

because  
I said  
I would.

# Parent Resource:

## Teaching Character Through a Promise Kept



# About this Parent Resource

Parents offer their children love, acceptance, appreciation, encouragement, and guidance. They provide the most intimate context for the nurturing and protection of children as they develop their personalities and identities, mature physically, cognitively, emotionally, and socially and transmit basic cultural values.

Communicating about academics and homework can be easy, but sometimes it is harder to understand how to instill values and strong character.



**According to the National Institute of Health, 1 in 5 adolescents suffers from depression, or anxiety; 1 in 4 has been bullied at school and there are over 3,041 teen suicide attempts a day.**

According to the National Institute of Health, 1 in 5 adolescents suffers from depression, or anxiety; 1 in 4 has been bullied at school and there are over 3,041 teen suicide attempts a day. Many children are losing hope, giving up on life and

feeling insecure about themselves at an alarmingly young age. Studies show that there is a connection between strong character and improved relationships, reduced conflicts and increased access to support, all of which lead to a decrease in negative behaviors.

One of the goals of ***because I said I would*** is to provide useful tools to help overcome this trend by developing character strengths in children and encouraging meaningful conversations and relationships. This guide is written in a programmatic approach and it is suggested that it be used in order in its entirety for best outcomes. ***Because I said I would*** recognizes that caring adults play an important role in the lives of children and when referring to parent also include caring adult.

Thank you for downloading this resource!

As a parent or caregiver who took the time to download these materials, we would like to ask for a few minutes of your time to take a brief survey. Your effort helps ***because I said I would*** to continue to develop relevant material for character education.

Please access our survey [here](#).

**because  
I said  
I would.**

# Table of Contents

## Helpful Parenting Tips

- Test your Promise IQ ..... 4
- You are a Role model ..... 5
- The Importance of a Promise ..... 7

## Teaching by example

- Setting yourself up for success .... 10
- The Big reveal ..... 13

## Supporting your child's first Promise

- Next steps..... 14
- A child's first Promise ... ..... 16

## Celebrating

- Because I said I would** Frame ...18
- Making Promises a routine .....19



because  
I said  
I would.

# Test your Promise IQ

Take a few minutes to test your knowledge about Promises. Read through each statement and determine whether it is true or false. Put an "x" in the corresponding box. See instructions for scoring below.

1. A Promise best practice is to be thoughtful with your word choice and be as specific as possible.
2. There is more than one step to making a Promise.
3. When making a Promise it is important to consider the circumstances around the Promise that might interfere with keeping the Promise.
4. Promises are the same as goals.
5. You should always keep a Promise even if it is not the right thing to do.
6. A Promise should have a timeline.
7. It is important to realize that sometimes a Promise won't be possible to keep.
8. Broken Promises only matter if other people know you broke the Promise.
9. It's more important to keep a Promise to someone else than it is yourself.
10. Calendaring can increase the chances of a Promise being kept.

| True                                | False                               | Score |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |       |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |       |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |       |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |       |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |       |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |       |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |       |

Total

**Score your quiz:** In the column to the far right place a 1 in the score column if there is a gray box in the column with your answer. Add your total.

## If you scored:

- 10 **Congratulations!** You are a Promise Genius. You have many of the insights that it takes to make and keep a Promise!
- 9-7 **Way to go!** You are on your way to becoming a Promise genius.
- 7-5 **Good work!** You have Promise potential.
- 5-1 **You are in luck.** You can review Promise best practices and increase your Promise IQ.

because  
I said  
I would.

# because I said I would.

# Role Model

You are a role model for the children in your life. Every time you say

something, take an action or have a reaction to someone or something, the child is observing your behavior. As infants, this is how children gain language skills and eventually learn to talk.

**“Children have never been very good at listening to their elders but have never failed to imitate them.”**

- James Baldwin, Novelist and Social critic



Preschoolers depend on observation to begin to understand and test the workings of interpersonal relationships.

Even teenagers—though you might not believe it— are listening to your words, observing your actions and examining how you handle

**“Children need to be taught and have opportunities to practice character development skills in much the same way that they learn how to read and solve math problems.”**

everything from personal relationships to stressful situations to career disappointments.

