

2017

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



Greater Good Parenting

Raising Caring, Courageous Kids

Appendix: Research Resources

To learn more about research on the qualities targeted by this Request for Proposals (RFP), please refer to the following collection of (a) relevant articles on *Greater Good*, the online magazine published by the Greater Good Science Center; (b) links to other organizations that feature relevant science; and (c) brief summaries of research studies.

We provide these resources to help you zero in on scientific findings or concepts that could help shape your proposal and your program. While your proposal does not need to demonstrate expert knowledge of this research, it should convey a basic familiarity with key concepts that you plan to cover.

(a) Greater Good Articles

The Greater Good Science Center has created webpages providing a basic overview of research on some of the key concepts covered by this RFP. Though not all of the topics listed below are specifically mentioned within the RFP, they are still very relevant to the core focus of the RFP.

On each of the below “definition pages,” we explain what each concept means, what benefits are associated with it, and identify specific research-based practices for cultivating it.

- [Gratitude Definition Page](#)
- [Forgiveness Definition Page](#)
- [Altruism Definition Page](#)
- [Compassion Definition Page](#)
- [Empathy Definition Page](#)

Over the years, *Greater Good* has produced many articles reporting on key insights from research relevant to the RFP. Below are a sample of articles that should help as you consider how these research findings could be incorporated into your proposal and your parenting program. You can find additional articles on [Greater Good](#), including on its Parenting & Family channel.

- [Seven Ways to Foster Gratitude in Kids](#)
- [Helping Kids Overcome the Bystander Effect](#)
- [How to Help Teens Find Purpose](#)
- [How to Talk with Teens about Purpose](#)
- [Does Forgiveness Make Kids Happier?](#)
- [Eight Keys to Forgiveness](#)
- [How Loved Children Become Giving Adults](#)
- [How to Help Kids Learn to Love Giving](#)
- [Can Living in the Moment Make You a Better Parent?](#)
- [Three Tips for Cultivating Humility](#)
- [How to Raise Kids Who Aren't Spoiled](#)
- [Four Steps to Cultivating Compassion in Boys](#)

(b) Organizations

In addition to the Greater Good Science Center, many other organizations have focused on the science behind the various skills and strengths covered by this RFP. Though some of these organizations use different terminology, all of the groups listed below produce resources that speak to the core interests of our RFP: developing kind, caring, courageous children—kids of high character who treat others with compassion and respect and make choices that place the long-term good of their communities ahead of their immediate self-interest.

We encourage you to visit their websites to learn more about the scientific research and key concepts that should guide your proposal.

- [Character Lab](#)
- [Character Day](#)
- [GreatKids.org](#)
- [Making Caring Common](#)
- [Character.org](#)
- [Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development](#)
- [Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence](#)
- [VIA Institute on Character](#)
- [Center for Character and Citizenship](#)
- [Center for the 4th and 5th R's](#)
- [The Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education](#)
- [GreatSchools](#)

(c) Summaries of Research Studies

Below please find short summaries of studies on the core themes identified within the RFP. After each summary, we have distilled key practical lessons it offers for parents.

1. Forgiveness

Wal, R. C., Karremans, J. C., & Cillessen, A. H. (2017). [Causes and consequences of children's forgiveness](#). *Child Development Perspectives*, 11(2), 97-101.

Just like adults, kids face offenses in day-to-day interactions with others that might initially lead them to respond by retaliating. In contrast, a child may respond with forgiveness—a positive change of motivation toward an offender. When children forgive, it means they need to regulate negative feelings, thoughts, and behaviors they may have toward an offender, and transform them into positive feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. Kids are more likely to forgive when they place high value on a relationship, have higher self-esteem, and have greater ability to control their impulses. The family relationship is an especially important factor for children's forgiveness. For example, parents who are more forgiving are more likely to have children who are more forgiving. Children learn through direct instruction from parents as well as indirect observation of parents' behaviors. Forgiveness builds positive relationships with friends and improves children's psychological well-being.

Parenting tips:

- Model for your children how to forgive in the co-parenting relationship because they notice that better parental relationships and positive feelings between parents result from forgiveness.

- Provide clear guidance to your children about how to respond when offended and remind them that forgiveness is also a choice.

Fehr, R., Gelfand, M. J., & Nag, M. (2010). The road to forgiveness: a meta-analytic synthesis of its situational and dispositional correlates. *Psychological Bulletin*, 136(5), 894.

