



CCPS Mental Health Update

Cecil County Public Schools is committed to empowering our staff and families to meet the social and emotional needs of our students, with a focus on behavioral health and trauma-responsiveness, to assure that every student is ready to learn, achieve success, and experience positive relationships.

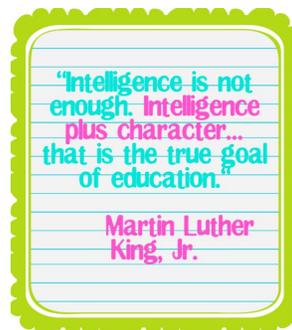
Did you know:

A person's character includes traits/qualities that reveal themselves in specific circumstances, even when no one is watching.

Self-Control
Honesty
Excellence
Courteous
Responsibility
Respect

Strategy of the Month:

Building Strong Character



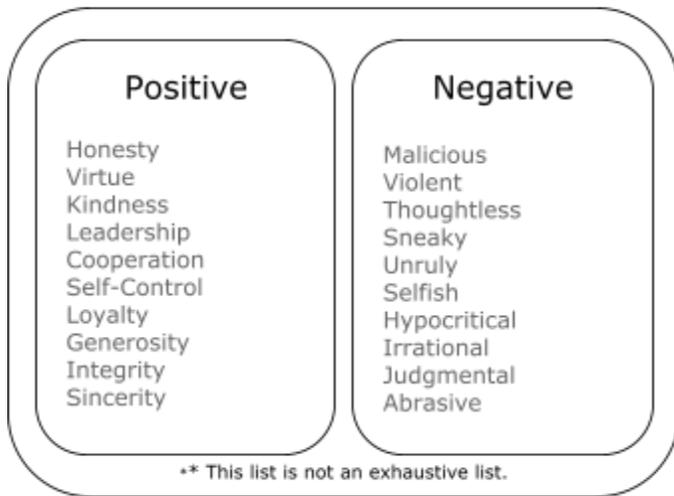
* Adapted from Psychology Today, Character-Training.com, K12 Learning Lift Off

**"Cultivating positive characteristics is arguably just as important as academic learning."
- Elizabeth Street**

Character Traits Children Should Learn in Early Years and Strategies

- **Curiosity:** "is one of the most permanent and certain characters of a vigorous intelligence" Samuel Johnson. Curiosity makes learning more interesting and encourages active thinking.
 - Encourage your child's curiosity: take them to new places, teach

Example Character Traits



Traits of character are *malleable* and based on *beliefs*. Everyone possesses positive and negative character traits. Some traits are stronger while others are weaker. They all determine how we will respond to situations.

Character Determines Success

How you respond to situations will determine the results of that circumstance. Character traits are the reason why you do something, the way you do something and why. That does not mean that "good" people will always experience more success than "bad" people.

How do we strengthen the positive character traits and minimize the negative traits?

- **Break character down to basic elements:** focus on building specific qualities into your life
- **Identify the differences between character traits and emotions:** emotions describe how a person feels, traits describe the person's personality
 - *How does the person feel right now?*
 - versus*
 - *How does the person usually behave?*
- **Identify personal character traits:** work with your child to identify traits for themselves.
 - Work with your child to identify traits for other people (i.e. people

them new things

- **Social Skills:** is a basic part of life. Good social skills increase academic performance, self-image, and ability to resolve conflicts more easily.
 - Work on identifying facial expressions in conversation, play charades to pick up on varying body language, play alongside your child
- **Resilience:** provides children with the skills needed to deal with difficulties including trauma.
 - Problem-solve together: by doing this task together, your child is learning various ways to overcome a situation
 - Put the problem in perspective: identify the difference between "big problems" or "small problems" and how to overcome them
- **Integrity:** Children should learn this trait before they are faced with an ethical situation.
 - Discuss what it means to have integrity
 - Discuss your family values
 - Provide situations where your child would need to identify an ethical way to handle a situation (i.e. they see a friend steal something)
- **Resourcefulness:** identifying solutions to a problem. This is a trait which businesses look for in potential hires.
 - Engage in activities that will encourage your child to think out-of-the-box (i.e. create uses for old objects like a plastic bottle, egg carton, or rubber bands).
- **Creativity:** involves creative expression and imagination. Creativity helps to build communication skills, improves problem-solving and emotional development.
 - Involve your child with music, photography, theater, making creations (i.e. with clay, playdough, drawing, or painting)
 - Free play without screen time should happen every day
- **Empathy:** Developing empathy as a child creates a positive impact in the overall community and improves their emotional intelligence.
 - Model empathy

- they know well)
- An adult identifies traits they see a child possesses
- Work with your child to identify character traits they personally see themselves reflecting

“Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching.”
C. S. Lewis

- Include people that are different from you and your child in your social group
- Read diverse books or watch diverse movies
- **Assertiveness:** Being bold, confident, and respectfully speaking your mind when necessary. “Assertiveness is a necessary building block to mature and peaceful relationships between all human beings”- Lisa M. Schab.
 - Explain varying communication styles
 - Role-play different scenarios to teach how to be assertive
- **Humility:** Being self-assured will lead to a positive self-image and less desire to brag about talents and achievements.
 - To teach humility, it must be modeled
 - Admit when you have made a mistake, don’t know the answer, give credit to others
 - Encourage your child to do the same
 - Engage in role-playing games
 - Praise humility when your child demonstrates it
- **Confidence:** Positive self-esteem has been linked to behavior and happiness.
 - Realistically praise your child; refrain from constant and excessive praise
 - Focus on rewarding positive behavior rather than negative
 - Allow your child to fail at times to help overcome those obstacles.

If you have a child in need of support and/or resources click on the following link.
[Student Support Request Form](#)

The Maryland Coalition for Families is available to provide the following supports

- Parents and caregivers of children with mental health needs
- Anyone who cares for a loved one struggling with substance use disorder
- Anyone who cares for a loved one struggling with problem gambling

Families and others can reach MCF by:

- Calling our statewide intake line at 410-703-8267
- Emailing info@mdcoalition.org