**Offering situations to practice and observe character are important.** Dr. Julia Ogg, PhD., researcher at University of Illinois, explains that “Children need to be taught and have opportunities to practice character development skills in much the same way that they learn how to read and solve math problems.” The real challenge for parents and caring adults is to provide a positive example as often as possible. Making and keeping a Promise is an ideal way to do this.



## Do I have to be perfect?

The best advice is to “Parent by example”, which is not always easy. We all have days when we argue with family members or say something that we regret later. The simple truth is that none of us is perfect. Your actions after a misstep are just as important as your initial actions. It is these

moments that allow you to demonstrate challenging emotions such as forgiveness, humility and empathy.

because  
I said  
I would.

## Role Model FAQ's

### How do I model respect?

Think about how you talk about and treat your friends, family members, neighbors and even yourself. Your child is learning to value other people and institutions by watching your example. This includes how you talk about their school, teachers, and administrators. Your child takes cues on self-worth from you. Respect yourself and your child will follow your lead.

### What can I do to encourage positive communication?

Do you wish your child would talk to you more? Or choose to speak instead of scream? Consider your own use of words. Do you use them to hurt, criticize or argue with others, even if it's not your children? Words are a powerful thing. If you demonstrate how negative, hurtful and disrespectful language can be, your child will do the same. Do you listen to your child without interrupting? Be mindful of how and when you communicate—give your child your complete attention and respect her thoughts. You are teaching her to do the same for you. Take the time to listen and share their concerns, so they feel both loved and respected. Practice respect and tolerance, to provide clear standards of acceptable behavior.

#### **Talking Points:**

- **Be specific.**
- **Be open-minded.**
- **Be patient .**
- **Allow time for questions.**
- **Listen.**

### How do I continue to encourage my child?

Is your child convinced he is going to fail a class, not make the team or lose a friend? Consider the energy in your family. Do you focus on the positive? The next time you make a mistake, like burning dinner, think before reacting. Then remember to laugh and suggest you feel lucky for the chance to order out. It is often simple (and not so drastic) mistakes that become the best opportunities to model good behavior.

**Developing a practice of regular family Promise making** and discussing the Life of their Promises and Promises kept, can be a meaningful family activity and allow for engagement in children's lives, as well as promoting the practice and learning of positive character.



# The importance of a Promise

- Do you think before you make a Promise to someone?
- What if you cannot deliver on your word?
- Does it really matter?
- Are the words you choose important?

The way you honor your commitments and keep your Promises speaks to integrity. Having integrity means staying true to your word, even if it is difficult, or inconvenient. Nothing destroys credibility faster than not following through or following up on a commitment. Think for a minute about other relationships: marriage, parenting, or business relationships. The strength

of our relationships is measured by how much people can count on us. If we are not true to our words, that means our relationships will be as unreliable as we are.



## The Promise Card

A Promise card may be the reason you are reading this material. Chances are high that you already have some knowledge about Promise Cards. A Promise Card helps you remember the importance of honor. It holds you accountable to the Promises you make.



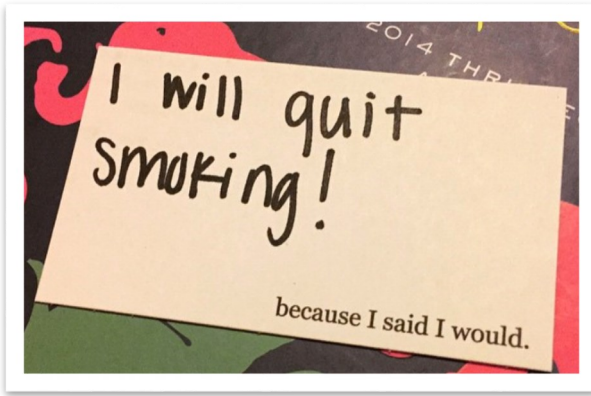
Promise Cards are simple to use. Write a Promise on the card and give it to the person to whom you are making the Promise. Explain to them that you will come back for the card when the Promise has been kept. Afterwards, keep your card as a reminder that you are a person of your word. When you share this concept with children, there is a frame included in this kit to frame the Promise Card and hang it somewhere visible to reinforce the concepts of honor and accountability.

You may also choose to keep the card instead of giving it to someone. The Promise Card can serve as a personal reminder of the Promise that you made and reinforce your accountability to honor your word.

because  
I said  
I would.

