



Building your teen's character strengths

In the classroom, your child has been learning about how to build skills such as decision making, goal setting and problems predicting. These are all skills that contribute to building their resilience and wellbeing.

We have also been learning that character strengths such as self-regulation, perseverance and love of learning are not only the foundations of positive youth development and thriving, but are related to school success, life satisfaction and wellbeing. Some ideas that can help you to play a key role in building your children's character strengths include:

Give meaningful and specific praise

When your child does something noteworthy, let them know by using comments that target the particular character strength shown.

You showed great leadership today when you encouraged your team to do their best even when they were down by 20 points.

I'm really proud of the way you supported your friend when they were being bullied by those other kids.

Telling me about your friends smoking cannabis took a lot of courage. I appreciate you being honest with me.

Help your teenager to recognise the character strengths they possess

Sometimes teenagers can become focused more on what they can't do than what they can do. Tell your child the strengths that you know they have (be honest) and how these strengths make them the wonderful person they are. Ask your child if there is a strength that they would like to build on and work out a plan together to help them start practising this strength more often.

Encourage your teenager to say positive things about themselves

What we think in our minds can contribute strongly to what we believe about ourselves. This is why it is so important that we start saying positive things about ourselves many times each and every day. Have your children write a list of at least 10 positive statements to say to themselves each day.

Write these on a list stuck to the fridge

I am important.

I matter.

I am worthwhile.

I am unique.

I will be what I want to be.

I know what I can do.

I can handle things.

I am strong.

I accept myself.

I can change my life.

Help your teenager recognise character strengths in others

It is not only important that your child becomes aware of their own character strengths but they also need to recognise and acknowledge strengths in others. Try reading books or watching movies where strengths are used by the characters. Have conversations and ask questions to develop your child's awareness of the strengths shown by fictional and real-life characters. For example:

What strengths did the characters show?

How did the characters use their strengths to overcome challenges and obstacles?

How was this character like you?

How was this character not like you?

Would you like to be more like this character? Why?

thankful optimistic leadership fair creative
modesty perseverance good friend forgiveness self-disciplined kind
courageous honesty curious empathy
humour open-mind