

## Personal/Family Coat of Arms (a.k.a Bully Shield)

We are each our own individuals with our own identities, but we also have a family identity. Knowing what our individual strengths are, as well as our family strengths, will help us shield ourselves if a bully ever tries to belittle or tear down our strengths. To fortify your family against any potential bully, have each person create their own person coat of arms, including parents or guardians. Then as a family, create a family coat of arms. Title your shield by putting your name on the top if an individual shield or your family name if for the whole family. In each section of your shield, put the following:

### Individual Shield

1. Choose one word that describes you, and draw a picture that represents that word in one panel of the shield.
2. Draw a symbol to represent the social or political cause that you have done the most for in your life time. For younger children: How would you like to help your friends?
3. List two things that you have been struggling (want) to become better at, and write them in one panel of the shield.
4. Draw a picture or note a major fantasy of what you yearn to do or would do if you had no restrictions. For younger children: What would you like to do that you have never done?
5. Select three words that you would like people to use to describe you, and write or symbolize them in one panel of the shield. For younger children: What are three words that your friends would say about you?
6. Draw something to represent what caused the greatest change in your way of living. For younger children: What makes life happy for you?
7. Draw or symbolize the most important person in your life. For younger children: insert the most important people.

### Family Shield

The family shield represents all of the strengths you bring together. What qualities does each member contribute to help strengthen the whole family? Think of the positive attributes each person adds. These often overlap and over time will mature into additional strengths.

1. In one panel of the shield, Use a capital letter to write the first letter of your last name as fancy as you can. If your family has more than one last name, use the first letter of each last name. Below the fancy letter(s) list the members of your family.
2. In **two** of the panels, draw a different family activity you do together (hobby, sport, eating dinner together, picnic, beach, zoo...).
3. Draw and/or write your favorite thing(s) to do as a family in one panel of the shield.
4. Draw or write about your pets, or draw an animal to represent your family. See the heraldic animals listed below if you want to choose an animal to represent your family in lieu of a pet.
5. List the positive qualities of your family. As a group, what makes you strong together
6. In the last panel of the shield, draw a family flag. You can use the information below about coat of arms to create your family flag.

(Adapted from <http://www.lorinda-charactereducation.com/2013/02/family-shield-its-all-in-name-self.html>)

Now consider how central this coat of arms is in your daily life. Do you use your coat of arms only to protect you, or does it also represent something that you aspire to? (From: Webb, James T. 2008. Dabrowski's Theory and Existential Depression in Gifted Children and Adults.)

### Historical Information about Coat of Arms (From <http://www.storyboardtoys.com/gallery/coat-of-arms-lesson-plan.htm>)

Coats of Arms date to the early Middle Ages. In the early twelfth century, helmets and other armor began making it difficult to tell armed warriors apart. The solution was for each knight or soldier to paint something personal on their shield. These designs were important in battle, but they also functioned like team uniforms when knights met in tournaments. Over time, shield emblem designs became enduring symbols of their owners, and of their owners' families.

It became quite fashionable to have a "coat of arms", so people hired artists to design them. The designs weren't just used on shields. They were applied on tunics, saddle blankets, banners and tapestries. They were duplicated in sculpture and architectural features. They were used in signs and advertisements. They were carved into coins, jewelry (e.g. signet rings) and the personalized stamps for sealing letters.

Soon, Coats of Arms weren't just for soldiers! From about 1210 A.D., some priests are known to have had them. The first women known to have had their own coat of arms got them around 1220. Around 1230 towns and cities began having coats of arms. Tradesmen and even peasants started using coats of arms around 1250. In an era when few people could read or write, coats of arms made it easier for people to recognize each other's marks.

### The Language of Heraldry

#### Heraldic Colors:

Yellow or Gold - Generosity  
White or Silver - Peace & Sincerity

Black - Constancy (& sometimes Grief)  
Blue - Loyalty & Truthfulness  
Red - Military Fortitude & Magnanimity  
Green - Hope, Joy & sometimes Loyalty  
Purple - Royal Majesty, Sovereignty & Justice

#### Heraldic Animals:

Bear - Protectiveness  
Bee - Industriousness  
Camel - Perseverance  
Dog - Loyalty  
Double Eagle & Eagle - Leadership & Decisiveness  
Dragon - Defender of Treasure  
Falcon or Hawk - Eagerness  
Fox - Cleverness  
Griffin (part eagle, part lion) - Bravery  
Horse - Readiness to Serve  
Lion - Courage  
Pelican - Generosity & Devotion  
Raven - Constancy  
Snake - Ambition  
Stag, Elk or Deer - Peace & Harmony  
Tiger - Fierceness & Valor  
Unicorn - Extreme courage  
Wolf - Constant Vigilance

**Heraldic Symbols:**

- Axe - Dutiful
- Bridge - (signifies a governor or magistrate)
- Crescent - Enlightenment
- Crosses - Christian sentiments
- Crown - Authority
- Fire - Zeal
- Flaming Heart - Passion
- Fleur-de-lis (stylized Iris flower) - Purity (associated with France)
- Hand - Faith, Sincerity & Justice
- Heart - Sincerity
- Horns & Antlers - Fortitude
- Lightning - Decisiveness
- Moon - Serenity
- Oyster Shell - Traveler
- Ring - Fidelity
- Scepter - Justice
- Star - Nobility
- Sun - Glory
- Sword - Warlike
- Tower or Castle - Fortitude & Protectiveness

