



### What is Initiative?

Initiative is the ability to begin and follow through with a plan or task, the willingness to take the first step, or the act of taking the lead. People with initiative are said to be "self starters," because they do not need close supervision. They see a need, carefully plan ways to meet that need, step out to act, and follow through until the need is met. Initiative means taking responsibility for a task that needs to be done, even though it wasn't necessarily assigned to the person. It means taking ownership in making a group project successful.

A person with initiative has the character within to try, even when the task looks difficult or there will be no reward. He is willing to go beyond what is assigned.



If you notice a need, perhaps it is your task to address it!

### Initiative "Killers"

- "That isn't my job!"
- "I won't get the credit for doing that."
- "Doing that task would be below my dignity!"
- "I don't know how to do that!"
- "I'm afraid to do that."
- "I'm really too tired."
- "I'm too busy."

### Teach Your Children to Initiate Friendships

#### Before you act, ask yourself:

1. Have them role play introducing themselves to a new child on the block.
2. Have them role play introducing that new child to another child.
3. When they are in groups and you are present, give them tips on situations to apply what they have learned.
4. Discuss ways they might show thoughtfulness to their friends to initiate building friendships.

## Initiative vs. Idleness

"Recognizing and doing what needs to be done before I'm asked"

#### I will:

- Do what is right before being told.
- not put off until tomorrow the things I can do today.
- contribute to the success of the whole team.
- be a part of the solution rather than the problem.
- look for ways to help others.

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### Family Project

- Discuss things you see in the community that need to be done.
- Brainstorm to think of solutions.
- Discuss the responsibility of your authorities to address those needs (without criticism.)
- Determine if there is a project your family can do to begin meeting that need without overstepping the role of your authorities.
- Find wise steps to complete the project.

### Building Initiative in Your Life

1. Look for needs. Train yourself to be aware of needs around you.
2. Seize the opportunity. Don't procrastinate out of laziness or fear. Take ownership (responsibility) beyond your assigned tasks. Break large projects into achievable steps and begin.
3. Be a team player. Initiative can make a team successful. Meet the needs you see while fulfilling your own responsibilities first. It will make the wheels turn smoothly on the team project.
4. Think ahead. Think through projects and prepare to solve problems before they arise.
5. Manage your time wisely. Determining your priorities and using slack time to fulfill small tasks will bring greater results. Planning time for rest can increase your productivity.

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#### For more on Initiative...

- visit "[Just for Kids](#)"
- see the [Resource list](#)
- visit [www.characterfirst.com](http://www.characterfirst.com)

"Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."

-Thomas Edison

### What Does Initiative Look Like?

- Seeing bulk mail left lying around the Post Office and picking it up.
- Seeing strangers in a meeting and welcoming them.
- Noticing that the office coffee pot is empty and refilling it.
- Noticing that the yard of a neighbor who is ill needs mowing and mowing it.
- Inspecting the equipment needed on a project in advance and being sure it will work properly.

"It is not the style of clothes one wears, neither the kind of automobile one drives, nor the amount of money one has in the bank that counts. These mean nothing. It is simply service that measures success."

-George Washington Carver

### Balance Initiative with Cautiousness

#### Before you act, ask yourself:

- Am I overstepping another's role? Would that offend them?
- Would it be appropriate to act in this case?
- Will I neglect my own obligations if I act?
- Can I fulfill my commitments to my authorities without overextending my time with this extra task?



### Train the Children to Plan Ahead in Family Meetings

#### Before you act, ask yourself:

Talk about the next week's activities and help the children think through what needs to be done in advance.

#### For example:

- is football practice tomorrow? Make sure the equipment and uniforms are ready to use.
- Is the family going on an outing on the weekend? Make sure that homework for Monday is completed on Friday afternoon.



[Click HERE for a Family Project](#)

### Tips for Parents in Teaching Initiative

#### Encourage initiative in your children:

- Demonstrate it by doing small acts showing initiative yourself and explain what you are doing to the children.
- Point out where others are showing initiative.
- Together with the children, look for examples of people showing initiative in the news, story books, etc.
- Leave items out where they shouldn't be to see which children will show initiative.
- During this month, give "initiative" awards to the children at meal time.
- Praise your child each time he or she shows initiative.

