



Active Caring

Active Caring starts with small steps at home. Plain vanilla neighborliness is powerful modeling. Whether it is bringing a dinner to a family with a new baby, giving a ride to someone, or visiting a neighbor or Friend to check-in, it speaks volumes about how we walk with each other in community. Whenever it is appropriate, bring a child along. Weave in a little framing on the walk or ride over. Have you missed seeing the Friend at Meeting? Do you remember how exhausting it was to have a new baby? Make space for a little debrief on the way home, too. Reflect on feelings and noticings. Compliment your child on the ways they added to the adventure. Active Caring is a lifeway and a mentorship, not a program or a checklist. It needn't be another stressor. Daily life is the curriculum. Simply bring a Quaker heart and awareness to it. Sharing your thinking and intentions around Active Caring shows children some of the inner workings of your faith.

Active Caring takes on a whole new dimension as children grow up and engage at preschool or kindergarten, on the bus, on sports teams, or in organizations. Opportunities abound to welcome a new classmate, to cooperate, to include someone in a game, to refrain from gossip, or to offer a word of encouragement. These are small positive actions with perhaps small but meaningful impact on recipients. Our children aren't responsible to solve all of the challenges arising near them, but a good word or action here and there can add a little warmth and light to the situation. Their actions serve as inspiration and invitation to others to follow their lead.

Even as Active Caring starts in early childhood with personal relationships in the family, meeting, and neighborhood, it lays the foundation for actions in the larger society like vigils, service projects, and volunteering in older years. Introduce questions of justice, fairness, and equity in developmentally appropriate ways. This kind of framing provides Friendly lenses through which to evaluate the world. [*Parenting 4 Social Justice: Tips, Tools, and Inspiration for Conversations & Actions with Kids*](#) is a wonderful new resource. In selecting family service projects, seek especially those which encourage authentic relationships to form. Whenever possible work with locals on projects of their choosing. Debrief on the ride home and again in the next day or so to allow for deeper reflections to bubble up. [*Stickyfaith Service Guide: Moving Students from Mission Trips to Missional Living*](#) has a wealth of solid guidance for families and houses of worship.