# Modeling a Promise

The best way to share the experience of a Promise is to make and keep a Promise to the person you are teaching. Remember the importance of a parent as a **role model**.



Let's think about your personal experience with Promises by looking at your **Promise History**.

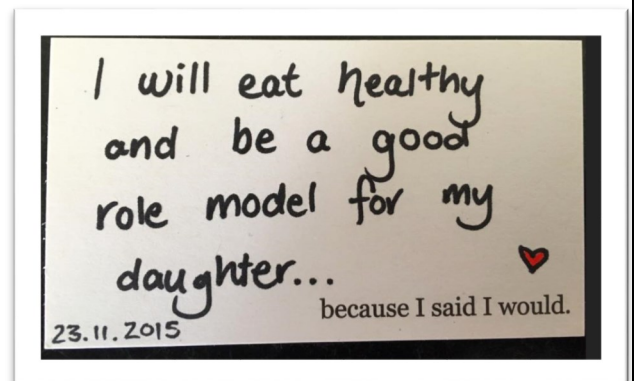
- Can you think of a time when someone made a promise to you and kept it?
- What was the promise?
- Jot it down here. (We'll come back to it.)

---

---

**Take a moment** and reflect on the impact the promise had on you, on your family and others.

- How did you feel when the promise was kept?
- How would your feelings have changed if it had not been kept?
- About the situation?
- About the person?



---

---

---

To get ready for your "teachable moment", complete the My Promise History Sheet on the next page. The **Promise Story** created through this exercise will help:

- Set the first promise up for success
- Be shared with your child a little later in the process.

because  
I said  
I would.



because  
I said  
I would.

# My Promise History

Promises that I have made and kept:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Promises others have made and kept that  
have had an impact on me:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Choose one  
and write . .**

**My Promise Story**

# Setting Up for Success

When you decide to make a Promise you are consciously making choices. It's best to be aware of the choices you are making in order to set your Promises up for the best possible outcome. To simplify this process, ***because I said I would*** has created a **Promise Planner**.

Let's look at how it works:

**The Promise Planner** is a natural extension of the Promise Card. It is a guide to help you contemplate and account for all of the things that might arise when trying to complete your Promise.

Look at the Promise Planner on the next page and use this handy guide to complete it.

1. First, think about the Promise you are going to make; write down a draft – the wording doesn't have to be perfect.
2. Think about external factors or barriers that might impact the completion of this Promise; i.e. weather, money, resources, etc.
3. Think about internal factors that may impact as well, i.e. motivation, time, etc.
4. Think about things you could do to help overcome or alleviate the barriers.
5. Make a list of some of the steps you will need to take to keep the Promise.
6. Then finally write your Promise on a Promise Card.

Keep in mind the timeline and the purpose behind the modeling of your Promise. Try to choose something that is meaningful, has a short or shorter timeline and, most importantly, is able to be kept.

Here is a Promise Card for your use. Just cut it out and use it with the Promise Planner.



because I said I would.

**because  
I said  
I would.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Promise Planner

**Draft word choice for your promise:**

I will...

FINAL WRITTEN PROMISE  
CARD GOES HERE.

because I said I would.

**Start date:** \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / 20\_\_\_\_  
Month Day Year

**Completion date:** \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / 20\_\_\_\_  
Month Day Year

**Other parties involved:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Possible barriers to success:**

Yes No

Knowledge / talent / experience

Yes No

Forgetfulness

External party cooperation

Resources / funding

Personal learning curves / possible mistakes

Equipment / supplies failure

Traffic / transportation / weather

Lack of adequate time / poor time estimates

Loss of motivation

Arising priorities or conflicting emergencies

Other(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**I commit to these best practices:**

Yes No

Calendaring tasks

Yes No

Written communication with all parties

Accountability partner(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Back up plan(s)

Checklist(s)

Motivators: \_\_\_\_\_

**Actionable steps (check as completed):**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

Completed     Qualifies for Achievement Badge

because  
I said  
I would.

# The Life of a Promise

There are 5 phases in the Life of a Promise. Much like the phases in the life of a butterfly, they can be visualized using the diagram below.

Here are the guiding principles for each of the phases in **The Life of a Promise**.

1. Catalyst:

What started the Promise?

