



Strength – it’s not always about being strong



Talk with your child about the strengths you have used that have helped you in different situations in your life.

Strengths are the values, beliefs, talents or skills that form who we are – our character.

When the spotlight shifts onto your children’s positive strengths and personal qualities, they feel better about themselves, are happier and are more likely to thrive.

Building on your child’s strengths is important if they are to have a sense of purpose and direction in their life, feel encouraged and motivated. They are also more likely to take on new challenges and learn new skills.

Building these **six core strengths** in your children can provide a strong foundation for their future health, happiness and productivity.

1. Making relationships

This strength is the cornerstone of all the others. Having healthy connections allows your child to love, to become a good friend, and to have a positive model for future relationships. A child who has difficulty with this strength can have a hard time making friends and trusting adults and may socially withdraw.

2. Containing impulses (or regulating emotions)

This strength is about being able to notice and control feelings such as frustration, anger and fear. Developing this strength is a lifelong process. It is an important strength to be learned so we can put a moment between an impulse and an action. When a child doesn’t build their capacity to self-regulate they may have problems sustaining friendships, and in learning and controlling their behaviour.

3. Being part of a group

This is the capacity to join others and contribute to a group, and springs from our ability to form connections. A child who is afraid or unable to connect, may be excluded and feel socially isolated.

4. Being aware of others

The ability to recognise the needs, interests, strengths and values of others, and the ability to see beyond themselves, is an essential element of human communication. A child who has the capacity to understand and accept how others are different is able to value what makes each of us special and unique.

5. Tolerance – accept differences

This strength is the capacity to understand and accept how others are different from you. Children who struggle with this strength can create an atmosphere of exclusion and intimidation for those people and groups they fear. They may be more likely to lash out at others, tease, bully and at times act out their intolerance in violent ways.

6. Respect – finding value in differences

This strength is about appreciating the worth in yourself and others. Respect grows from the foundation of the other five strengths. An aware, tolerant child with good connections, attachment and self-regulation strengths acquires respect naturally. A child who can’t respect others is often incapable of self-respect. Children who respect diversity in others often find the world to be a more interesting and safer place.

Which of these strengths does your child demonstrate regularly? Which strengths can you help them to develop?

- Is able to work independently.
- Is interested in doing well.
- Understands and sets goals.
- Is eager to learn new things.
- Asks for help when needed.
- Gets along well with others.
- Is able to organise their thoughts.
- Predicts problems and tries to solve them.
- Admits disappointments and mistakes and is able to move on.
- Has passions and hobbies.
- Can plan ahead.
- Makes good choices.
- Negotiates.
- Accepts personal responsibility for actions (good and bad).
- Follows rules and routines well.
- Is able to make friends and keep them.
- Has a good sense of humour.
- Is truthful and honest.
- Has positive relationships with adults.
- Likes to help others.
- Reacts appropriately when frustrated or angry.
- Is able to express their emotions and recognise others’ emotions.

Adapted from http://www.lfcc.on.ca/Perry_Six_Core_Strengths.pdf viewed 22 April 2015