



Formative Parenting

Cultivating Character in Children

A Ministry of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Immaculata, Pennsylvania

Establishing a Foundation for Authentic Self-Esteem, Part 5 FOCUS ON INDUSTRY

A Parent's Guide to Identify • Establish • Develop • Maintain • Remediate a Child's Sense of Industry

Dear Parent,

Review the CHARACTERISTICS CHART below. Decide which characteristics, if any, describe your child under **usual**, **repeated** circumstances. The results will serve as a guide to determine how to best meet the Self-Esteem and Identity Formation needs of your child.

<p>Characteristics of people who have a <u>basic</u> sense of INDUSTRY:</p>	<p>Characteristics of people who have a <u>basic</u> sense of INFERIORITY:</p>
<p>A PERSON WHO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sticks to a task, project, assignment, hobby, etc. and finishes or completes it without needing reminders from parents, teachers, or other adults • applies himself/herself to complete what he/she starts -- therefore is "productive" • gives steady care to projects • perseveres with diligence and care to fulfill responsibilities • systematically completes tasks; works with order and system • regularly experiences a sense of accomplishment for having done well in the midst of peers/friends/others • feels adequate to perform most tasks or assignments • has confidence in his/her ability to complete a task with satisfaction • demonstrates a sense of devotion to responsibilities/tasks, etc. 	<p>A PERSON WHO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feels inadequate or inferior especially in comparison to peers • often feels defeated before even beginning a task, project, etc. • expects to perform with inferiority to others in the group even before beginning a task, assignment, etc. • lacks self-confidence • has a sense of being doomed to mediocrity • sees himself/herself as <i>average, common place</i> or <i>below average</i> and/or believes that others see him/her in the same way • accepts producing less than his/her ability; "settles for less" • does not recognize his/her ability or giftedness • has a personal sense that he/she is of little importance compared to others • painfully timid, fearful, shy OR shows exaggerated aggressiveness

The positive outcome of the ratio of **INDUSTRY vs. INFERIORITY** produces
METHOD as a basic life strength
and
COMPETENCE as a basic life virtue.

PARENT PRACTICES that support the growth of **INDUSTRY** incorporate the following characteristics:

steady care productivity follow-through deadlines
finishing what one starts long-range projects
time management planning (calendar, check-lists, chore charts, etc.)
working side-by-side through a project of many steps

PLAN YOUR WORK and WORK YOUR PLAN

Parent Practices That Support the Growth of INDUSTRY during Elementary School Years (K-8)

Suggestions offered by 93 Parents of “Successful” Children include but are not limited to the following parenting practices:

- Prepare your child for a task by working side by side and demonstrating/modeling. Then supervise and advise/help as needed. Afterward, expect your child to follow through on subsequent occasions, i.e., making beds, clearing the table, emptying the dishwasher. Teach your child to contribute to the family through household chores that are completed routinely, without prompting, reminding, or complaining. Use of a chore-chart may be beneficial.
- If your child commits to a team sport or activity, acknowledge at the start that he or she must attend all practices and complete practice assignments until the end of the season. As a parent model how to follow through with commitments and responsibilities. Let your child witness you working with others and completing separate pieces of a large goal.
- When a task is difficult and your child wants to quit, provide time out, relaxation and then re-focus and try again. Sometimes it is appropriate to give help or demonstration.
- Encourage participation in extra curricular activities balanced with the need for quiet, family time and school work.
- By Grade 4**, use meal time to re-live the day and talk about what each family member accomplished. Ask your child to share an overview of his or her day. Share details and exchange ideas for how to approach the future.
- Follow your child’s assignments. Show interest, review completed work, and examine returned tests. Compliment effort and give specific praise, i.e., level of difficulty, neat completion, arrangement, etc. Dialogue about future strategy. Support your child’s efforts with praise, suggestions and constructive criticism but let the planning and accomplishment belong to your child.
- By Grade 5**, teach your child to calendar what needs to be done, to look ahead, to plan the work and work the plan! Help your child to develop a systematic approach to task completion.
- Familiarize your child with public transportation and allow him or her to use it occasionally for activities.
- By Grade 6**, avoid “over-parenting.” Expect your child to organize his or her own social activities and let your child and friends solve their own problems. Support plans and offer suggestions but do not orchestrate for your child.
- By role playing, help your child to learn effective ways to negotiate matters of concern with his or her teacher.
- By Junior High**, teach time management through example. Involve your child in setting goals and in identifying specific, related behaviors / tasks. Help your child to design a suitable time line for completion. Expect your child to project a weekly calendar that safeguards time for family life, completing school assignments, developing personal interests, and volunteering service outside of the family home. Monitor progress every few days.

Dr. Patricia McCormack, IHM, a former Catholic schoolteacher and catechist, is a formation education consultant, an author of several books as well as the PARENT PARTNERSHIP HANDBOOK feature of *Today’s Catholic Teacher*, and director of **IHM Formative Support for Parents and Teachers**, Arlington, VA. She speaks and writes frequently on topics of child formation. *Reach her at DrPatMcCormack@aol.com.*

This article originally appeared in the (March 1997) issue of *Today’s Catholic Teacher*, © Peter Li, Inc. Reproduced with permission. All rights reserved. This article is protected by United States copyright and other intellectual property laws and may not be reproduced, rewritten, distributed, disseminated, transmitted, displayed, published or broadcast, directly or indirectly, in any medium without the prior written permission of Peter Li, Inc.