

insights



Developing leadership skills in your child

by Michael Grose



Your child has the potential to be a leader given the right circumstances and environment. The following five leadership skills have been observed in student leaders in Australian primary schools and can be promoted by parents at home.

Responsibility

Being a leader means that your child is willing to take responsibility and be accountable for their actions. Personal responsibility is shown when your child is accountable for their behaviour, for their belongings and for others. Practical ways to develop responsibility include:

- Giving them responsibility for part of their day
- Encouraging them to restore relationships with others when they mess up
- Taking responsibility for household chores

Communication

While most leadership positions require your child to speak publicly their communication skills can be developed through regular one-on-one or small group experiences at home and at school. Practical ways to develop your child's communication skills include:

- One-on-one conversations with adults
- Regular discussions at the meal table
- Encourage your child to participate fully in speaking activities at school

Organisation

Personal organisational skills and the ability to organise others are important for effective leadership. Practical ways to develop organisational skills include encouraging your child to:

- Keep their personal space tidy and organised
- Use a diary to help manage their time
- Organise a weekly chores roster including all members of the family

Teamwork

Cooperating, encouraging and accepting others are essential qualities of an effective leader. Practical ways to develop a sense of teamwork include:

- Play team games where children work together
- Encourage siblings to cook and do other chores together
- Focusing on your child's contribution to a team or group rather than individual achievement

Emotional intelligence

An underestimated quality shared by most admired leaders is their ability to remain calm when things don't go well. This emotional intelligence skill requires self-awareness, an ability to recognise their emotions and respond appropriately to the emotions of others. You can nurture these skills in the following way:

- Help your child recognise their emotions
- Help your child recognise emotions in others
- Teach your child to shift their mood

Leaders are needed in all walks of life – at work, in school, in families, in sport and in the wider community. The skills of leadership are sewn in the first group that they belong to – their family. By encouraging your child to be a contributing member of their family you are also helping to develop leaderships skills they can practise outside their family.



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