

# PCK Character Coaching Connection

By PCK Character Coach, Dianne Daniels

First Quarter, 2018-19

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## Compassion Is A Strength At PCK



The first quarter of the 2018-19 school year flew by, and time always seems to pass more quickly when there is a lot going on. We have certainly been busy in Character Coaching! We always start the school year by reviewing the 3Rs: Respect, Responsibility, and Ready to participate. We are putting an extra emphasis on **respect** this year, and are helping the students use good manners. We are particularly working on saying *please* and *thank you*, as well as *good morning* and *good afternoon*.

*continued on page 2*

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You can expect to see polite table manners and respectful conversations at home because our students learned about these in class. If you don't see signs of these lessons around your own dinner table, you can simply ask, "What did you learn about respectful manners at school?" If your child forgot, we have signs with a list of polite manners posted around the building. Many grade levels played a "table manners board game," so ask your child what he learned. Most students said they didn't know that it is impolite to rest their elbows on the table.



In September we focused on the trait of thoroughness. You can help reinforce what your child learned by insisting that all homework be completed every night, and that tasks you assign, such as cleaning a bedroom, are done thoroughly (at an age-appropriate level). All students learned the value and necessity of doing their work thoroughly, but ongoing practice at home certainly helps them learn how to incorporate the character traits into daily life. They also learned about doing their work with a good attitude, so if you hear any grumbling when you ask your child to load the dishwasher, ask, "What would Mrs. Daniels say about having a positive attitude when you are asked to help?"

This month we are spending time with the trait of compassion. We are also digging into some of the harder elements of this trait. All of our students know to be kind, but there are a few murky areas that need some examination. For instance, most students admitted to being kind to their friends but not their siblings. Students also acknowledged that making donations or raising money for a cause is only one side of compassion - we need to show it every day and to everyone we meet, even when it isn't for a formal community service project. We also spent quite a bit of time talking about how to be kind to someone who is not kind to you, including how to handle bullying situations. You can help at home by coaching your children through their sibling squabbles. Don't solve their problems for them or simply separate them. Instead, ask questions like, "What do you need to be able to work this out?" or "What do you need your brother/sister to understand about the way you are feeling?" Questions like these allow kids to solve their own problems, and they guide children in figuring out what they really want and what they can do to move a situation forward in a positive way.

For more information on raising compassionate kids, see this article: [5 Way To Instill Compassion In Your Children](#).

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# What's Happening In Class

In addition to our monthly character traits of focus, our students also learn about additional traits and the value of a strong character. Each grade level focuses on a different aspect of the trait so be sure to ask your students about what we do in Character Coaching.

Our **full-day kindergarten** students started learning about empathy. We will work on this trait throughout the year. They learned about emotions and figuring out how someone is feeling by their body language. Ask your student to show you how he looks when he is happy, sad, angry, scared, hurt, and loved.

This week our **first grade** students are learning how to stand up for themselves and others without being mean. They wrote their ideas in their character journals, so ask what ideas your student came up with.

Throughout the year, **second grade** focuses on developing impulse control. We use a curriculum called Stop and Think. You should see worksheets come home so you can ask your child about what she is leaning. Recent sheets you may have seen include "Stop and think through a maze," or "Impulse control secret message." Students may complete unfinished sheets at home if they like, but it is not required.

**Third grade** is learning about facts versus opinions, and how to use both. They are also learning how to discuss issues in a respectful way when they disagree with someone. This week they are preparing to debate an issue, and as part of their preparation they are learning how to support their opinions with facts, how to listen to another person's point of view, and how to share ideas respectfully even if you and the other person never agree.

The students in **fourth grade** recently learned about active listening. Active listening is when you *listen carefully with the intent to understand*. It is more intentional than simply *hearing*. When using active listening, one needs to look at the speaker and make eye contact when possible, sit up straight or lean forward slightly, nod in understanding, and ask questions as needed. Remind your student to use active listening when you are giving an instruction.

**Fifth grade** recently learned how to show compassion while trying to solve a problem. It can be very difficult to be kind in the midst of conflict. They played a game where they had to line up in number order, then completely reverse that order (switch from being ordered 1 - 26, to being ordered 26 - 1) while balancing on a strip of masking tape. Most of the groups did a great job, but there are few who still need a little work on using a kind voice when frustrated.

Our **sixth graders** learned about being compassionate with someone who is still learning something. Most of the students agreed that they struggle with this. We played a "dolphin training" game to learn about positive reinforcement and how people learn better and more quickly when they are encouraged. Ask your student about they game - they had a lot of fun with it!

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# Character In Action

Here are some questions to discuss with your student at home. When you see your child demonstrating outstanding character, feel free to tell me about it at [ddaniels@ckcs.net](mailto:ddaniels@ckcs.net). I love hearing about character in action!

What do *you personally* do when someone is unkind to you? What are some other ways you could handle yourself?

Tell about a time your showed compassion. What was hard about it? What was easy? How did showing compassion make you feel?

Name three things you will personally do this week to show kindness to your sibling(s).

How do you show compassion in competitive situations (such as during a game or competition)?

Ask your child what kind of advice he/she receives from coaches or non-school teachers about how to behave in competition. Several students have said their sports coaches tell them it is okay to intentionally hurt players on the opposing team. Talk about your own feelings on this subject, and how your student can be competitive while still upholding your family values.

If you ever have questions about what we do in Character Coaching, or about any aspect of our character education program, please contact me at [ddaniels@ckcs.net](mailto:ddaniels@ckcs.net). I would love to talk about the great things your students are doing.

## Up next month: Dependability

Doing what I said I would do, even when it is difficult.