

# A Family's Guide to Teaching Good Character

Good character doesn't just happen. It is a result of families who intentionally teach their children about character.

The family guide is available in the following grade levels:

K-5

6-8

9-12

## What is character?

- **Moral character** includes values we need to be our best self, like the Six Pillars of Character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship.
- **Performance character** focuses on values that help us do our best work, like diligence, imagination, work ethic, dependability, and a positive attitude.

## How to teach character with T.E.A.M.:

- Teach children that their character counts: The Six Pillars of Character provide the vocabulary words to teach your children about character.
- Encourage the Six Pillars of Character: Reward good behavior (usually praise is enough) and discourage bad behavior by imposing fair and consistent consequences.
- Advocate Character: Continually encourage children to live up to the Six Pillars of Character.
- Model Good Behavior: Everything you say and do (or neglect to do) sends a message about your values. Be sure that these messages reinforce your lessons about doing the right thing, even when it is difficult. When

you slip, be accountable; apologize sincerely and do better!

### **How to use this guide:**

Our goal is to give families a variety of ways to teach character. Imagine a parenting toolbox where you can keep all of your parenting tools. This guide can provide you with more ideas for your toolbox.

This guide is organized by the Six Pillars of Character. For each Pillar, you will find:

- An introduction to the Pillar
- Ideas on how to teach, enforce, advocate and model good character
- A discussion starter
- An Excellence & Ethics Tool. These strategies can help you talk with your children, and can be used with kids or adults, at home, school or at work.

### **About this guide:**

A project of The Robert D. and Billie Ray Center at Drake University, *A Parent's Guide to Teaching Good Character* introduces families to the Six Pillars and provides ideas for parents to help teach good character in their home.

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### **Learn more:**

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