

# Teaching Our Kids Character Habits That Last a Lifetime (Part 3)



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Our children excel when we help them learn character habits at home and school. My first two blog posts discussed effective perseverance, leadership, empathy, bravery, and ethical skill development. Below are strategies parents and teachers can use to help children learn how to become accountable, respectful, provide service to their families and communities.

### Accountability: Own Your Choices

Accountability means taking responsibility for your words and actions. Kids who practice this habit learn that mistakes are okay—when we own them and grow from them.

Encourage accountability by:

Letting natural consequences happen when appropriate  
Helping your child reflect on poor choices without shame

Using phrases like “What do you need to do to make it right?”

Try this: After a challenging moment, ask, “What would you do differently next time?”

Books to share:

David Gets in Trouble by David Shannon: David learns to take responsibility for his actions. Short and humorous but opens the door for honest conversations.

The Paperboy by Dav Pilkey: A quiet, reflective story about a boy who honors his daily responsibility. Subtle but powerful.

## Respect: Treat Others How You Want to Be Treated

Respect is foundational. It means valuing yourself, others, and your environment. It starts with kindness and expands to how we speak, listen, and act.

Build respect by:

Setting clear expectations around language and

behavior

Demonstrating respect in your own relationships (even when you disagree!)

Talking about the importance of caring for things—home, school, nature

Try this: Ask, “What’s one way you showed respect today?”

Book to share:

All Are Welcome by Alexandra Penfold: A beautifully illustrated book that celebrates diversity, inclusion, and respect in a school community.

Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon by Patty Lovell: Molly Lou respects herself despite being different—and earns others’ respect by staying true to who she is.

## Service: Help Others from the Heart

Service is about giving—not to get something back, but to make the world better. Children who serve become more aware of their role in a community and how they can contribute.

Foster service by:

Volunteering as a family, even in small ways (like helping a neighbor)

Encouraging random acts of kindness

Celebrating efforts that come from the heart, not for a reward

Try this: Create a “kindness jar” and fill it with acts of service your child notices or does each week.

Books to share:

The Lion and the Little Red Bird by Elisa Kleven: A sweet story about kindness and care through quiet actions and gentle observation.

Last Stop on Market Street by Matt de la Peña: CJ and his grandmother ride the bus through the city, serving others and finding beauty and purpose in unexpected places. A modern classic about service and community.

## Growing Good Humans

The habits of character give children a roadmap—not just to succeed, but to lead, care, and thrive. This framework helps families make these habits come to life, day after day.

You don't have to be perfect to raise children of character. You just need to be intentional. Every bedtime talk, every moment of reflection, and every story you share builds something lasting.

Because in the end, we're not just helping our kids become good students. We're helping them become good

people.