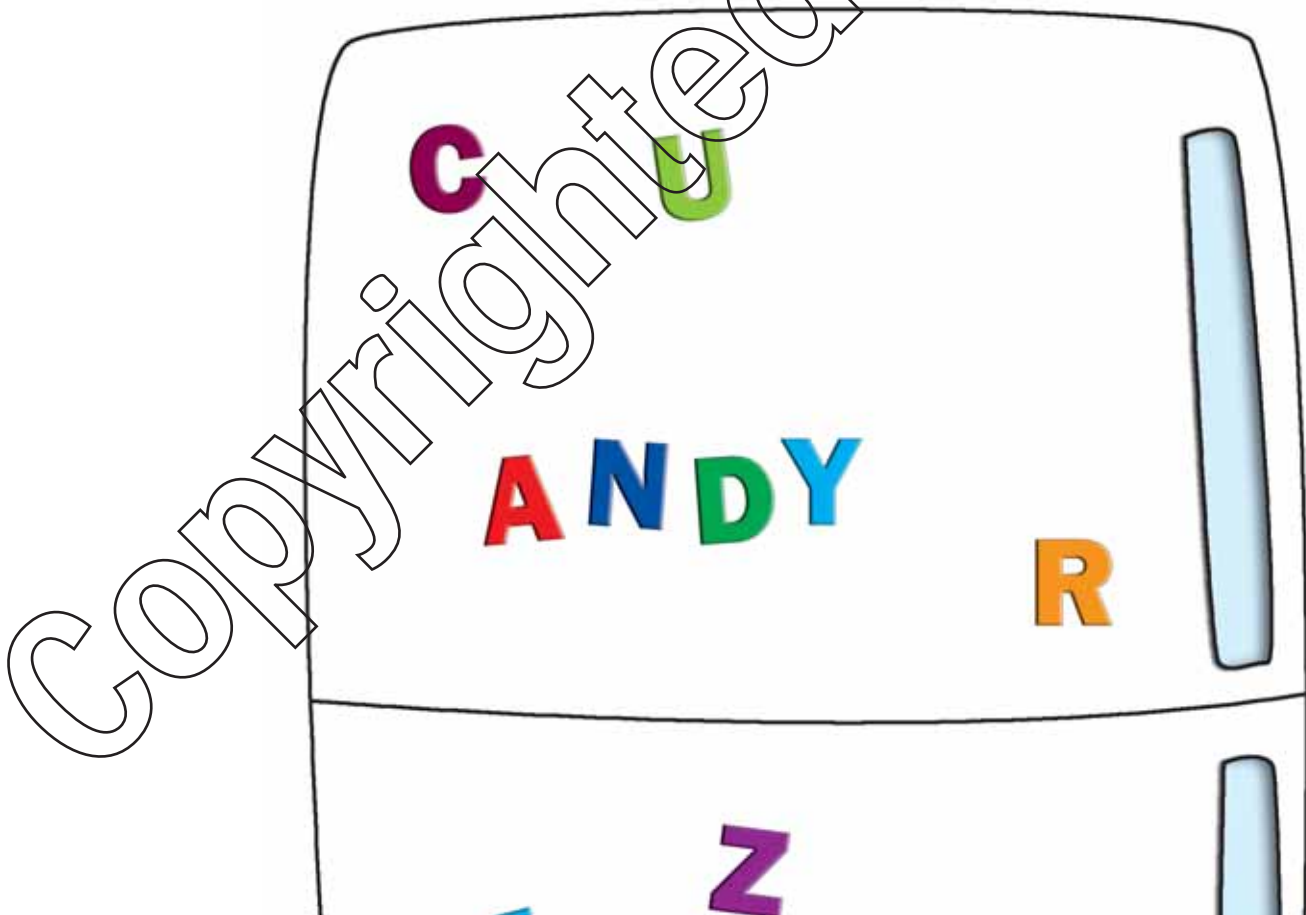
*Fitting In*

Visual Learning

### Activity 5: Spell Your Name

Using magnetic alphabets, show your child how to spell his first name. Leave the name on the refrigerator so he can see it often. Assist your toddler in selecting the appropriate letters to spell his name. Keep the model available for him to copy the pattern. When your child is ready, remove the pattern and encourage him to spell his name without using the model. Post the positive message in a visible location.

