

THE FIVE Cs

CREATING THE FIVE Cs

By the mid-1990s, thanks to the contributions of many practitioners such as Rick Little and researchers such as Peter Benson, William Damon, and myself, such a vocabulary began to emerge. We identified a set of strengths that, if nurtured, would prepare teens for a successful transition to adulthood:

- *Competence*: the ability to act effectively in school, in social situations, and at work
- *Confidence*: an internal sense of overall self-worth and efficacy
- *Connection*: positive bonds with people and social institutions
- *Character*: respect for society and cultural rules, an inner moral compass
- *Caring*: a sense of sympathy and empathy for others and a commitment to social justice

Later, a sixth C was added - one that emerges when the other five are present:

- *Contribution*: the capacity of teenagers to participate effectively by caring for themselves, so as not to be a drain on others, and by giving of themselves at home, in the community, and in civic life

THE BIG THREE:

HOW TO GROW THE FIVE Cs

1. Have sustained, positive interactions with adults
2. Participate in structured activities that enable them to develop valued life skills
3. Become leaders of valued community activities