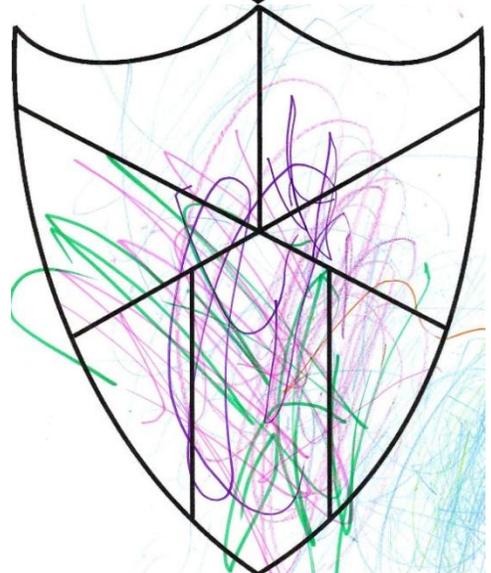
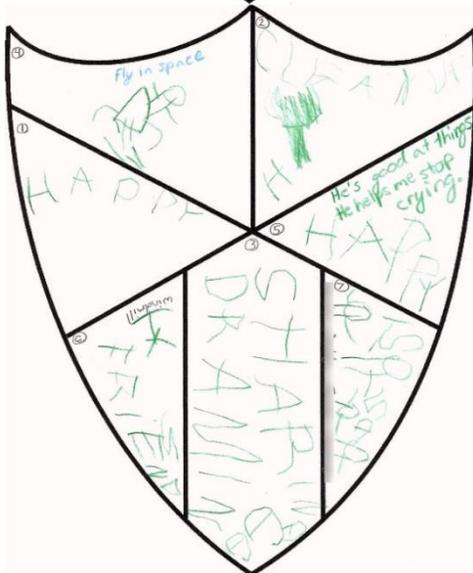
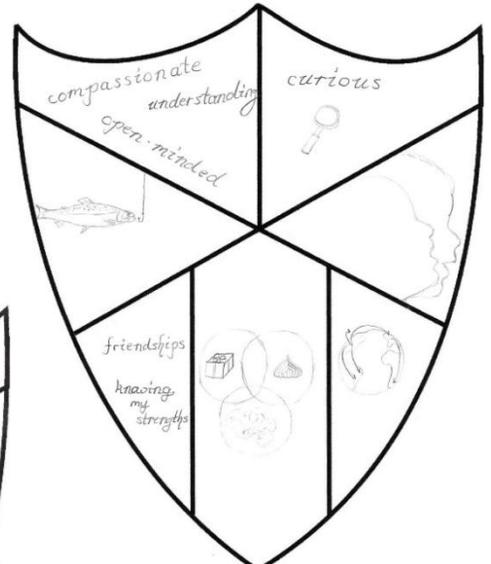
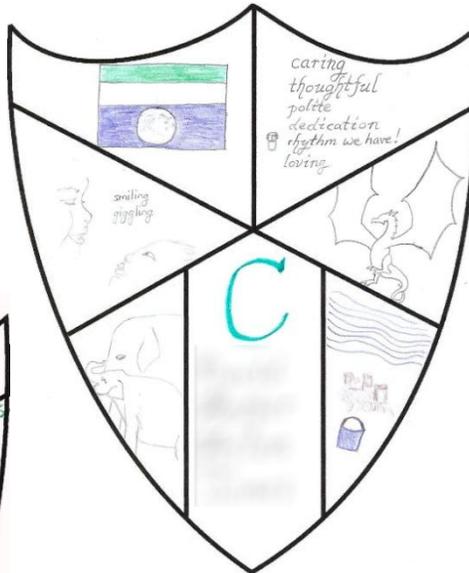
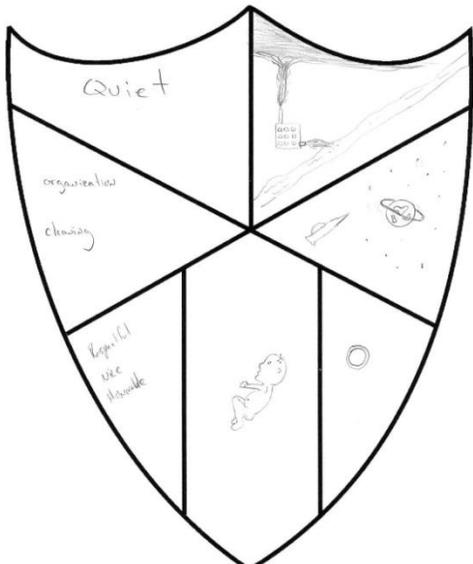
**Common Design Features (heraldic terminology):**

- Bend - a diagonal stipe
- Chevron - an upside-down "V"
- Chief - broad stripe across top of shield
- Dexter - the right-hand side of the shield (from its user's perspective)
- Ermine - a white fur pattern (with black tail tips)
- Fess - broad horizontal stripe through center
- Pale - broad vertical stripe through center
- Passant - an animal shown walking
- Rampant - an animal standing on hind legs
- Sinister - the left-hand side of the shield (from its user's perspective)

**Other important design details:**

Besides simple fields of color, a coat of arms may contain other design motifs, such as checkerboards, polka dots, or fur patterns. One traditional design rule is that two solid-color fields shouldn't appear side by side unless one of the two is "metallic". Even this "rule" has been broken by many famous and historical coats of arms.

Few laws have ever been passed about the design of coats of arms, and even fewer of have ever been enforced! However, most European nations began requiring registration of coats of arms by the seventeenth century. The registration requirements were somewhat like modern trademark laws - they were primarily intended to stop people from copying each other's designs.



\_\_\_\_\_ Coat of Arms

