



Family Values Last a Lifetime

Values are principles, standards or qualities that matter to each of us; they are the ideas and beliefs we hold as special. Morals are a set of beliefs or guidelines that people follow based on their culture or society.

Children look to their parents to set boundaries whether they are guiding them to make the right choices, to behave in an appropriate manner, to treat others respectfully or to cooperate at home by helping out with the family chores. Parents should be clear and consistent in developing their family values and be sure to infuse their values in the family rules. In guiding children to understand right from

wrong, we are teaching them morals. In order for morals to work, they need to have special meaning or value, therefore it is important for all members of the family to practice what is being preached.

Moral development begins at home and as children grow and expand their experiences outside the home, they may be influenced both positively and negatively by several sources. This is why parents must develop a strong foundation of morals and values in their children so that they will be able to make decisions that are in line with what parents have taught them about right and wrong.

Where do morals come from?

- **Parents:** The primary source of moral development are the parents or primary caregivers.
- **Extended Family:** Grandparents, aunts, uncles and other extended family members often play a significant role in the development of morals in the lives of children.
- **Siblings:** Older brothers and sisters are a main source of moral development. A statement like, "You're going to get in trouble if mom catches you," is a moral warning statement.
- **School:** Children spend the first 18 years of life being educated by other adults in day care, preschool and 12 years of schooling. Education strongly influences the development of children's morals.
- **Peer Group:** Peers shape children's beliefs and behaviors. The ultimate test of a value is when children can resist peer pressure.
- **The Media:** Parents need to monitor the content of what children are being exposed to on television, in movies, in video games, in music and on the Internet.
- **Church:** Religious education can play a major role in the development of children's morals.

*Adapted from Dr. Stephen Bavolek's Community Based Education in Nurturing Parenting® Program

Learn more about what PCA Louisiana is doing to educate in order to prevent child abuse and neglect at www.pcal.org.

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