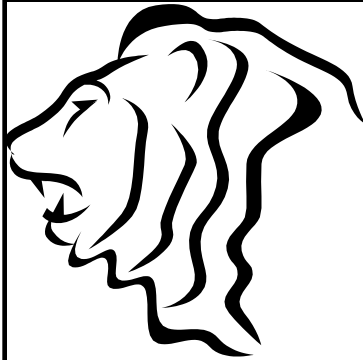


# COURAGE

One isn't necessarily born with courage, but one is born with potential. Without courage, we cannot practice any other virtue with consistency. We can't be kind, true, merciful, generous, or honest.

Maya Angelou

<p><b><u>Kids and Courage</u></b></p> <p>Submitted by Audrey Krisbergh, The Center for Parenting Education</p> <p>To many parents, courage may seem like an abstract principle which does not apply to their children or their children's lives. Certainly, our children, who live safe and protected lives, do not have the opportunity or the need to display this character trait.</p> <p>But wait a minute! When you take a closer look at what courage actually is, you can see that it is an important aspect of each child's character development. Being brave in the face of fear and doing what needs to be done even when it is really hard both constitute courage. Children need courage when they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keep trying to master a new skill even when they are frustrated or other children laugh at their attempts.</li> <li>• do the 'right' thing when facing difficult situations, like standing up for another child</li> </ul>		<p>who is being bullied.</p> <p>admit to mistakes and are accountable for their behaviors, like acknowledging breaking a neighbor's window while playing ball and then apologizing and making amends.</p> <p>Having high self-esteem can enable a child to have courage; conversely acting courageously can help children to persevere against adversity and challenges and, in the process, raise their self-esteem. When children feel good about themselves and see that they have the personal power to make courageous choices, they are more likely to lead rich, fulfilled and personally successful lives.</p> <p>Parents are their children's first and most important teachers and, as such, have a powerful influence on their development. So how can parents use this influence to enhance the development of courage in their children?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure they understand what courage is by <u>de-</u></li> </ul>	<p><u>fining it and pointing it out</u> when you, they or someone else demonstrates it. <u>Praise</u> your child when they demonstrate courage. Highlight the positive! It will build self-esteem and result in more instances of 'brave' behavior.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Use mistakes as learning opportunities</u>, not as a reason to punish. Teach them what they can do differently and how they can make amends. Create a positive atmosphere that will encourage them to face and admit their mistakes openly and honestly.</li> <li>• <u>Be a constant source of support</u> for your children. All people, and especially children, can better demonstrate courage when they know they are not alone and that someone 'has their back.'</li> </ul> <p><u>Teach your children that sometimes asking for help is a sign of courage</u> - let them know that they don't have to face all difficult situations by themselves and that it is a sign of strength to sometimes ask for help.</p>	<p><b>February 2010</b> Character Education Program</p>  <p><b>AT SCHOOL</b></p> <p>This month, our school community is focusing on the character trait, courage.</p> <p>Courage is the strength of mind that enables you to face difficulties with confidence. We show courage by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attempting tasks that may be difficult</li> <li>• Resisting peer pressure</li> <li>• Influencing others to do the right thing</li> </ul>
<p><b>READING LIST</b></p>	K-3	Arthur's Loose Tooth	Hoban, Lillian	<p><b>Websites</b></p> <p><i>Educators or Guides Tab:</i> <a href="http://www.raisingcourageouskids.com">www.raisingcourageouskids.com</a></p> <p><i>Tips, Facts, and Activities:</i> <a href="http://www.courageforkids.com">www.courageforkids.com</a></p>
	K-3	Cowardly Clyde	Peet, Bill	
	4-8	Call it Courage	Sperry, Armstrong	
	5-8	Wringer	Spinelli, Jerry	
	Young Adult	The Boy Who Dared	Bartoletti, Susan C.	
Young Adult	Infidel	Hirsi Ali, Ayaan		

# Help Your Child Have the Courage to be Resilient

Resilience in children has been defined as, manifestations of competence despite exposure to stressful events. Adversity is a natural part of life. At some point, we all face difficulties, such as family problems, serious illness, a personal crisis, or a painful loss. Successfully facing tough situations can actually foster growth and give children the skills to be more resilient in the future. Considerable research has revealed that resilience results from positive social relationships, positive attitudes and emotions, the ability to control one's own behavior, and feelings of competence. Resilient adolescents have positive relationships with adults who convey that they care by mentoring, listening non-judgmentally, helping, and being fair. Peer relationships are also important. Positive attitudes that promote resiliency include encouraging oneself to try, being determined to persevere until success is attained, applying a problem-solving approach to difficult situations, and fostering feelings of hardiness. Schools that foster resiliency also promote positive relationships between home and school. Such relationships do not require parental attendance at school functions, but they do require proactive and regular formal and informal two-way communication between home and school for collaborative priority setting and early interventions so students fully understand that the adults in their lives agree upon the importance of academic success. Following are ways to promote resiliency in your children and help protect them from long-term ill affects of difficult experiences

1. **Think positive!!** Modeling positive

attitudes and positive emotions is very important. Children need to hear parents thinking out loud positively and being determined to persist until a goal is achieved. Using a "can do" problem-solving approach to problems teaches children a sense of power and promise.



2. **Express love and gratitude!** Emotions such as love and gratitude increase resiliency. Praise should always occur much more often than criticism. Children and adolescents who are cared for, loved, and supported learn to express positive emotions to others. Positive emotions buffer kids against depression and other negative reactions to adversity.

3. Support positive relationships among students and adults. To develop resilience, adolescents need to be cared for and supported by adults in school, at home, and in the community. Many students from adverse backgrounds have a long history of negative interactions with adults and tend to anticipate future interactions with adults will be negative. To reverse this pattern, adults must deliberately, repeatedly, and genuinely communicate positive regard. In general, praise for success can be given in public, because it often increases such positive emotions as pride, but criticism should be given in private because it increases defensiveness and anxiety.

4. When students help others, they develop resiliency: Violence prevention, anti-bullying, peer mediation programs, and initiatives that encourage students to accept and sponsor less popular students all foster resiliency.

5. **Express yourself!** Resilient people appropriately express all emotions, even negative ones. Parents who help kids become more aware of emotions, label emotions appropriately, and help children deal with upsetting events are giving them useful life skills.

4. **Get fit!** Good physical health prepares the body and mind to be more resilient. Healthy eating habits, regular exercise and adequate sleep protect kids against the stress of tough situations. Regular exercise also decreases negative emotions such as anxiety, anger, and depression.

5. **Foster competency!** Making sure that children and adolescents achieve academically is great protection against adversity. Children who achieve academic success and who develop individual talents, such as playing sports, drawing, making things, playing musical instruments or playing games are much more likely to feel competent and be able to deal with stress positively. Social competency is also important. Having friends and staying connected to friends and loved ones can increase resiliency. Social competency can even be created by helping others.

Portions taken from *Resiliency: Strategies for Parents and Educators*, Virginia Smith Harvey, *Helping Children at Home and School II: Handouts for Families and Educators*, NASP, 2004.

CHARACTER EDUCATION  
COMMITTEE 2009-2010

Ms. Jessica Adamski, Teacher

Dr. Ann Bacon, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Ms. Judy Bomze, Director of Pupil Services

Ms. Patricia Carroll, Teacher

Ms. Shelley Ferguson, Teacher

Ms. Alison Gaskin, Teacher

Ms. Sheri Gerson, Teacher

Ms. Carla Greene, Principal

Ms. Nada Kurtzer, School Psychologist

Dr. Faye Lovrinic, School Psychologist

Ms. Janice Stearns, Teacher