

**THE PARENT/  
COMMUNITY  
Connection  
IN THE  
CLASSROOM**

Connecting your  
classroom to **parents,**  
**community** and  
**character education**

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# Table of Contents



Foreword .....	<b>iv</b>
The Parent Connection .....	<b>v</b>
Introduction .....	<b>vi</b>
Getting Started .....	<b>vii</b>
Respect .....	<b>1</b>
Responsibility .....	<b>7</b>
Honesty .....	<b>13</b>
Caring .....	<b>19</b>
Justice/Fairness .....	<b>25</b>
Citizenship .....	<b>31</b>
Courage .....	<b>37</b>
Perseverance .....	<b>43</b>
Hope .....	<b>49</b>
Parent Letters .....	<b>55</b>
Survey .....	<b>65</b>
Character Skits .....	<b>67</b>
Bibliography .....	<b>76</b>

# The Parent Connection

**P**arenting is complex, challenging and filled with opportunities for growth, not just for children! Many times you may have wished for a “Parenting 101” manual. Sometimes it is a relief to know that “trained educators” are responsible for your children’s education; however, you want to be involved in your child’s school. Perhaps you would you like to help children, your own and their peers, develop positive character. Don’t you wish there was an accessible “How to be a Positive, Effective and Involved Parent” manual that would provide clearly written, tried and true recipes complete with all of the essential ingredients, including the preparation time and presentation ideas? Guess what? You have found the book! This “recipe”, developed by Julie Gaines, has been tested many times and according to children, parents, teachers and administrators, the results are supreme!

Julie Gaines, a parent, and extraordinarily talented and generous volunteer, has harnessed her enthusiasm, energy and creative ideas to help parents and schools work together to promote positive character in students. Her passion will attract you immediately. Her experience, both in the workplace and as a volunteer in her children’s school, helped Julie write this easy to use, highly successful manual. I think of it as the “How to be a Positive, Effective and Involved Parent” manual; however she has named it *The Parent/Community Connection in the Classroom!*

Monthly ideas developed for parents at Providence Spring Elementary, where Julie is a volunteer, include clear, detailed, interesting lessons that parents and community volunteers can teach each month. Julie Gaines understands your busy lifestyles, and the fact that many of you are not trained educators, therefore she makes sure that the lessons require only brief preparation (using materials usually found in most of our homes) and the actual lessons are taught in 30 minutes or less. Julie writes with clarity, passion and commitment. It is evident that she cares about the character development of children, her own and others, as well as the opportunity and the tools for parents to be involved. Each one of you cares about your child’s character and hopes to be an actively involved partner in the school. Julie Gaines, a shining model of positive character and of parent involvement, makes it possible for you to contribute in a meaningful and manageable way. It is with joy and anticipation that we celebrate the publication of *The Parent/Community Connection in the Classroom*.

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# Introduction

*“People can be divided into three groups:  
Those who make things happen.  
Those who watch things happen.  
Those who wonder what happened.”*

—John W. Newbern

**T**his book is intended to be used by parents and members of the community as a guide for teaching character education lessons in the classroom. The simple lesson outlines and corresponding activity ideas make teaching character lessons fun and easy. Recruiting your parents and community members (e.g., businesses, social groups and youth organisations) to teach monthly 30-minute lessons will increase the effectiveness of your school’s character education initiative. Everyone benefits—the home, school and community—when basic core values are supported.

## **Each unit includes:**

- An easy-to-follow outline for each character trait lesson.
- Book suggestions per year level.
- Engaging activity ideas.

In addition, this book includes character skits, display board ideas and sample letters to parents with suggestions for ways to develop character at home.

The Parent and Community Connection is designed to promote a character education alliance between schools, parents and the community. By working together we can increase awareness and gain the support and vision you need to enhance your initiative. In the words of a great visionary, Helen Keller: “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”



# Respect

*"Respect is learned, earned and returned."*

**Pre-teach:** Introduce yourself and tell the students which trait you will be discussing today. Ask the following questions and call on different students for answers. Below each question are examples of the types of responses you are looking for. You may need to rephrase the students' answers or guide them along.

