



# Family Focus on Fairness

## What is Fairness?

One of the first concepts in life that children pick up on is fairness. How many times have you heard a child say, “That’s not fair!” However, fairness is not easy to define.

It’s just as easy for adults to feel certain things “just aren’t fair,” especially when things aren’t going in your favor. But just because something doesn’t go “your way,” doesn’t mean that it wasn’t fair.<sup>1</sup>

## Youth—Parent Partnership

The *Focus on Character* topic at the latest youth meeting was fairness. For the roll call activity, youth were asked to share a time when they felt they were treated fairly or a time when they felt they were treated unfairly. Parents may want to discuss their child’s response and help them find ways that could remedy the situation in the future.

This would also be a good time to discuss the family’s rules with your child and why there are rules.

Parents should also remember that the best way to teach children is to model the behavior we want them to have. It is time to take an inward look at yourself to determine any stereotypes, prejudices, or other biases you may be showing your child, without even realizing it.

## Family Activity

- Watch a family movie together. Discuss how the characters in the movie were being fair or unfair.
- Have a family meeting to discuss the family rules. Include your children in the discussion about what the rules should be and consequences for not following the rules.

## Fairness Challenge:

At the next sporting event you attend, act in a sportsmanlike manner. What does sportsmanlike behavior look like?

- No booing or yelling at referees/umpires, other team’s players, or fans.
- No intentional distractions toward the other team.
- Keep playing area clear of litter.
- Stay off playing area during game time.
- Congratulate other team and fans for a good game or winning.

## Fairness Quote:

“We judge ourselves by what we feel capable of doing, while other judges us by what we have already done.” — Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

<sup>1</sup>Adapted from Jody Dexter, et.al. “Caring Activities for 4-H Clubs,” *Character Counts! For 4-H Clubs*, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension, 1997.