

## **6. Help them help others**

Encourage your child to set aside time each week to do something for someone in need – even if it means a few less minutes for homework or play. He could invite a lonely classmate over, help an elderly neighbor with the gardening, or have a video chat with a relative who lives far away. Pointing out opportunities to be helpful can open your child's eyes to all the big and small ways he can make a difference. (Yes, even by helping out around the house.)

## **7. Teach them how to calm down**

Research shows that kids and teens who can manage anger and frustration are able to solve conflicts kindly and respectfully rather than lashing out. That means they're more likely to get along with classmates and have solid friendships. Here's a simple way to calm down that you can teach your kids: stop, take a deep breath through the nose and exhale through the mouth, and count to five. Sounds too easy, right? That's the beauty of it. But it does take practice. Introduce the steps when your child is already calm and have her practice. Then, when you notice her starting to get upset, remind her about the steps and do them with her. You'll need to repeat this process together several times, but she will get the hang of it.

## **8. Talk to their teachers about kindness**

When you meet with your child's teacher, show that you care about whether your child is a good person as well as a good student. Ask how he treats others, whether he is respectful and kind to classmates, and whether he is rude to students, teachers, or other staff like cafeteria workers. Ask how you can encourage him to be a good community member, and share with your child what you heard. Teachers see your child in situations that you don't, and sometimes kids act differently when their parents aren't around – for better *or* for worse. You might be pleasantly surprised by what you hear. And if you're not, try to keep an open mind if the teacher's experiences don't match yours. Talk with him and your child to find out what's happening and how you can help.

## **9. Do community service together**

As a family, choose a volunteer project and pledge to participate together four times. You can start by having each member of the family nominate causes and organizations they care about and taking a family vote. Then make a commitment and put specific dates on your calendar. Volunteering together will help all of you remember to look out for others and may open your eyes to people you don't normally see or talk to. It will also help bring your family closer together.

## **10. Be a good role model**

Most importantly, don't just tell your kids to be kind – show them how. Don't gossip or make snide remarks about other parents or kids. Always say "hello" and "thank you" to people who help your community. Reach out to neighbors and parents in the school community you don't know, even if you're not sure you have anything in common. Your kids are constantly watching and learning from your actions, whether you realize it or not. That's why it's so important to be aware of what we do – and to act like the people we want our children to become.