

COURAGE

Bravery, Courageousness, Fearlessness, Daring, Heroism

“Efforts and courage are not enough without purpose and direction.”

John F. Kennedy

Courage is the ability to overcome fear in order to do what is right, even if it is difficult or risky. Courage can come during physical dangers, but it can also be useful when standing up for beliefs and making hard decisions on the basis of evidence rather than on what is the easy or popular thing to do. It means being neither reckless nor cowardly but accepting to our duties and responsibilities.

“Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen..”

Winston Churchill

Courage, however, does not mean never being afraid; children should be told that there are times when it is all right to be frightened and to run away from danger. But they also need to learn how to face and overcome some fears, such as a fear of the dark.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- ★ Coach your child on how to be brave. Praise him when he acts courageously (but never ridicule him for any reason—ridicule can have long-lasting effects on a child’s self-confidence).
- ★ Show your child newspaper pictures of local people who have performed acts of courage or service to the community. Talk with your child about what the people did and why they are considered “heroes.”
- ★ Select a photo of someone in your family who has an admirable quality or who performed a courageous act. You might choose a grandparent who left everything behind to immigrate to the United States or your mother who sacrificed so that you could have a good education or your father who fought in a war. Sit with your child and tell him about the relative’s life. Talk with him about the qualities of character that the relative showed—courage, self-discipline, responsibility, citizenship, and so forth.
- ★ Discuss with your child how to say no. Sometimes children don’t know how to say no to peers who ask them to do dangerous or risky things. After identifying ways that she might be tempted, teach your child a three-step process for self-protection:

1. Apply the “trouble” rule: Will this action break a law or rule?
2. Make a good decision—think carefully about the risks or possible consequences.
3. Act fast to avoid trouble, using options such as the following:
 - Say no!
 - Leave.
 - Make a joke.
 - Suggest something better to do.
 - Make an excuse such as, “My dad will get really mad.”
 - Act shocked.

“Courage is the most important of all the virtues, because without courage you can’t practice any other virtue consistently.”

Maya Angelou

—Mom, some of the kids were smoking afterschool today. One of them offered me a cigarette.
—What did you do?
—I said no.
—Then what happened.
—Everybody laughed at me and called me a baby.
—So then what did you do?
—I just walked away.
—Good for you! That took a lot of courage, and I’m proud of you.