*(Ask)* **What does the word *respect* mean?**

1. Showing consideration for other people and their property.
2. Caring for ourselves, family, community and school.
3. Appreciating and accepting individual differences.
4. Treating others the way that you would want to be treated.

*(Ask)* **How can you show respect?**

1. Use kind words and good manners.
2. Listen to what others have to say.
3. Follow the rules.
4. Appreciate differences among people.
5. Take care of other people's property at school, home and in the community.
6. Help others.

**Book:** Read and discuss a book that teaches a lesson about respect. *(Book list follows.)*

*(Ask)* **How would you practise respect if...**

1. Someone at school is saying unkind words and bullying another student. What should you do?
2. One of your classmates or siblings shares a story you have already heard many times before. How should you react?
3. The park is closed for maintenance and the sign says "Keep Out!" Your friends want to play anyway. What should you do? What if someone takes a permanent marker and starts writing on the sign?
4. Your teacher brings in a very special souvenir from her holiday. She allows it to be passed around the classroom. How should you handle the special treasure? What if it gets broken?
5. What should you do if you see a classmate or teacher with their arms full struggling to open a door? Or you see them drop a stack of papers on the ground?
6. Your coach chooses another player to put in the game and you feel it should be you?

*(Encourage students to come up with a few more situations to discuss together as a class.)*

**Activity:** Complete an activity to go along with your lesson. (*Activity suggestions follow.*) You may choose to incorporate an activity into your lesson at any time. Often visuals and experiments are very effective at the beginning and will get your students excited about the lesson.

**Closing comment:** If you expect respect, then be the first to show it!

Read and discuss the quote at the beginning of this section and then give a bookmark to each student. (Bookmarks follow at the end of the chapter.)

## Respect Activities

### Reaching Out with Respect

(Suggested for all year levels)

**Materials:** One sheet of paper

Practise firm handshakes in class with each other. Talk about how offering your hand and looking that person in the eye is a way to show respect. Discuss other ways our hands can show respect—applause, reaching out to help someone, handling delicate things with care, keeping our hands to ourselves and cleaning up. Have students trace around one hand on a piece of paper. On each finger have them write a way to show respect for others. Encourage students to share some of the statements they have written. If possible, display the hands in the room or hallway.

**Simon Says: “Who Are You?”** (Suggested for years P-2)

**Materials:** None

Students play a variation of Simon Says that highlight their similarities and differences. The objective is to teach respect and tolerance for each other. Tell them to watch carefully as they play the game because at the end each student must tell one new thing they learned about a classmate. Begin the game like this:

Simon Says: “Everyone with brown eyes, stand up.”

Simon Says: “Everyone who has a cat, put your right hand up.”

Simon Says: “Everyone whose favourite sport is basketball, stand on one foot.”

Simon Says: “Everyone who speaks more than one language, jump up and down.”

Simon Says: “If you like to eat spinach, nod your head.” And so on.

## Book Suggestions for Respect

### Prep

- *Arthur’s Nose*, Marc Brown
- *The Grouchy Ladybug*, Eric Carle

### Year One

- *Arthur’s Eyes*, Marc Brown
- *Dog Eared*, Amanda Harvey

### Year Two

- *Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten*, Bob Graham
- *Thank You for My Yucky Present*, Meredith Hooper

### Year Three

- *Nana Upstairs, Nana Downstairs*, Tomie dePaola
- *The Best Beak in Boonaroo Bay*, Narelle Oliver

### Year Four

- *Whisper Wild Freedom Child*, Rachel Flynn
- *Annie and the Old One*, Miska Miles

### Year Five

- *Memorial*, Gary Crew
- *Rainbow Bird*, Czenya Cavouras
- *The Dons*, Archimede Fusillo