

# Family Times

## NEWSLETTER



NEWSLETTER FOR ADULTS WITH CHILDREN AGES 5-8

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*Feelings of worth can flourish only in an atmosphere where individual differences are appreciated, mistakes are tolerated, communication is open, and rules are flexible – the kind of atmosphere that is found in a nurturing family.*

– Virginia Satir

### Caring

Caring means being kind, helpful, and generous to everyone. Caring people are not selfish; they are considerate and always think about how their conduct affects others. They have compassion and empathy, they care how others feel, and they are charitable and forgiving. They do good deeds without thought of reward.

Children model behaviors they see in the adults around them. If they see a role model as a caring person, they will do as they see that person doing.

They will try to be a caring individual to receive praise. When a parent praises a child for being a caring individual, the child learns to continue to be caring to achieve recognition. It becomes second nature for them to care for others.

You can make your home a caring place by establishing codes of conduct that discourage sarcasm, name-calling, labeling, and “put downs.” Encourage family members to recognize and acknowledge caring behavior in other family members and friends. When guests are in your home, ask them to describe caring acts that have affected their lives.

### Teaching a Child to Be Caring

There are many ways a child can learn to be caring. Even infants learn caring as parents praise them for accomplishments. Continuing to praise a child as he or she gets older helps the child learn more “advanced” ways of caring.

Taking a casserole or a bouquet of flowers to an elderly friend is a way of showing kindness and caring. You teach a child caring when you thank people for their services such

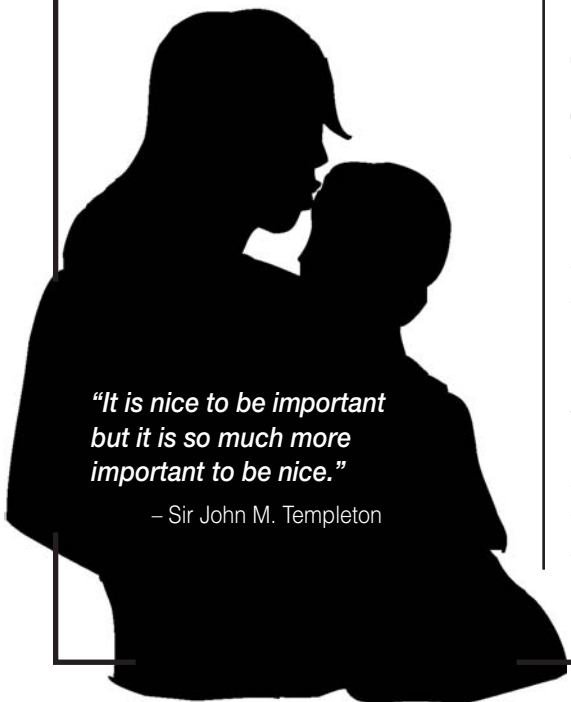
as a checkout clerk or a waitress. Another way to teach caring is by writing thank-you notes. Young children can dictate the note to be written on paper they have decorated with drawings.

Help a young child make a gift for a parent, grandparent, or sibling. This can be very simple such as a handprint in watercolors, finger paints, or homemade plaster.

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### To Make a Difference

- Create a caring home environment.
- Use such words as *kindness, love, concern, patience, help, volunteering, and loving.*
- Be kind to one another, younger children, friends, guests, and others.
- When necessary, be firm but not harsh.
- Establish codes of conduct that discourage sarcasm, name-calling, and “put downs.”
- Be selective about movies, books, and TV shows. Choose ones that model nurturing and caring behaviors.
- Discuss what it feels like to be “left out.”
- Acknowledge caring behavior in each other and friends.
- Give hugs.
- As a family, decide on “random acts of kindness” you can do in your home or community. Do a good deed for someone, secretly, each week.



*“It is nice to be important  
but it is so much more  
important to be nice.”*

– Sir John M. Templeton

A child will realize the importance of giving to others as well as the “rewards” he or she reaps when receiving thanks from the recipient.

Initiating a “random act of kindness” plan in your home is a great way to help children realize importance of caring. As you do these acts, remind your child that they are examples of caring. These acts may include getting an extra meal at a fast-food restaurant and giving it to someone who can’t afford to buy a meal. Doing a kind act in secret can teach caring to a child. Leaving a bouquet of flowers or a basket of fresh garden produce at a neighbor’s door is one good idea.

Caring for and feeding family pets and birds will encourage the feeling of caring for nature. School-age children can be encouraged to thank the bus driver each day for the safe trip home.

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*“No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.”*

– Aesop



Talking to children at bedtime about different ways they cared for others during the day is a good way to send them off to sleep with good thoughts.

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*“Real generosity is doing something nice for someone who will never find out.”*

– Frank A. Clark

## Aspects of Caring

### Concern

Concern for others’ well-being, means being willing to “be there” for them. When we become so involved with the well-being of others, it may seem that our happiness depends on their being happy.

### Empathy

Empathy is sharing another person’s feelings and emotions. Empathy involves emotional response to the pain and pleasure of others.

### Kindness

A person shows kindness by being sympathetic, generous, and charitable and by generally doing good.

### Charity

Charity is the voluntary giving of comfort, time, support, money, or other resources to help someone in need. Charity is done for the sake of making someone else’s life better and not for praise or gratitude. The highest form of caring comes from within; it is a true and honest expression of benevolence or altruism.



## The Book Nook

*The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein

*The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn

*A Special Kind of Love*

by Michael King

*Somebody Loves You Mr. Hatch*

by Eileen Spinelli

### Love

Love is the tender feeling of attachment or the feeling of affection we have for other persons.

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*“A kind word is like a spring day.”*

– Russian proverb

### References

Peggy Adkins “What’s a Parent to Do?” For *CHARACTER COUNTS!* National Office 4640 Admiralty Way, Suite 1001 Marina del Rey, CA 90292.

Copies of printed material can be found on the Web ([www.wvu.edu/-exten//infores/pubs/ceosoub.htm](http://www.wvu.edu/-exten//infores/pubs/ceosoub.htm)).

Note: *CHARACTER COUNTS!* and the Six Pillars of Character are service marks of the *CHARACTER COUNTS!* Coalition ([www.charactercounts.org](http://www.charactercounts.org)).

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