What is the situation?

Who instigated the Promise?

2. Contemplation:

Is the Promise going to have the impact that I want it to have?

Does this Promise accomplish what I want it to?

Is this Promise going to make a difference?

3. Communication:

Write it down. Make sure that it says what you want it to mean.

Make sure that what you meant is what the other person understands.

4. Carry Out:

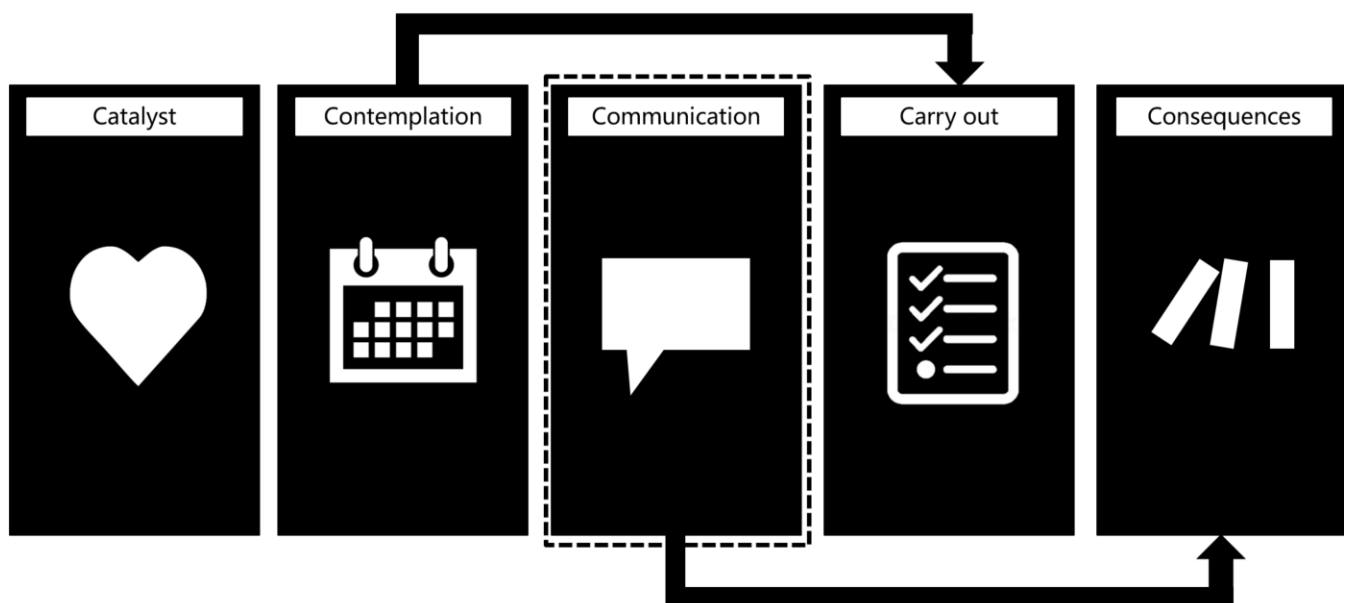
Keep the Promise. Have a back up plan if necessary.

5. Consequences:

Do all parties agree that the Promise was kept?

Remember the ripple effect.

A Promise is forever and starts a forward motion that does not end.



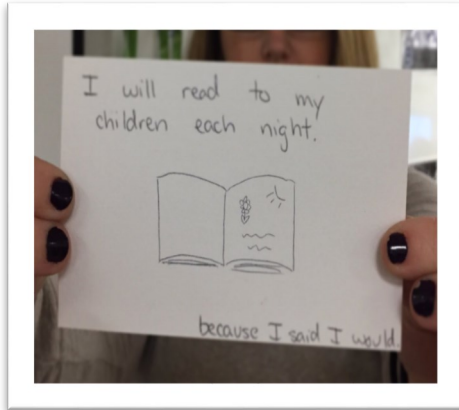
because  
I said  
I would.

# The Big Reveal: Sharing your Promise

Now comes the big moment. Remember modeling is doing, not telling.

If you need to, review the section on modeling (p5).

Here are some helpful tips:



- Decide when and where you are going share your Promise.
- Do NOT share the process just yet.
- Share your Promise with your child or the entire family if appropriate (your decision).
- Place your Promise card on the Promise tracker.
- Explain that you are going to keep the card there until you have completed the Promise.

