

Summer volunteer work can build character and leadership

The world's problems can seem overwhelming. It's important for kids to learn that every person can make a difference, and that when people work together, the results are amazing!

Summer volunteering is a great way to teach this lesson to your child—all while building his confidence, compassion and leadership skills.

To get started, talk with your child about:

- **Interests.** What subjects interest him most? How do they relate to community needs? If he loves animals, he could help an animal rescue group. If he's interested in business, perhaps he could help with a fundraiser. Your child's enthusiasm is a great motivator.
- **Skills.** Your child's abilities and strengths can be gifts to others. He might hold a bake sale or read to younger children. Sometimes it's fun to learn new skills, too, such as how to help with landscaping or home repairs.
- **Needs.** Perhaps your child has noticed a park that needs sprucing up. Or maybe a homeless shelter needs food. Go online with your child and search for upcoming community service events in your area. You could even ask your child's teacher if the school needs help over the summer.
- **Schedules.** Volunteering takes time, and families are busy! Set realistic goals that leave room for other priorities. Depending on your family's commitments, you and your child might volunteer just a few hours here and there—or decide to take on one large, exciting project!

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