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The Old Schoolhouse® Magazine

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The Homeschool Minute™ Let's Play a Game!

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Summer brings back some great memories. One particular summer, I learned what it meant to be "**RESPONSIBLE**."

I was a "new cadet" at West Point. Our reality began with an upperclassman saying there are only four acceptable responses for the next 12 months: "Yes, sir"; "No, sir"; "**No excuse, sir**" and "Sir, I do not understand."

Throughout the year, when an upperclassman would yell something like, "why isn't your room prepared for inspection?" you learned that regardless of the situation, the right response was "no excuse, sir."

One of the lessons I learned at West Point was that **I AM RESPONSIBLE**. There are no "excuses" for the decisions I make and the outcomes that result.

Fast forward 25 years. When my business results are disappointing, when my marriage is struggling through a difficult season, or when parenthood has taught me a painful lesson, I remind myself, "**no excuse, sir**."

Summer is a great time to teach our children about being responsible. Here are a few thoughts:

1. **Plan a fun activity:** Choose something that is uniquely fun for your children (a trip to the park, cook a favorite meal, etc.)
2. **Assign Accountability:** "Samantha, you are in charge of dessert tonight. What do you want to make?" Provide children with as much freedom, as possible, with the task. Freedom will help strengthen creativity and courage.
3. **Provide Support:** Set the expectation that you are there to help, but they "own" the task.
4. **Execute the Plan:** Have fun. Encouragement will help to build confidence and desire.
5. **Review the Outcome:** Provide a realistic review of what happened with a level of encouragement that keeps them motivated for more.

Learning responsibility is a critical life skill. Children can learn this character-building quality with some "fun" activities that they can "own."



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David has developed award-winning resources under the brand **Character Creates Opportunity®**, a character-development initiative designed for all ages. He is also the inventor of **Abundant Harvest®**--families, schools, counseling programs, and faith-based organizations nationwide enjoy playing this award-winning conversation game. It opens the door to more productive dialogue and encourages decision making based on such principles as honesty, loyalty, and commitment.

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