

OUR MISSION

To promote positive parenting and to prevent child abuse and neglect in the Rappahannock Area Community, which includes: Caroline County, City of Fredericksburg, King George County, Orange County, Spotsylvania County and Stafford County.



Nov. 2009—Issue 4

Cultivating and Attitude of Gratitude in Our Children

Gratitude is an attitude towards living. Parents who cultivate an attitude of gratitude help children see life through the window of thankfulness and hope. Gratitude is a character quality, a value we instill in our children. It's not a skill to be taught but an attitude to be caught. You've heard the old adage "count your blessings" well, now there is scientific evidence that grateful people are happier, more resilient, and



Parenting Resources

[More Details](#)



Raising Charitable Children by Carol Weisman

"This slim hardcover book is packed with practical ideas on ways families can bring volunteering into their lives to make a positive difference in the world. Volunteering as a family can also teaches your children valuable lessons - about giving, responsibility, generosity and self confidence. Weisman provides suggestions and stories of families who have volunteered in many different ways - creating cards to raise money, collecting donations, volunteer vacations, gift giving, and service jobs. ... (Allison Martin)

Cover the Car

Fundraiser

December 5th



More details
coming soon.

PARENTING PROGRAMS

Find a location near you

[Circle of Parents](#)



Cherish The Children - RACCAP Needs Your Support

Kids and Breakfast



- ◆ The State of Minnesota Breakfast Study showed that 'students who ate breakfasts before starting school had a general increase in math grades and reading scores, increased student attention, reduced nurse visits, and improved student behaviors.
- ◆ Children who eat a healthy breakfast 'meet their daily nutritional needs, keep their weight under control, have lower blood cholesterol levels, attend school more frequently, and make fewer trips to the school nurses office complaining of tummy aches.

RACCAP needs your help in the midst of these economically challenging times to continue providing programs that help prevent child abuse and neglect in our community. You can help promote positive parenting and ensure that children and parents have a place to go to find support and learn parenting skills that build healthy families.



Your Donations Make A Difference

For More Information [about RACCAP](#)

Cultivating and Attitude of Gratitude in Our Children (Continued from Page One)

...less depressed. They also have better relationships, a higher sense of self esteem and are more likely to feel loved.

According to a study done at University of California, Davis, by Robert Emmons - daily gratitude resulted in higher reported levels of alertness, enthusiasm, determination, optimism and energy. Additionally, researchers found that grateful people experienced less depression and stress, were more likely to help others, exercised more regularly and made more progress toward personal goals. According to the findings, people who feel grateful are also more likely to feel loved.

Think what a positive affect this could have on our families and children! What parent couldn't use more energy, feel less depressed, and stressed and why wouldn't we want our children to feel optimistic, enthusiastic and more willing to help others!

Tips for cultivating gratitude and thankfulness in children:

Have a positive *attitude* of gratitude

Having an attitude of gratitude may not change our day-to-day circumstances but it helps us reframe our focus onto the positive not the negative. We often spend our days complaining about bills, money, work, school, teachers, weight, friends and family and we create a pessimistic and ungrateful environment. Children easily pick up our attitudes and we can find ourselves with negative, whining, and ungrateful kids. Usually, the hardest time to be grateful is when we face adverse situations and difficult challenges. But this is exactly when we need to instill an attitude of gratefulness and thanksgiving in our children. We can always find a silver lining in our situation if we look for it. Keeping a positive attitude and helping children find the silver linings in life builds resilience. But it all begins with our attitude!

Model gratitude attitudes

Let your children catch you showing attitudes of gratitude. Children learn gratitude by watching their parents. Parents model the attitudes and actions they value most. Set the example by allowing children to see you doing random acts of kindness; allowing someone to go ahead of you in the grocery store line or allowing someone to scoot into your driving lane at the very last second! Make sharing and caring *feel good* moments – not “have to’s.” Let children hear you saying please and thank you and giving praise to others. Write thank you notes, and count your many blessings throughout the day.

Make gratitude attitudes a *reality*

At times, we all need a reality check in life to remind us just how good life is! We don't always understand the value of something until we no longer have it or we have to work for it. Provide children with opportunities or “reminders” of just how good they have it. For example; ride the city bus instead of driving, bake bread instead of buying it, serve a meal that is just potatoes, and brush your teeth using small amounts of bottled water instead of running tap water. Shop at a local thrift store to buy an entire outfit, hand wash the dishes, turn off all technology for a day. Find creative ways to remind children how much they have to be grateful for but not to guilt trip them. Gratefulness stems from a heart of thanks not guilt.

Put gratitude attitudes into *action*

There is no better way to learn gratitude than to give service. It's important that children make the connection between gratitude and giving. Selflessness diminishes selfishness. Nothing helps children understand more that life is “*not all about me*” than giving of themselves. Help children look for ways they can give service to others. Offer to mow the lawn for an elderly couple, take a meal to someone who is sick, offer time to a nursing home, or homeless shelter, encourage children to volunteer their time at home, in school, and within the community. There are many local agencies that could use volunteer help and organizations that offer family service projects in the U.S. and around the world.