When do people forgive? Researchers identified three important components of forgiveness: 1) thoughts that help make sense of the problem, 2) feelings about the problem, and 3) social relationships. First, thoughts that separate the person from the problem can increase forgiveness. For example, hearing an apology and sensing goodwill from the person who wronged you can motivate forgiveness, despite the problem they may have caused. Second, feelings of empathy for the transgressor are central to forgiving him or her, whereas feeling anger toward him or her has the opposite effect. Because of this, an individual's tendencies toward anger or sadness can sometimes get in the way of forgiveness. Finally, close and satisfying relationships facilitate the practice of forgiveness because we want to remain committed to these relationships even in the face of conflict.

Parenting tips:

- Help your child to forgive by zooming out and separating the person from the problem (e.g., "Tommy is a kind friend even though he broke your tower.").
- If your child is angry with a friend, wait for your child to calm down first, then encourage your child to put her/himself in the friend's shoes to increase empathy.

2. Generosity

Cowell, J. M., Lee, K., Malcolm-Smith, S., Selcuk, B., Zhou, X., & Decety, J. (2017). The development of generosity and moral cognition across five cultures. *Developmental Science*, 20(4).

Researchers studied what makes children generous in a study across five countries: the United States, Canada, South Africa, Turkey, and China. Across the world, children were more generous and more willing to share as they got older. Children were also more generous if they were able to control their immediate desires and impulses in order to give to friends. Perspective-taking was a helpful tool for this. There were also differences across the world. For example, children in North America and China were more giving than children in Turkey and South Africa. This tells us that generosity and giving might look differently across different people and cultures.

Parenting tips:

- Help your younger children become more generous by teaching them to put themselves in other’s shoes, especially when the impulse to “take” is stronger than the desire to “give.”
- With your child, make a list of how different friends and family members show generosity, and point out that everyone has different ways of giving.

Paulus, M., & Moore, C. (2017). Preschoolers’ generosity increases with understanding of the affective benefits of sharing. *Developmental Science, 20(3)*.

Sharing feels good—that’s clear from a large body of scientific research. Do young children share because they know that they will feel warm and positive when they give to others? A study of preschool-age children showed that the more children thought they would feel happy when they shared (and unhappy when they did not), the more likely they were actually to share! The expectation of feeling good when they share may actually drive the action of sharing.

Parenting tips:

- When young children are having trouble sharing, remind them that it feels good to be able to share with friends.
- When your children do share, ask them how it feels, and call attention to how happy and positive they might be feeling.

3. Gratitude

Reckart, H., Huebner, E. S., Hills, K. J., & Valois, R. F. (2017). A preliminary study of the origins of early adolescents’ gratitude differences. *Personality and Individual Differences, 116, 44-50*.

Feeling gratitude has many positive benefits for our health and relationships. For example, teenagers who feel grateful experience fewer physical health problems like headaches and stomachaches. But where do feelings of gratitude come from? Researchers studied how social relationships, personality, and stress in teens contribute to gratitude. Social support was one of the important factors contributing to the experience of gratitude. Teens who felt supported by parents, friends, and teachers were more likely to feel grateful. Personality also made a difference. Outgoing, energetic teens may experience gratitude more easily than sensitive, nervous teens.

Parenting tips:

- At the end of a school day, ask your teen how friends or teachers have been supportive. Ask what makes your teen feel supported at home and school.

- Especially during stressful times, like exams or romantic break-ups, ask your teens to make a list of things that made them feel grateful that day.

Rothenberg, W. A., Hussong, A. M., Langley, H. A., Egerton, G. A., Halberstadt, A. G., Coffman, J. L., ... & Costanzo, P. R. (2017). Grateful parents raising grateful children: Niche selection and the socialization of child gratitude. *Applied Developmental Science, 21(2)*, 106-120.

In young children, gratitude is not an enduring personality trait but a short-term feeling of happiness or appreciation that comes with the experience of receiving. For example, it's like that warm, happy feeling you get when someone gives you a compliment on your work. Research has found that grateful parents raise grateful children. How? Grateful parents choose activities and environments that foster gratitude in their children. They are more likely to set explicit goals to foster gratitude in their children, and choose activities or environments based on these goals. This in turn increases how frequently their children experience gratitude.

Parenting tips:

- Set a goal for yourself to choose one activity (e.g., counting your blessings) or place (e.g., a religious event) that you can go to with your child this week to foster the experience of gratitude.
- With your child, write “thank you” letters to friends or family members.

4. Honesty

Lee, K., Talwar, V., McCarthy, A., Ross, I., Evans, A., & Arruda, C. (2014). Can classic moral stories promote honesty in children? *Psychological Science, 25(8)*, 1630-1636.

