

Definitions of ACES “Core Values” for Character Education

Respect

Respectful behavior means showing consideration, admiration or thoughtfulness to someone or to something. When we learn to be kind to ourselves, we can generously offer that same kindness to other people. Respect is a gift that you give yourself and the world. Qualities that show respectful behavior are being friendly, nice, thoughtful, courteous, compassionate, caring, loyal, trustworthy, honest, listening attentively to others, being patient, kind and loving. Think of a time when you felt really good about yourself. Chances are it was a time when you did something nice for someone else or a time when they did something nice for you. Everyone in the world has the right to live with respect and dignity. When we practice treating others well, we also receive respectful treatment back from others. Respect means understanding and behaving as if we are all unique, lovable, capable and valuable.

Simplicity

Simplicity is to be content with the things that you have and to celebrate the ways that things are. Living with simplicity is living life easily without complexity, complications, embellishment, or difficulty. The best things in life are easy, simple, and free. Whenever something gets too complicated, let that be a sign to remind us that there may be an easier way. Simplicity calls upon people to rethink our values. Simplicity helps us to concentrate on what's important and necessary in life. Simplicity helps us to avoid wasting time and energy. Simplicity teaches us economy, living with a lack of pretense, difficulty and drama. You have succeeded in life when all you really want is what you already have and what you really need. You realize there is nothing lacking and the whole world belongs to you. The value of simplicity allows us to appreciate the little things and people that make a huge difference in our lives.

Love

The greatest gift you'll ever learn is to love and to be loved in return. Love can be seen with your eyes by a caring expression, felt when in the presence of someone special and heard by listening to kind, caring words. Love touches our hearts. Love has the power to unite, guide, transform, heal, to free and empower people. Love shows a genuine interest for other people, places or things that we value as important and pleasant. LOVE is necessary for all of the things we do and want in our lives. Love is the ability to trust one another with a good feeling inside. Love means not dwelling on the weaknesses of others. The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched...they must be felt with the heart. When there's love inside of us, anger runs away. Love means that we want what is good for ourselves and good for others. Love is being kind, sharing and caring. Love is the means for change, growth, and success. Love means choosing to care for someone because you can't imagine life without them. All that we love deeply becomes a part of us. Love is the energy of life. When we surround ourselves with loving and supportive people our confidence and happiness grows.

Peace

The energy of peace brings harmony and balance to our lives and to the world. There would be peace in the world if everyone practiced being kind, thoughtful and peaceful with others each day. Each one of us can make a difference. The quality of peace allows us to value and appreciate others and ourselves in spite of our differences and encourages us to live joyfully in peace.

Happiness

Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are all in harmony. Happiness does not depend on what we have, but on what we are. Happiness is the result of

appreciation and gratitude. Happiness increases when it's shared. The essentials for happiness are something worthwhile to do, something/people to love and something to hope for. Happiness allows us to feel and show pleasure, contentment and joy. The secret to happiness is to make others believe they are the cause of it. The best way to cheer yourself up is to cheer someone else up. Happiness is a state of mind. It depends on our dispositions, not our circumstances. Happiness is not the money; it lies in the joy of achievement and effort towards something we value. The wise person understands that his own happiness must include the happiness of others. To give happiness is far nobler than to attain it. If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion. People are just as happy as they make up their minds to be. Happiness is not a destination; it's the journey of how we decide to live our daily lives. The quality of our thoughts determines our own degree of personal happiness.

Tolerance

Tolerance is a way of being and behaving that naturally brings dignity and upholds the rights of others. The seeds of Tolerance are sown with compassion and care. We show tolerance when we accept others as they are, even when they look, think or act differently than we do. Love is the seed of tolerance and makes anything easier to accept. When people experience a lack of love and support, they may not know how to be tolerant of others. Tolerance is the ability to show fairness and to deal effectively with difficult situations, conditions and people who hold different views. You learn Tolerance at home AND at school. A tolerant person is like a tree with many fruits. Even when hit with sticks and stones, the tree gives its fruit in return. Tolerant people see things clearly and respect, appreciate and understand those around us may be different than we are. Tolerance allows you to face difficulties, transform misunderstandings and to let your problems go to find a solution that benefits all involved. It allows you to understand and appreciate everyone.

Humility

Humility is the quality of being modest, thoughtful and respectful to others. With a balance of self-respect and dignity, a person with humility listens to, appreciates and accepts the qualities of others with genuine integrity. When we act with humility there is not a need to prove ourselves to others or to show off. Our motivation comes from inside to do the right thing and to honor each individual as the special people that they are. Humility allows us to remain stable, maintain our own confidence and power on the inside so that we don't need to control others on the outside. Humility creates an open mind, confidence and recognition of our strengths without boasting about them. Arrogance damages or destroys the value of humility. The tendency to impress, dominate or limit the freedom of others in order to prove yourself diminishes the inner experience of worth, value and humility. With humility there is not the need to show off or prove how great you are. People already know and appreciate you, just as you are. Being humble allows us to graciously appreciate those around us and value the gifts that others offer us. Humility is dedication where no acknowledgement is sought for the self. Only when we have learned to value others no more or less than we value ourselves can we be said to be truly humble.

Cooperation:

Cooperation is governed by the principle of mutual respect. Cooperation requires recognizing the value of everyone. Where there is love there is cooperation. One who cooperates receives cooperation. The method to give cooperation is to use the energy of the mind to create pure feelings for others and a desire to help. Cooperation exists when people work together towards a common goal. When cooperating, sometimes we need to contribute ideas and sometimes we need to let go of our ideas. When cooperating, sometimes we need to lead and sometimes we need to follow. One who cooperates creates good feelings with others. Courage, consideration, caring, teamwork and sharing provide a foundation for cooperation. By staying aware of our values, we can give cooperation.

Responsibility

Responsible individuals work in collaboration with others. Responsible individuals know that everyone has something worthwhile to offer. Responsible individuals know that many situations require a cooperative rather than a competitive environment. This means that RESPONSIBLE people know that working together is better than working against each other. RESPONSIBLE people do not quit, but rather keep going until they reach the end of whatever they are working on. Responsibility is managing time and resources to bring about the maximum benefit so we can do our best.

Honesty

Honesty is the human quality of communicating the truth. When we are honest, our words are consistent with our behavior. There are no contradictions or discrepancies in thoughts, words, or actions. We act truthfully, honorably and are considered trustworthy. When we are honest, we can appreciate our own and others possibilities and potential. Living with Honesty allows us to use our judgment wisely and to value the trust that others have placed in us. You can trust, feel safe and experience harmony inside when you are around honest people because honesty inspires faith in others. There is a deep relationship between honesty, trust and friendship. We live with integrity when we are honest because our inner and outer selves reflect that we are living in harmony. Honesty is the opposite of confusion and mistrust.

Unity

We experience unity when as a group we all work together striving for excellence. We feel united with others when we are as enthusiastic about their success as we are about your own achievements. Unity makes the biggest task seem easy. It gives us substance, strength and courage to make the impossible possible. Where there is unity there is always victory. None of us is as smart (alone) as all of us are (together). Cooperating with others requires teamwork that creates unity with good wishes, pure feelings for others and for the task at hand. Unity requires recognizing the value of everyone's part, knowing that you're part of a team, and keeping a positive attitude. Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.

Freedom

We experience freedom when we are able to act and live as we choose, without being subject to any undue restraints or restrictions. We have the right to speak, act or move easily and freely without restriction, interference or fear. We have the ability to exercise free will and to make wise choices independently. We are able to be open, friendly or frank in speech or behavior. Freedom is the state of being unaffected or subjected to something unpleasant or unwanted.