---

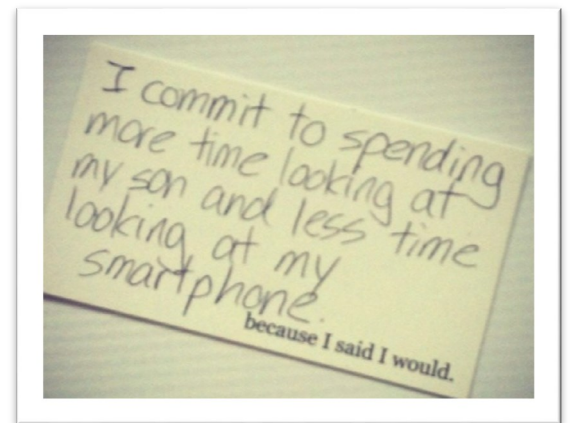
Take a minute and write a note about how the experience of sharing your Promise felt for you.

---

---

---

---



What do you think your child or family was thinking?

---

---

---

because  
I said  
I would.

## Tracking your Promise

### Keep track of your Promise.

- Put your Promise card on the Promise Tracker and place it in a visible area.
- As you move through the Life of your Promise, check off the box or make any notes you might think are necessary. This may cause some questions or raise some interest from children.
- Curiosity is good!
- Explain that you are tracking the Life of your Promise because you want to make sure that you are on staying on track to keep it and that you want to be a person of your word.
- Don't over explain. A little mystery can help keep interest.
- You will explain this in detail when you complete your Promise. This tactic is used to encourage the child's natural curiosity and keep them interested.
- Try not to give too much information.









## Promise Tracker

The Promise Tracker is a tool to help understand the Life of a Promise. Practice will help make these basic steps a part of the thought process of each Promise made and help the outcome be a Promise kept.

Simply put the tracker on the fridge or another place where it can be easily seen and remain visible. Update it as each of the phases are completed by putting an x or a sticker or some other type of mark in the column. Notes may be included if preferred.

# Promise Tracker

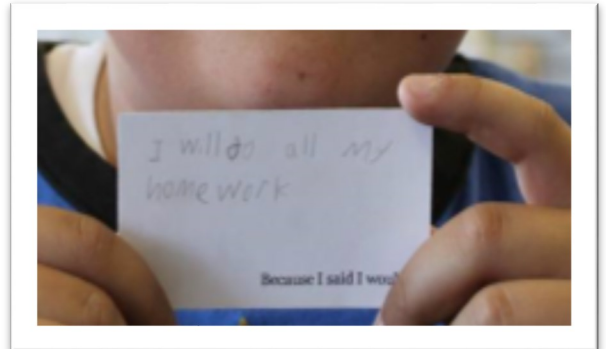
**To Use this tracker:** Follow the Life of a Promise by placing the Promise card in the marked column . Stay accountable by checking off the columns as you complete each phase in the Life of your Promise.

|  <b>Promise Card</b> |  <b>Catalyst</b> |  <b>Contemplation</b>  |  <b>Communication</b>   |  <b>Carry Out</b> |  <b>Consequence</b>  |
|---|---|--|--|--|---|
|   | What started the Promise?<br>What is the situation?<br>Who instigated the Promise?                  | Is the Promise going to have the impact I want it to have?<br>Does this Promise accomplish what I want it to?<br>Is this Promise going to make a difference? | Make sure your Promise says what you want it to mean.<br>Be mindful of Word Choice.<br>Make sure that what you meant is what the other person              | Keep the Promise.<br>Have a back up plan.  | Do all the party's agree that the Promise has been kept?<br>Remember the ripple effect. A Promise is forever and starts a forward motion that does not end. |
|   | What started the Promise?<br>What is the situation?<br>Who instigated the Promise?                  | Is the Promise going to have the impact I want it to have?<br>Does this Promise accomplish what I want it to?<br>Is this Promise going to make a difference? | Make sure your Promise says what you want it to mean.<br>Be mindful of Word Choice.<br>Make sure that what you meant is what the other person understands. | Keep the Promise.<br>Have a back up plan.  | Do all the party's agree that the Promise has been kept?<br>Remember the ripple effect. A Promise is forever and starts a forward motion that does not end. |
|   | What started the Promise?<br>What is the situation?<br>Who instigated the Promise?                  | Is the Promise going to have the impact I want it to have?<br>Does this Promise accomplish what I want it to?<br>Is this Promise going to make a difference? | Make sure your Promise says what you want it to mean.<br>Be mindful of Word Choice.<br>Make sure that what you meant is what the other person understands. | Keep the Promise.<br>Have a back up plan.  | Do all the party's agree that the Promise has been kept?<br>Remember the ripple effect. A Promise is forever and starts a forward motion that does not end. |

