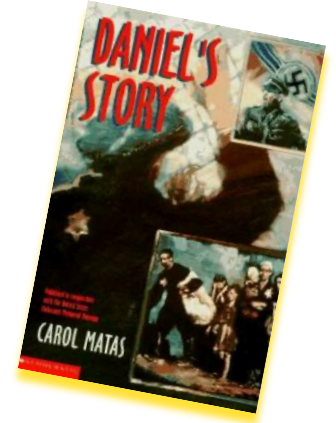


ETHICS AND LITERACY

Developing a moral sense in children

In a complex, lightning-paced, consumer-based world, teaching children to be thoughtful, considerate and to do the right thing can be a challenge. The best thing, of course, is to model moral behaviour. There are many children's books available that inspire moral reflection: *Daniel's Story* by Carol Matas is a fine example.



TIPS FOR PARENTS

- ① *Use stories and games to inspire moral reflection and encourage empathy in children: Read or tell stories that convey virtues like tolerance and compassion.*
- ① *Talk about what's going on in the world on a level each child can grasp: war, famine, disaster, celebrity-scandals. A parent needn't (a parent can't) shelter children from what's being showcased in the media; indeed, it's vital to discuss problems—here and in other countries—in order to keep children from feeling powerless.*
- ① *Advocate for those less fortunate: in this way children learn they have a responsibility for others. Example: donate winter clothing to refugees or food to soup kitchens.*
- ① *Encourage environmental awareness: Recycling, composting, etc., are family habits which instill in children respect for the environment and which give them a sense of having control over their future.*
- ① *Develop children's critical thinking skills. Critical thinking is key to being able to make good personal decisions based on quality information and to participate fully in our democracy. Allow children to express their opinions, respectfully, at home, at school, in the community-at-large. Even children can write letters to the editor.*
- ① *Encourage your children to become leaders at their school, to participate in volunteer programs, or to join the debating team.*