Stories are important ways to teach children honesty. Does science support this popular practice of using stories to teach children moral values? When researchers compared the effects of the three stories *Pinocchio*, *The Boy who Cried Wolf*, and *George Washington and the Cherry Tree* on young children’s lying, they found that not all stories had the same effect. In fact, only *George Washington and the Cherry Tree* was effective in promoting honesty. Why? George’s father praises him for telling the truth. In *Pinocchio* and *The Boy who Cried Wolf*, the main characters instead suffer the negative consequences of lying. Research tells us that emphasizing the positivity of honesty is more valuable than emphasizing the negativity of dishonesty.

Parenting tips:

- Read *George Washington and the Cherry Tree* with your child as a bedtime story.
- When you find your child being truthful, praise your child with positive attention and warmth, re-emphasizing the importance of honesty.

Talwar, V., Arruda, C., & Yachison, S. (2015). The effects of punishment and appeals for honesty on children's truth-telling behavior. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 130*, 209-217.

What tools do parents have to teach their children to be honest? One study compared the effects of external and internal appeals. External appeals are positive approvals from others for being honest. Internal appeals are feelings of self-satisfaction that comes from doing the “right” thing. Researchers found that to teach children to tell the truth, external appeals are much more effective. Parents have a powerful tool of telling a child how pleased and happy they would be if the child were honest. These external appeals were effective regardless of whether or not there was a punishment for lying. On the other hand, punishments actually undermined the effect of internal appeals.

Parenting tips:

- The next time you want your child to be honest, let the child know: “I (or others) will be really happy and pleased with you, if you tell the truth.”
- Make a list with your child on how telling the truth impacts family members, friends, and teachers positively.

5. Humility

Chancellor, J., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2013). Humble beginnings: Current trends, state perspectives, and hallmarks of humility. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass, 7*(11), 819-833.

Researchers have begun to uncover five important aspects of humility. First, humility is about accepting yourself as you are. A clear awareness of yourself, your own strengths, and weaknesses are key. Second, humble people see themselves and others accurately without needing to make them better or worse than they actually are. This is not easy, given that most people have a positive bias about themselves. For example, most of us think we are above average, which cannot be true! Third, humble people are also teachable people. Humility makes one more open to new information, even when this information is embarrassing or unflattering. Fourth, humility is about thinking of yourself less and attending to others. Being truly happy or grateful for others are good examples of selflessness. Finally, a hallmark of humility is seeing others as having the same value and importance as yourself.

Parenting tips:

- With self-compassion and honesty, model for your children your ability to identify both your strengths and areas you are working on. Ask your children to also identify their strengths and areas they want to grow.

- With your child, do one thing today for another person that serves no concrete benefit to you.

Kruse, E., Chancellor, J., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2017). State humility: Measurement, conceptual validation, and intrapersonal processes. *Self and Identity*, 16(4), 399-438.

Humility is a balanced, secure, and non-distorted sense of one's own strengths and limitations. How does one develop humility? Affirm yourself. When individuals can accept themselves fully, they are also more able to accept their own limitations. Shift away attention from ourselves and onto the strengths and contributions of others. Focusing on others increases humility, whereas focusing on yourself or your superiority decreases humility.

Parenting tips:

- With your children, think back to recent team activities they were part of and create a list of how other team members' made valuable contributions.
- This week, choose one pretentious or stuck-up action that you do (e.g., name-dropping) and try to reduce it.

6. Love

Sprecher, S., & Fehr, B. (2005). Compassionate love for close others and humanity. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 22(5), 629-651.

Compassionate love includes feelings, thoughts, and actions that are focused on caring, concern, and tenderness for others. It drives us to support, help, and understand others, especially those in need. Compassionate love is not limited to romantic relationships, or close friends, but for all of humanity. Researchers have found that volunteering and providing social support to others are linked to higher levels of compassionate love in college students. Higher religiosity and spirituality are also linked to greater compassionate love for close others and humanity.

Parenting tips:

- With your child, find one way to help a stranger in need (e.g., victims of natural disasters) through donations, letter writing, or giving goods.
- Sign up for a volunteering activity at your child's school or religious/spiritual community event this month.

Boldt, L. J., Kochanska, G., Grekin, R., & Brock, R. L. (2016). Attachment in middle childhood: predictors, correlates, and implications for adaptation. *Attachment & human development, 18(2)*, 115-140.