# After the Promise

Share when your Promise has been kept. If it is not an ideal time to talk through the process, just make sure to make the point that the Promise has been kept. Then, plan a time in the near future to talk about the process. If possible, have the discussion immediately following the kept Promise.

- Get your Promise planner out and the tracker and share the process of making a Promise.
- Use the Promise History that you wrote. (pg. 9) to share your experience with promises and the meaning they have had for you.



## A Child's First Promise

Encourage your child to make a Promise.

You don't have to overwhelm them with all of the information, at once. Just introduce the ideas involved:

- Make a Promise that has a short time line.
- Make a Promise you can keep.
- Think through the obstacles or constraints involved in the Promise.
- An older child may be ready for the Promise Planner. You know your child best.

Make sure that you have a Promise card ready. (Cut out below).

Plan to make another Promise at this time.

Each of you make a Promise together.



because I said I would.

because I said I would.

because  
I said  
I would.

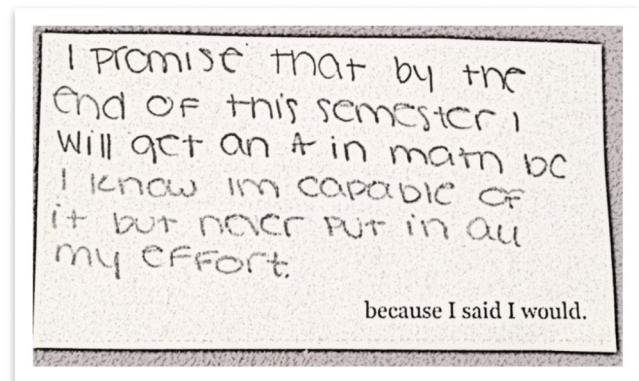


because  
I said  
I would.

Celebrating

### Following up and using the Promise tracker

- After the Promises have been written on the Promise Cards, put both of the Promise Cards on the Promise Tracker.
- Check- in after school or during dinner or another time you interact and explain the phases of the Promise as you check them off for your Promise.
- Encourage children to check off theirs as well as, they begin to learn and understand the phases.



This process allows the child to practice making a Promise and feel more confident in the process when they make their next Promise. You are giving them the chance to practice developing character. When the Promise has been completed, it's time to celebrate!

### Celebrating is exciting!

This can be a time to make a difference by using positive praise. Here are some do's and don'ts when giving praise based on the concept of Growth Mindset from Carol Dweck, Professor of Psychology at Stanford University.

#### Do's:

- Notice kids good efforts and strategies and praise them.
- Be specific about the praised behaviors and reinforce this behavior with your feedback.
- Use praise to link the outcomes to child's efforts.
- Talk explicitly and in detail about the strategies the child used. Comment on which strategies were helpful, and which were not. Ask your child to explain his or her work to you.

#### Don'ts:

- Don't offer praise for trivial accomplishments or weak efforts.
- Don't inflate praise, particularly for children with low self-esteem.
- Don't ever say, "You are so smart." in response to good work. Instead, praise the work a child has done
- Don't comfort children following a failure by telling them that not everyone can be good at everything.

Take your child's completed Promise and place it in the ***because I said I would*** Frame.

Display the kept Promise prominently. Help your child feel good about being a person of character!

because  
I said  
I would.

Your completed Promise Card here.

because I said I would.

# Making Promises Part of the Routine

## What Now?

Every family has unique constraints on the time that they spend together. Think about **your** family.

If you have a time that you spend together every week, like game night or movie night or even homework time, consider taking a few minutes of that time to:

- Make Promises.
- Check-in on the Life of Promises that have been made.
- Make sure to celebrate your kept Promises

If family time is not a part of your regular routine, now is the time to start making it a part of family life. This time is invaluable to a child.

