

TIPS FOR PARENTS: CULTIVATING CHARACTER STRENGTHS AT HOME

- **Maintain a strong relationship** as your kids move through middle and high school.
- **Take advantage of teachable moments.** Issues related to character strengths come up every day—at school, with friends, in the media, in the news and many other places. Have conversations about what character means to you and ask what it means to them.
- **Show and tell what matters.** Help them see character strengths at work in your own life and why you make the choices you do.
- **Pay attention to your child's world and interests.** When you show interest in the things that matter to your child, you show them that you care about their choices and activities. Your interest can then motivate your child to pay attention to what matters to you.
- **Give your child choices and appropriate independence.** Helping children see that they have power in their own lives and can influence others, helps them be aware of and internalize their own character strengths.
- **Learn from your kids.** Your relationship with your child is a two-way street. Showing you are open to learning from them makes them more likely to be open to learning from you.
- **Encourage experiences that reinforce character strengths.** Be sure to talk about the experience, so they become more articulate about why they do what they do.
- **View mistakes as teachable moments.** Keep perspective about the seriousness of mistakes, keep your relationship as a priority, and help her or him find ways to learn from their mistakes.
- **Be patient.** As kids grow up, they often “try on” different attitudes and skills to see what really fits them. Sometimes they'll try things that really don't fit or that even disturb you. Talk with them about what you see or the concerns you have. But also recognize that this “trying on” is an important part of kids discovering who they are.
- **Celebrate unique strengths.** Often kids develop character strengths that parents struggle with or that are particularly valuable. Recognize those strengths as unique and important gifts that kids bring to your family and the world.

MORE IDEAS FOR FAMILIES:

Visit Search Institute's website for parents, www.ParentFurther.com. It offers hundreds of activities to strengthen family relationships and prepare kids for the future, including a focus on many character strengths kids need to succeed.