# I can spell my name!





*Fitting In*

# Reinforcement Activity

## Activity 6: Jobs I Do at Home . . .

List some of the jobs your child does at home below.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

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Fitting In

Reflection Activity

Activity 7: Reflection Log

Summarize your toddler'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 did your child 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)?

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*Fitting In*

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

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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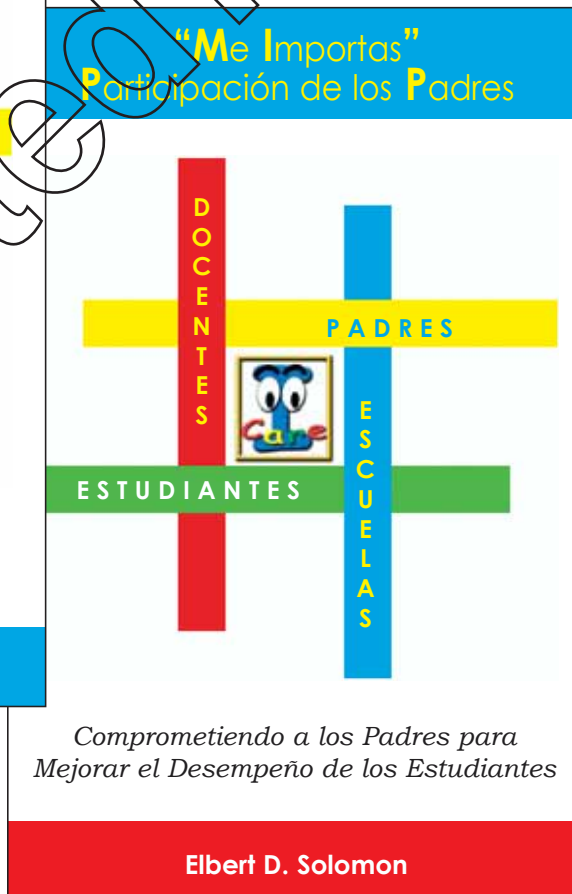
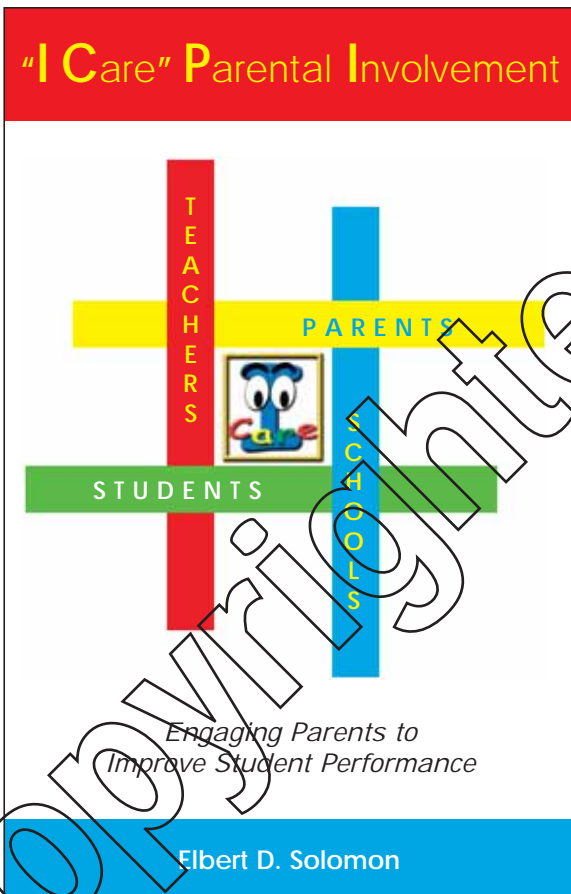
## 50 Ways Parents Can Say "I Care"

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.



	\$14.95
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(whichever is greater)	\$5.00

**Total: \$21.00**