

CHARACTER EDUCATION



The "Great 8 Traits" Curriculum

The Great 8 Traits is a social-emotional program developed right here at Playtime! The purpose is to explicitly teach young children social skills and tolerance to build character. The classroom teacher provides a clear, multi-sensory model of each trait and teaches the social skills through play, literature, games, scripted stories, & daily interactions with peers and adults. Developing these traits early in life leads to happier childhoods and creates more socially mature adults.

There are eight essential character traits in our Great 8 Traits Curriculum. The acronym, T.E.R.R.I.F.I.C., is used as an easy, "kid"-friendly way to organize the traits. After all, Playtime Learning Academy teaches some terrific kids! Each month we focus on a specific character trait. This is the list of character traits and the focus month.

Trustworthy	(September)
Empathetic	(October)
Responsible	(November)
Respectful	(December)
Independent	(January)
Fair	(February)
Imaginative	(March)
Courteous	(April)



Playtime Learning Academy understands that the parent is a child's first teacher and by working together toward a common goal, we can have the greatest results. Each month, Playtime emails a flyer for the current trait focus to Playtime families. The flyer includes an introduction to the current month's unit, key skills, top book picks, and vocabulary words. This encourages support from the parent and provides important information about the social-emotional curriculum at the school.



September's Focus: Trustworthy

Young children can't tell the difference between the truth and a lie. Until about age 6, children usually give the answer that they wish was the truth because they have a natural desire to please. Keep the lines of communication open with your child and encourage children to be honest. The best way to teach children about honesty is to be truthful with them and follow through with what you say. When children can count on others, they learn to be honest and reliable. Use the key skills, suggested stories, and vocabulary words to extend this month's character trait focus.

Key Skills:

- ♦ Be honest.
- ♦ Be reliable.
- ♦ Have the courage to do the right thing.
- ♦ Learn the difference between the truth and a lie.

Top Book Picks:

Edward Fudwupper Fibbed Big

by Berkeley Breathed

The Berenstain Bears and The Truth

by Stan and Jan Berenstain

Pinky Promise

by Vanita Braver

A Big Fat Enormous Lie

by Marjorie Weinman Sharmat

Vocabulary Words:

Trust

Courage

Honesty

Reliable

Truth

Lie



October's Focus: Empathy

One of the hardest things for children to do (and adults too!) is to take the perspective of another living creature. Unfortunately, bullying continues to be an epidemic in today's American schools. Seeing another person's point of view and understanding the feelings of others can greatly reduce school "bullying" and help children to be better friends and schoolmates. Talk to your child regularly about feelings of others, including characters in children's books and age appropriate television programs. Validate your child's feelings, even when they are negative, and allow them to express emotions in appropriate ways.

Key Skills:

- ♦ Be able to label our feelings.
- ♦ Understand that other people may have feelings different than our own.
- ♦ Regulate our emotions.

Top Book Picks:

The Chocolate-Covered-Cookie

Tantrum by Deborah Blumenthal

Good News Bad News by Jeff Mack

Happy, Sad, Silly, Mad My World

Makes Me Feel by John E. Mitchell

Llama Llama Mad at Mama by Anna
Dewdney

Vocabulary Words:

Happy	Sad	Angry/Mad	Scared/Afraid
Excited	Silly	Self-Control	Hurt



November's Focus: Responsibility

Preschool is not too early to teach kids to be responsible. Even infants and toddlers learn about responsibility when we meet their basic needs. Allow young children to help themselves from a very early age with developmentally appropriate tasks like feeding themselves, getting dressed, taking care of a pet, and picking up their toys. Show children how to care for their body and keep it safe. Although children sometimes get very frustrated when they can't do something, encourage them to keep on trying. When a child is able to conquer a difficult task, they will be proud of their accomplishments and want to take on more challenges. Also, find ways to help others in the home or in the community. Teaching children about service is a great way to foster responsibility in young children and it is good practice for adulthood.