## Sharing Promises

At *because I said I would*, we encourage you to share your kept Promises with others. This can be done at parents discretion using any of our social media :

- Simply take a picture of the Promise card
- Post.

## Family night suggestions

***becauseisaidiwould.com*** has a large collection of Personal Development Videos and Ted talks that would make a great addition to learning about Promises and good character.

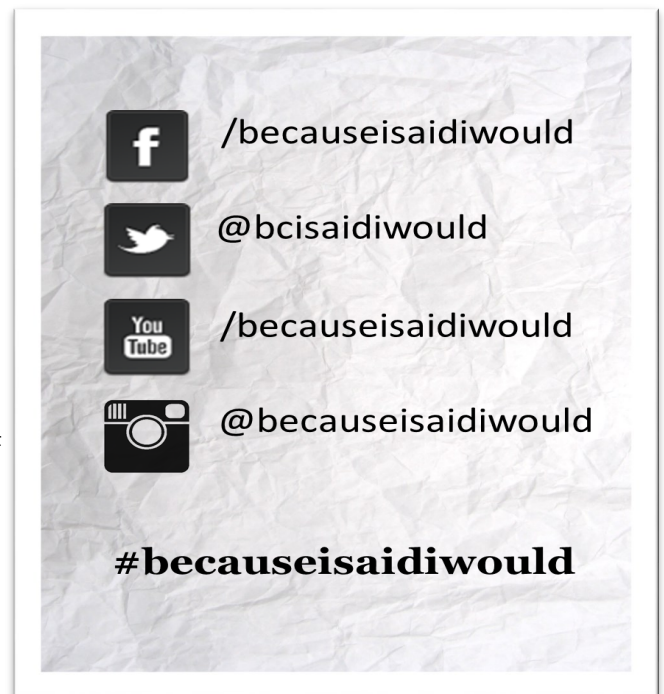
Take some time to check out titles like:

“**What all great superheroes have in common**” Watch the video and share the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUviUikVh-U>

“**because I said I would.**” Watch the video and share the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=looz1TrCmbs>

“**How to get better with word choice: Bad word choice**” Watch the video at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=6&v=uTyG4gg777M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=6&v=uTyG4gg777M)

There are many more titles. Please take time to check them out.



because  
I said  
I would.

# Additional Tools

## Parent Checklist for healthy self-awareness

1. Have meaningful conversations.
2. Actively listen to children's concerns.
3. Model good behavior for a child.
4. Think about your word choice.

**"Even little changes in the way you do things help kids stay excited about a subject,"**

-Kathleen McCartney, Ph.D.  
Parents advisor, Dean of the  
Harvard Graduate School of



5. Consider the point of view of others in your interactions.
6. Follow through on your Promises.
7. Hold yourself accountable.
8. Think about your decisions and the consequences of your choices.
9. Allow children to make some decisions on their own.

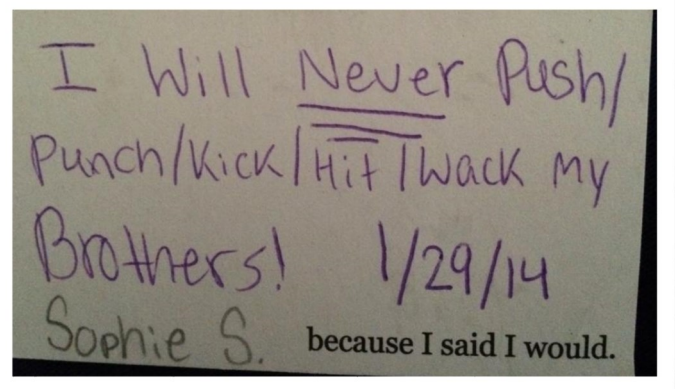
10. When you feel stressed or overwhelmed, take a moment to reflect.

Please visit ***becauseisaidiwould.com*** for

- Promise Cards and Promise Planners
- Additional Character education materials including videos and lessons
- Volunteer Project Planners

Thank you for your time and the effort that you put into teaching a child what it means to be a person of character.

Please take a few minutes to help us by completing this survey [here](#).



because  
I said  
I would.