Young children are hard-wired to develop unique interpersonal bonds—attachment—with their parents in order to survive. This attachment shapes a child’s sense of security that helps a child soothe and regulate emotions under stress. Researchers have found that the most important factor contributing to a secure attachment in middle childhood is responsive parental care. Parents who are sensitive and responsive to children’s needs develop strong bonds that over time lead to fewer behavioral problems and higher competence in their children.

Parenting tips:

- Make a two-column list of 1) how you know when your child needs your attention and support, and 2) how you respond to that need with warmth and acceptance.
- Build in 15-minutes of one-on-one time with your child daily to ask how her/his day was and how things are at home and school.

7. Purpose

Bronk, K. C. (2012). A grounded theory of the development of noble youth purpose. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 27(1)*, 78-109.

Purpose represents an intention to accomplish something that is meaningful to both the self and the world beyond the self. Finding and maintaining such purpose is a key factor in psychological well-being and life satisfaction. In a study of teens, researchers found that purpose develops in four steps. First, a purpose often begins as a minor commitment, shaped by early experiences. Second, this commitment is sustained when there is a match between personal skills, social needs, and personal meaning. Third, positive feedback, including support from like-minded peers and mentors, heightens the commitment into a purpose. Finally, one’s purpose evolves over time through access to new opportunities, resources, and experiences.

Parenting tips:

- Find an activity with your teen where personal talent meets social needs.
- If your teen is passionate about an activity, then help her/him find a supportive community of peers and mentors.

Malin, H., Liauw, I., & Damon, W. (2017). Purpose and character development in early adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 46(6), 1200-1215.

What is the relationship between (1) purpose, long-term intention to accomplish aims meaningful to the self and the world beyond the self, and (2) other character strengths? In a study of 8th graders in the United States, researchers found that dispositional, enduring gratitude was closely related to having a purpose. Children who were able to feel grateful for their blessings and have ongoing appreciation for the simple things were more likely to have a purpose. Children who were universally compassionate (not only compassionate under certain conditions) were also more likely to have a purpose. To raise children with a purpose, also fostering character strengths in gratitude and compassion may be important.

Parenting tips:

- Create a family mealtime routine of identifying several things for which you are grateful.
 - Find a volunteering activity with your teen to help others in need to build universal compassion.
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8. Reliability

White, R. E., Prager, E. O., Schaefer, C., Kross, E., Duckworth, A. L., & Carlson, S. M. (2017). The “Batman Effect”: Improving perseverance in young children. *Child Development*, 88(5), 1563-1571.

In an environment full of temptations, like iPhones and TV in the background, how do children persevere on their “boring” but important task at hand? Researchers found that psychological distancing, or taking an outsider view on one’s own situation, helped children persist on the important task. For example, children worked harder when they asked themselves, “Is Tommy working hard?” (third-person) than “Am I working hard?” (first-person). Better yet, children worked the hardest when they dressed up as another character with props, “Is Batman working hard?” Psychological distancing helps children reduce momentary distractions and focus on more long-term goals.

Parenting tips:

- The next time a child needs to persist on a difficult or boring task, give her/him a superhero character to become during the task.
- In the face of a challenge, teach your children third-person self-talk “[child’s name] can do this!” instead of “I can do this.”

Eskreis-Winkler, L., Shulman, E. P., Young, V., Tsukayama, E., Brunwasser, S. M., & Duckworth, A. L. (2016). Using wise interventions to motivate deliberate practice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 111(5), 728-744.

How do gymnasts become Olympians? How do chess players become grandmasters? Studies have found that deliberate practice is key. Deliberate practice is engaging in an activity outside of your comfort-zone, and improving performance through repetition and feedback on the most critical skills in that activity. Children learn this through focusing on their weaknesses, receiving feedback, focusing 100%, and repeating until mastery. At the same time, two important messages are given. First, while talent and effort both contribute to success, the importance of effort must be highlighted. Second, when children experience frustration and confusion, interpret them as positive signs that a child is at the optimal level that is stretching the child beyond their comfort-zone.

Parenting tips:

- With your child, come up with real-world examples where you thought the success was due to talent, but really came from deep practice and effort.
- Ask your children after a math test or a basketball game, “Do you know what you got right and what you still need to work on?” If the answer is “No,” they may need more supportive feedback in order to improve.

Contact Information:

Maryam Abdullah, Ph.D.
GGSC Parenting Program Director
ggscparenting@berkeley.edu

Learn More About This Initiative:

[Greater Good Science Center’s website](#)



ggsc.berkeley.edu

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