Key Skills:

- ♦ Take care of my body.
- ♦ Take care of my things.
- ♦ Keep on trying.
- ♦ Do my best.
- ♦ Help others.

Top Book Picks:

The Berenstain Bears' Bedtime Battle
by Stan and Jan Berenstain

I Wanna Iguana
by Karen Kaufman Orloff

Max Cleans Up by Rosemary Wells

Pumpkin Soup by Helen Cooper

What Does It Mean To Be Safe?
by Rana DiOrio

Vocabulary Words:

Safe Try Help Practice Chores Responsible



December's Focus: Respectful

Sometimes we forget that children are not born with a built-in sense of respect for others. Actually it is quite the opposite. Children at this young age are very egocentric and don't understand that other people have different feelings and views. While each child has a different personality, all children need to be taught to be respectful. Children come into this world having a desire to get their needs met. It is our job to teach children how to do this in a respectful way. The best thing we can do as parents is to lead by example and encouraging open-mindedness. At home, demand good manners and do not tolerate rudeness. It is also a good idea to help your child understand the value of property and spell out the rules for caring for toys and materials. It is also important that children respect their body and say Stop! if they feel that they are not being respected, physically and emotionally. In time, you will see your young child becoming a respectful and accountable person.

Key Skills:

- ♦ Be nice.
- ♦ Be a good listener.
- ♦ Stay in your own space.
- ♦ Use materials and toys correctly.
- ♦ Say Stop!

Top Book Picks:

Kindness is Cooler, Mrs. Ruler

by Margery Cuyler

The Nice Book by David Ezra Stein

It's Okay To Be Different by Todd Parr

Listen, Buddy by Helen Lester

Don't Touch My Stuff by Sharon Hughes

Vocabulary Words:

Respect Listen Manners Kindness Rude Nice



January's Focus: Independent

We all want to teach our children to be strong independent thinkers who are willing to try new things. Children that try, don't give up too easily, and discover that they are competent will continue to try new things. They will become successful! Help your child by holding back the help sometimes. Never do for a child what he or she can do for his or herself. Try to give yourself some extra time so that your child can try a few times before you take over from being in a hurry. Focus on the good attempts and not on how well your child completes a task. The more you encourage the act, the more likely a child will want to try again. And....provide a lot of choices for your little one to make decisions independently even if they are (secretly) from a couple options you already agree to allow.

Key Skills:

- ♦ Try your best.
- ♦ Exhibit self-control.
- ♦ Focus on your task.
- ♦ Control your own body.
- ♦ Say, "I Can!"

Top Book Picks:

All by Myself by Alik

Ella Sarah Gets Dressed

by Margaret Chodos-Irvine

The Pout-Pout Fish in the Big-Big Dark

by Deborah Diesen

I Knew You Could by Craig Dorfman

The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn

Vocabulary Words:

