

Leader in Me...

7+1 Habits of Happy Kids!

1 Be Proactive® *I'm in Charge of Me* Character Trait: Responsibility (October)

Be Proactive means to take responsibility for your choices and behaviors. Habit 1 is the key to all of the other habits; that's why it comes first. Be Proactive says, "I am in charge of my own life. I am responsible for whether I am happy or sad. I can choose how I react to other people or situations. I am in the driver's seat." Young children can easily learn to understand that different choices yield different results. The goal is to teach them to think about those results before they decide what to do. Discussions can focus on taking care of themselves, taking care of their things, reacting or not reacting to others' behavior, planning ahead, and thinking about what the right thing to do is.

2 Begin With the End in Mind® *Have a Plan* Character Trait: Perseverance (November)

Begin With the End in Mind means to think about how you would like something to turn out before you get started. Reading a recipe before cooking or looking at a map before leaving on a trip is beginning with the end in mind. For young children, a good example is that of a jigsaw puzzle. Before doing a puzzle, they look at the cover of the box. They start with the end in mind.

3 Put First Things First® *Work First, Then Play* Character Trait: Self-Discipline (December)

Put First Things First means to decide what is most important and to take care of that first. Thinking about what needs to be done tomorrow or by the end of the week can be overwhelming, especially for children. Learning to think of which things are the most important and taking care of them first allows children (and adults) to be less stressed. Using a planner at school is a great organizational tool to Put First Things First in writing. By writing down his or her responsibilities and planning ahead, last-minute trips to the store, missed events, or missed homework are avoided. Modeling this behavior is one of the best ways to teach children.

4 Think Win -Win® *I Win, You Win, We Win* Character Trait: Respect (January)

Think Win-Win is the belief that everyone can win. It's not me or you—it is both of us. It is a belief that there are enough good things for everyone; it is an abundant way of thinking. Think Win-Win is being happy for others when good things happen to them. As the adult, not everything is negotiable, but if you go into discussions with a student with a win-win mindset, you'll find a lot less resistance.

5 Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood® *Listen Before You Talk* CT: Kindness (Feb.)

Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood means that it is better to listen first and talk second. By taking the time to listen to another person, you reach a higher level of communication. Teaching Habit 5 to young children is done by first considering their age and development. Young children find it difficult to understand another's paradigm (point of view). Introducing listening as a skill that should be practiced is the best approach to this habit. Learning to listen without interrupting and learning to listen with your ears, your eyes, and your heart will help children build a foundation for Habit 5. Simply put, we have two ears and one mouth so that we can spend more time listening with the intent to understand.

6 Synergize® *Together is Better* Character Trait: Teamwork (March)

Synergize is when two or more people work together to create a better solution than either would have thought of alone. It's not your way or my way, but a better way. Talk about the equation: $1 + 1 = 3$ (or more). How is that possible? 1 person + another person = 2 ideas + many more than either of them would have thought of alone. Synergy is taking good ideas and making them better by working together. Discussions can focus on other examples of synergy in nature, history, literature, and personal experiences. For example, synergy happens in nature when a flock of geese heads south for the winter. They fly in a V formation because due to the updraft, the entire flock can fly farther than if each bird flew alone.

7 Sharpen the Saw® *Balance Feels Best* Character Trait: Integrity (April)

Sharpen the Saw means to have balance in your life. There is a story of a man who was sawing down a tree and not making a lot of progress. When a passerby asked him why he didn't stop sawing to sharpen his saw, he remarked that he was too busy sawing. Habit 7 reminds us that we are more productive when we are in balance—body, brain, heart and soul. Just like the four tires on a car, if one area is being ignored or overused, the rest will feel the results.

8 Find Your Voice® *Inspire Others to Find Theirs*: Character Trait: Courage (May)

Everyone has unique gifts and talents they need to discover. Finding your special abilities will allow you to shine. Sharing these with others can bring great joy. Inspiring others to find their voice, or unique talents, is also a goal for Habit 8.