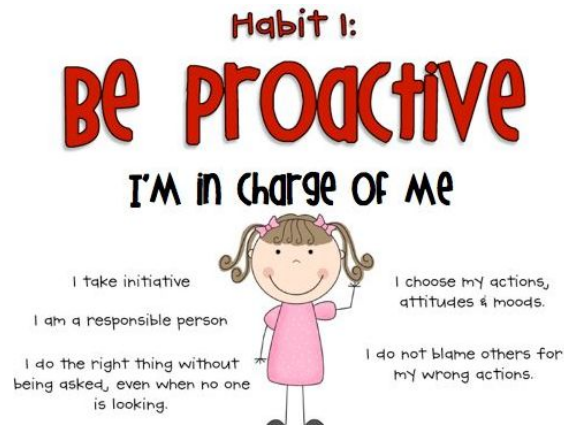


Habit 1 is Be Proactive- "I am in charge of me."

Being Proactive is the key to moving from dependence to personal responsibility. This means the child is in charge of their choices, the consequences of those choices, how they respond in every situation, and their personal belongings. Do not feel like you need to "water it down" for younger children. They can understand and often will surprise you how eager they are to take charge of some of their own life.



How can you help teach your child proactivity?

- ★ **Allow choices:** Choices are one of your child's first introductions to responsibility. While choices appear to be about freedom, they are also about decision making, taking responsibility and committing to action. It doesn't matter how large or small the choice, practice matters. They can begin to take charge of what is going on in their own life.
- ★ **Set clear expectations, then let them succeed:** Have you ever been frustrated by an assignment you were expected to complete without clear instructions? It can feel the same to your kids. Even if you have done this before, review and clarify. Where does their backpack go when they get home? Shoes? Coat? When you talk about a clean room, what does that look like? Just toys put away? Bed made? Laundry? (Make sure your expectations are

appropriate for your child's skill level.) When does the task have to be completed by? This should always be discussed in a calm tone and in a cooperative manner. If the child forgets the first few times, resist the urge to remind them, wait until the agreed upon completion time then ask if they forgot the agreement? Remind them at that time that they are in charge of their item/space and you are counting on them to take responsibility for that to Be Proactive.

- ★ **Let them be Center Stage of their own life.** Each of us is writing the script of our life. Role-play with your kids: They don't get to do something they want. Someone calls them a name or teases them. They forgot their homework. What words or actions can the child choose to use? Explore both positive and negative and talk about likely outcomes of both choices.
- ★ **Words to use:**
 - "Would you like ___ or _____? Good choice."
 - "Thank you for being proactive and putting your coat away."
 - "Did you remember to 'stop and think' before you responded that way? What might have been a better way to respond?"
 - "We agreed your room needed to be clean before you could go to your friend's house. It does not look like what I picture a clean room to be. Were my expectations unclear?"
 - "That sounds like you have a problem. What do you think you could do about that?"
 - "Tell me what you are thinking here."