Self-control

Independent

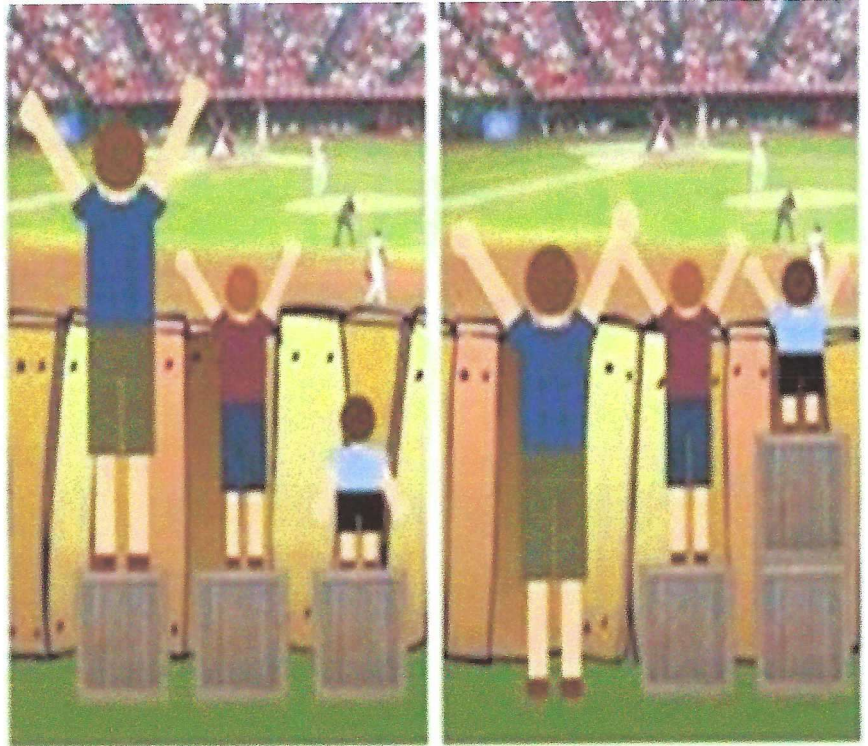
Challenge

Courage

Try

February's Focus: Fair

When children are involved in an environment where fair play is emphasized, they experience how important it is to treat others fairly. Teamwork, taking turns, and sharing all reinforce social skills that help children interact successfully at home, school, and play.



Key Lessons:

- ◇ Do your part.
- ◇ We all have rights.
- ◇ Follow class rules.
- ◇ Fair does not always mean equal.
- ◇ Be a good sport.

Top Book Picks:

Not Fair Little Bear by Sara Packard

The Rainbow Fish by Marcus Pfister

The Sneetches by Dr. Seuss

Stone Soup by Marcia Brown

The Berenstain Bears Play A Good Game
by Jan and Stan Berenstain

Vocabulary Words:

fair equal rights rules good sportsmanship share



March Focus: Imaginative

Imagination may seem like children's work, but it continues to play an important role throughout our lives. Imaginative thinkers are successful adults because they are good problem solvers and provide creative ideas in their jobs and relationships with others. Children should be encouraged to use their imagination in play and in everyday situations when things don't go their way. When a child can stop and think of a way to solve his or her own problems, we are aiding in the development of a forward-thinking individual. Encourage children to think for themselves by holding back on providing the solution right away. Remember...when children come up with their own ideas and solutions, they are more likely to want to follow through with them.

Key Skills:

- ◇ Try new things.
- ◇ Solve problems.
- ◇ Share your ideas.
- ◇ Have an "I CAN" attitude.

Top Book Picks:

If I Built a House by Chris Van Dusen

Ladybug Girl and Bingo by David Soman

The Little Bear Book by Anthony Browne

My Gum Is Gone

by Richard P. Yurcheshen

Snow Dog, Sand Dog

by Linda Joy Singleton

Vocabulary Words:

Imagination

Ideas

Mind

Problem Solving

Creative



April Focus: Courteous

Children are born with many innate abilities but behaving politely is not one of them. For a child to be courteous and behave politely, they must first be aware of the feelings of others. Around 18 months a child starts to understand that other people have feelings just like him or her. This is a ground breaking moment when you can begin teaching important skills that will help your child in all social situations. Start early and develop the good habits of being courteous to others. Manners are a skill, so remember to be consistent and soon it will become natural.

Key Skills:

- ◇ Use please and thank you.
- ◇ Use appropriate volume.
- ◇ Use table manners.
- ◇ Don't interrupt.

Top Book Picks:

Are You Quite Polite? by Alan Katz

I'm Sorry by Gina and Mercer Mayer

Little Raccoon Learns To Share

by Mary Packard

Mary Wrightly, So Politely

by Shirin Yim Bridges

Sometimes I'm A Bambaloo

by Rachel Vail

Vocabulary Words:

please thank you apologize manners interrupt polite