



**Category: VFRelationships**

## **Child Power on Paper**

*"Resumes for Children—17 Years Old and Under"*



How many 6-8-year-olds do you know with a resume?

It's not common, but it sure is necessary, says Donna "Kris" Manley, author of *"Resumes for Children—17 Years Old and Under."* And she's not just talking about child actors. Manley says *all* children benefit because *all* children have something to showcase.

Years ago, while working part-time in the junior section of a department store, Manley noticed that many of her customers often proudly talked about their children's capabilities and achievements. She remembers asking one glowing parent, "Does your daughter have a resume?" The parent looked at Manley puzzled and answered, "She's only 13."

It was Manley's response to the parents that usually inspired numerous light-bulb moments: *Why not capture your child's accolades, awards, achievements and activities now so that later on, when she is applying for a job or an academic program, she will already have that information ready?* In most cases, the parents had never thought of it in that way.

These types of conversations prompted Manley to research "resume development for kids." She hardly found anything. At that point, she set out to fill the void.

To date, Manley's book and seminars are in demand by teachers and parents in many Atlanta-area public and private schools, as well as other U.S. school systems.

Compiling a resume for children simply better positions them for success, says Manley. The author talks with VERTICAL FIX about her book; how to start creating a resume; the benefits; success stories, and more.

**This is a topic that people don't hear much about. What kind of responses do you encounter?**

This is embraced very well. At first parents look at me really funny as if to ask, "What in the world does a child need with a resume?" Actually, I was on the Coach K Talk Radio Show with Keesha Mayes. But before I was actually booked on the show and I told her what my book was about, she seemed kind of cold on the phone. So I sent the book, and she called me back and said, "Yes, you can be a guest, but I will tell you, I was going to blast you good." She thought I was yet another pushy parent telling people what we need to do with our kids....*let them be children, they are too young for this...* Needless to say, after she read the book, she now sings its praises. But my book reviews have been great...from Alaska to Wisconsin to Florida...the *Writer's Digest* gave me a 5, which is the highest they give. So it's been received very well.



**The book is geared toward parents even though the title is “Resumes for Children—17 Years Old and Under.” Can you explain?**

Even though the title says “Resumes” for children, I like to call them “CABs” or “Child Activity Briefs,” and there is a pun intended. We have to be drivers of those CABs. Some children are too young to drive their own CABs, so we as parents and nurturers of kids, we have to drive for them. We have to guide them and direct them. So that’s why I geared the book to parents. Yes, the older ones can kind of manipulate; they can drive a little bit. But it’s the parents who have to help them choose the right activities in order to build their skills. Generally, kids don’t know what they want to do. But as parents, you can say, “Ok, what do you like?” We are the drivers.

**How does a parent actually develop a child’s resume?**

Writing a resume for a child is different from writing a resume for an adult. You want to pint-size your words. Adults may use “develop,” and a child will use “I made.” When we say “contribute,” a child says “I gave.” You want to write it how your child would speak so that they will be able to articulate their own resume to someone else. We can’t write it like we would write it. Instead of just thinking, “Oh I could put this down and this down,” you really need to think a whole lot more about competencies your child displays. We display competencies as adults, such as leadership, sportsmanship, teambuilding; well children do too. So we really need to pick those things out because they are obvious to parents. Parents are the experts; they know their kids better than anyone else. But it takes a minute to really pick out the competencies and make that shine for them.

**What’s the youngest age you suggest for a resume?**

I would say 6 years old.

**Should parents “make” children participate in certain activities in order to develop a good resume?**

I don’t recommend it because you can have a fabulous looking resume for your child, but an unhappy child.

**What are some of the benefits of children having a resume?**

One major benefit for any child is to boost his or her self-esteem. Some children may think they haven’t done much. But I believe if they see their activities, skills and capabilities down on paper, it will help them think differently. Also, if the parents keep their children’s resumes year after year, as the child grows and develops, the child will see his or her knowledge increase. That definitely helps with self-esteem.

Another benefit of having a CAB is that the parent can use it toward any academic programs to seek sponsorship, grants, scholarships, fellowships, competitions...you’d be amazed at how you can use a child’s resume.



### **What example situations can you share?**

This happened recently, I know a 10-year-old who loves to draw, and he is good. I told his Mom that some branches of the Atlanta Fulton County Library display children's art for free. She contacted the library, and guess where his art is hanging? And she put that on his resume. As a result, she has entered him in competitions, and she said having his art on display in the public library made the artistic director of one competition look twice at his application.

A resume also helped my 15-year-old nephew go overseas, 20 days, three countries. My brother and his wife were seeking sponsorship, so I pulled together his resume, and they hardly had to put out any money.

Also, I was watching the Discovery Channel and a child was terminally ill. The doctors and nurses were trying to make her feel better and didn't know what she liked. I thought, "That would be a great idea, to take that child's resume and put it in her patient file so when the child went from facility to facility, hospital to hospital, the nurses and doctors could open that up and see what that child enjoys." Now the parents may not have control over the medical care, but they can have control over what I call, "comfort care." Put that resume in that file, let the nurses and doctors know, "This is what he likes, and when I'm not here, get this particular book he likes, or this particular DVD." You know it's one thing for [doctors] to see that child as a patient, but they also need to see that child as a person.

### **How is the book set up? Does it provide a step-by-step how to?**

In the book, there's an introduction telling parents how to develop the resume and why it's important. But the rest of the book is a collection of 21 fictitious resumes, all samples ranging from 6 years old up to 17. You have an aspiring radio personality, an aspiring pilot, a child book reviewer, entrepreneurs....And in the back there are 30 pages or more of resources and ideas that the parents can take in and brainstorm on how to put their child's resume together.

### **Do you provide resume writing services for the children?**

Yes, I do. I've done so many resumes for children because sometimes the parents just don't know where to start.

### **What advice can you give parents who want to go for it?**

I would say for you and your child to find a quiet spot and start brainstorming. Begin with the tangibles, any achievements your child has accomplished, their awards and recommendation letters. And then start with things your child displays, the competencies. Are they good at teamwork? Do they show follow-through? Think of things that employers would look for within your child. What is your child capable of? And then start writing down their interests. I think as parents start to write these things, they'll see their child's resume come to fruition.