

What is a Character Growth Card?

The CGC is a school-based assessment developed to help middle school teachers provide students with formative feedback on skills that researchers and teachers alike have linked with success. We believe these questions are a useful springboard for teaching and learning activities related to a young person's development of character skills. It is not appropriate for diagnosing or comparing children. We do not yet have evidence that it is a valid tool for evaluating programs or schools.

The skills on this card fall into three major categories: social character, which facilitates harmonious relationships with other people and is exemplified by social intelligence and gratitude; achievement character, sometimes termed performance character, which facilitates the achievement of personal goals and is exemplified by grit; and intellectual character, which facilitates learning and is exemplified by curiosity. Some skills relate to two categories. For example, self-control is both interpersonal and an achievement strength; zest is both interpersonal and a learning strength; and, finally, optimism relates both to achievement and learning.

Why these skills?

The skills and behaviors on this card have been shown either to contribute to success in school and life, or are important ends in themselves in the context of K–12 education.

For each of these skills, there is at least some evidence that they can be cultivated, thus making them an especially important target for families and educators interested in supporting student growth and development.

How should I use this card?

When working with children, adults who use this tool find it helpful to:

- *Discuss the differences and similarities between their scores and a child's self-ratings for each skill area.*
- *Return to this card on a quarterly basis as a way to emphasize that over time, these skills can grow and change.*
- *Discuss whether scores have changed over time and a child's perceptions about the source of this change. Has the child's behavior changed? Or perhaps have the child's personal standards changed? For example, children who become more aware of self-control skills may wish to change their self-control rating after several months of personal observation and reflection, even if their behavior itself has not changed much.*
- *Discuss different situations or environments when ratings might be different than the norm. For example, a child might say that he or she is normally a 5 on self control, but when it comes to playing on the baseball team, he or she would give herself a 1 or 2 in this area.*

Again, please note that this card should **not** be used to diagnose or compare children, nor to compare schools or programs. Rather please use it to help children focus on their own growth and development in these areas, and as a conversation starter.

CHARACTER GROWTH CARD

■ Q1 ■ Q2 ■ Q3 ■ Q4

STUDENT NAME _____

GRADE _____ SCHOOL _____ DATE _____

1 = Almost Never · 2 = Very Rarely · 3 = Rarely · 4 = Sometimes · 5 = Often · 6 = Very Often · 7 = Almost Always

	SELF-ASSESSMENT	AVERAGE TEACHER SCORE	TEACHER 1	TEACHER 2	TEACHER 3	TEACHER 4	TEACHER 5
GRIT Finished whatever s/he began Stuck with a project or activity for more than a few weeks Tried very hard even after experiencing failure Stayed committed to goals Kept working hard even when s/he felt like quitting							
OPTIMISM Believed that effort would improve his/her future When bad things happened, s/he thought about things they could do to make it better next time Stayed motivated, even when things didn't go well Believed that s/he could improve on things they weren't good at							
SELF CONTROL (<i>school work</i>) Came to class prepared Remembered and followed directions Got to work right away instead of waiting until the last minute Paid attention and resisted distractions							
SELF CONTROL (<i>interpersonal</i>) Remained calm even when criticized or otherwise provoked Allowed others to speak without interrupting Was polite to adults and peers Kept temper in check							
GRATITUDE Recognized what other people did for them Showed appreciation for opportunities Expressed appreciation by saying thank you Did something nice for someone else as a way of saying thank you							
SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE Was able to find solutions during conflicts with others Showed that s/he cared about the feelings of others Adapted to different social situations							
CURIOSITY Was eager to explore new things Asked questions to help s/he learn better Took an active interest in learning							
ZEST Actively participated Showed enthusiasm Approached new situations with excitement and energy							