



Parent Page

The Trait of the Month is: **Responsibility**

We cannot do everything at once, but we can do something at once. --Calvin Coolidge

Responsibility – Taking care of one's self and others; to carry out a duty or task carefully and thoroughly.

Being responsible means being dependable, keeping promises, and accepting the consequences of what we say and do. It also means trying to be the best we can be. Children need to learn that being part of a family, a team, or a class involves accepting responsibilities. When we act responsibly,



The following quotes underscore the awesome responsibility of parenting.

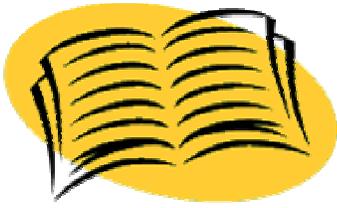
One hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove...but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child. –Anonymous

We all have dreams. But in order to make dreams into reality, it takes an awful lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline, and effort. –Jesse Jackson

There are two ways of spreading light - to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it." –Edith Wharton

To Do List

1. Go over the **Responsibility Poster** together and put it on the refrigerator.
2. Read the attached **Story** with your child and discuss the **Questions** at the end.
3. Do at least one **Additional Activity** to reinforce the responsibility character trait.
4. Write a short comment on the **Puzzle Piece** about what your child has learned about responsibility, cut out the puzzle piece, and have your child return it to school.



Horse Sense

By Katherine Grace Bond & Sarah E. Bond

Today Carlos was starting his new business, Casper Rides. He planned to offer horse rides to kids in the field next to the new mall.

"What's taking you so long?" his friend Miles hollered from the stable.

Carlos said, "I can't find the saddle."

Miles squawked, "How's that possible? Aren't saddles pretty big?"

He poked his head into the tack room. "Oh my! How do you find anything in here? This place is a mess!"

"It's not that bad," Carlos picked up a squashed hat. "I know where everything is."

"Everything except the saddle." Miles said. "You know, Carlos, you've gotta get organized!" Miles was a neat freak: color-coded folders for his classes, bed always made, hair never out of place. He was annoying Carlos.

"Ow!" Carlos's shin hit something hard. "Here's the saddle. See?"

The town of Murphy was growing fast. The new mall looked strange, looming up above pastureland and the tiny country store. Carlos steered Casper into the field and stopped.

Miles slid off Casper shakily.

Mrs. Shapiro, Carlos's neighbor, soon pulled up in a green van. Her daughter Emma had taken riding lessons from Carlos last week. Three more cars and a truck pulled up behind them. It was looking like the business was going to work!

"Hey, Emmy, do you want to ride Casper?"

Emma nodded, "Okay." Carlos lifted her up and told Mrs. Shapiro it will be \$6.00. Casper snorted with happiness.

Six other little girls lined up with their mothers. Two more cars pulled up, along with four boys on bikes.

This is great! Carlos thought. *I'll make a fortune!*

Miles went to work organizing the line of kids. "Everyone gets a six-minute ride," he said, checking his watch.

Carlos helped Emma down and Mrs. Shapiro handed him a \$10 dollar bill. "I'm sorry, but it's the smallest I have."

Carlos said, "I don't have any change."

"Where's the cash box?" Miles sorted through Carlos' backpack but only found a bag of Doritos. He shook his head. "Carlos, if you are going to have a business, you need to you have bills and coins small enough to make change."



Horse Sense (continued)

"I know that." Carlos groped in his pockets and pulled out a half-melted candy bar.

"Wait!" Carlos yelled. "I'll go get some change."

He dashed toward the mall, leaving Miles to mind Casper, and all the customers waiting behind.

When Carlos finally found a change machine, he saw Miles running toward him.

"All the customers left after you did. And then Casper made a mess on the ground!"

Carlos told his friend, "Miles, all horses go to the bathroom."

"But we need to clean it up with something. It's the law," Miles told him.

They headed toward the bathroom to try to find paper towels. Brownies and their mothers waved at them from the girls' department of Macy's.

"Where'd you tie up Casper?" Carlos asked.

"Tie him up?" Miles looked at him blankly. "I told him to stay."

"Stay?!!!" Carlos felt the blood drain from his face. "He's a horse, not a dog!"

Suddenly, shrieks came from the girls' department. A rack of clearance bathing suits bumped into the aisle. A table full of socks crashed to the floor as Brownies, mothers and clerks scattered. Carlos and Miles rounded the corner just in time to see a large white horse stepping carefully over shoe boxes and plastic purses. Casper swung his head around, draped in bathing suits, and whinnied.

"Horse loose on aisle 12!" came the announcement over the public-address system. Sirens blared. Casper turned at the escalator and headed for cosmetics. Carlos and Miles charged after him, along with the security guards.

Then Casper stopped. Standing next to the perfume was little Emma Shapiro, holding out an apple from her lunch sack. "Come on, Casper," she sang out. "Come have a treat."

Back at the stable, Carlos pulled out the cash box from under straw and boots. Fifty-two dollars and 76 cents. It would take all that and more to pay off the damages at the mall. No profit today.

Miles sat on the floor, drawing a chart. "Okay," he said. "Here's how it happened: Casper escaped because you went into the mall, which was caused by you leaving the cash box because you couldn't find it, which was caused by the utter chaos of your life."

"Don't forget that *you* didn't tie him up."

"Well, yeah," Miles said. "That too."

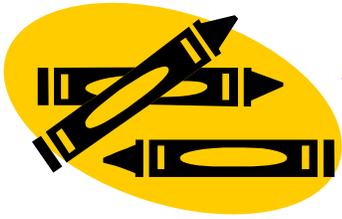
"Carlos?" Miles continued, "How about if I help you get organized in here? Then do you think you could teach me what to do with a horse?"

Carlos felt a slow smile coming to his face.

"Let's start with hanging up that saddle," Miles said. "Wherever it goes."

Story Questions

1. In what ways do Carlos and Miles each behave irresponsibly?
2. In what ways do Carlos and Miles each behave responsibly?
3. How would behaving responsibly have helped these boys avoid some of the problems they encountered with the new business?



Additional Activities

1. Identify something that your child does well such as a sport, hobby, or household chore. Explain to your child that responsible people help others. Work with your child to find a younger neighbor or friend who might need help learning to do what your child is good at doing (for example: throwing a ball, painting, or riding a bike).
2. Visit <http://www.epa.gov/recyclecity/> with your child to learn together how many people practice responsibility by recycling.
3. Help your child learn to care for a pet. Use the chart below to list pet-caring responsibilities for you and your child, and hang it in a public space. If you don't have a pet, use the calendar for a chore chart. Discuss a small reward for your child if he or she shows responsibility by honestly filling in the chart for the week.

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							