

One Word, One Community: A C.A.R.E.S. Paper Chain Project

Goal

To spark excitement, foster community, and set meaningful intentions as a school through a collaborative project celebrating the C.A.R.E.S. competencies: Cooperation, Assertiveness, Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-Control.



Materials Needed

- Pre-cut colorful paper strips (one per participant)
- Markers or pens
- Tape, glue sticks, or staplers
- Bins or boxes in each classroom for collecting strips
- A central location for the chain display (e.g., main hallway, cafeteria, or gym)
- Optional: C.A.R.E.S. posters or banners to accompany the display

Timing & Structure

When to Launch

First week back after winter break

Duration

- **Intro & writing activity:** 20–30 minutes per classroom
- **Chain building (school-wide):** 1–2 days after collection
- **Unveiling assembly or hallway reveal:** End of the week

Project Explanation for Grades K–2

"We're starting the new year by thinking of one word we want to help guide us—something that reminds us to be kind, brave, responsible, or helpful. We'll all write one word on a special strip of paper and link them together to make a big paper chain. It shows how we're all connected and growing together!"

Prompts for brainstorming

- "What's one word that reminds you to be a good friend?"
- "What word makes you feel strong and proud?"
- "What helps you stay calm or try your best?"

Project Explanation for Grades 3–5

"Each of us will choose one word that reflects how we want to grow this year—especially how we treat others and ourselves. The word of your choice can connect to how you show cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy, or self-control. We'll create a giant school chain to represent our shared intentions."

Prompt ideas

- "What word inspires you to be a leader or helper?"
- "What word inspires you to be a leader or helper?"
- "How do you want others to feel when they're around you?"

Project Explanation for Grades 6–8

"You'll choose one word that sets your tone for the new year—something rooted in how you want to show up for yourself and your community. This isn't a resolution—it's an intention. A one-word focus connected to the C.A.R.E.S. skills that reflects the kind of impact you want to make."

Examples

- Cooperate → "Teamwork"
- Assertiveness → "Voice"
- Responsibility → "Ownership"
- Empathy → "Listen"
- Self-Control → "Balance"

