



The Parental Involvement Connection

Home & School:

Together We Can Make a Difference



February, 2012

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT NEWSLETTER

Vol. 8, Issue 3

Parents—You Do Matter!

by Margaret Barnes

It's interesting when you ask people about their work, people often respond, "I'm just a teacher, I'm only a custodian, I'm just an accountant, I'm just a nurse's aide," and you might have even heard a person say, "I'm only a parent." Of all the jobs there are, I believe the job of being a parent is the hardest job, but at the same time it can provide rewards that will last a lifetime. Not only can you have a positive impact on your own children's lives, but you also have the opportunity to influence other children during the course of raising your family. You can do this by the way you live your life.



Each one of us experiences stress on a daily basis, and it's how we respond to this stress that teaches our children how to deal with tough situations. "Testing" time is just around the corner in our schools. As parents, we need to realize how this affects children of any age. By helping your child be physically and mentally prepared for a test, you are helping them lower the feeling of anxiety that often follows a lack of preparation.

It's important that you are involved in your child's education enough to know what homework they have, and that your family has an established homework routine. When you have expectations for your child academically and provide a supportive environment to foster those expectations, I truly believe your child will experience a positive outcome.

Spend time with your child; take an interest in what they choose to be involved in; set positive examples; and most of all, show your child you love them. The confidence these actions instill in a child can truly set him or her up for success.

**The only rock I know that stays steady,
the only institution I know that works, is the family.**

~~~~Lee Iacocca

#### As I Grow

**Please understand I am growing up and changing very fast.**

**It must be difficult to keep pace with me, but please try.**

**Please reward me for telling the truth. Then I am not frightened into lying.**

**Please tell me when you make mistakes and what you learned from them; then I can accept that I am okay, even when I blunder.**

**Please pay attention to me and spend time with me. I can then believe that I am important and worthwhile.**

**Please help me explore my unique interests, talents and potential. In order for me to be happy, I need to be me.**

**Please do the things you want me to do; then I have a good, positive model.**

**Please tell me by your words and actions that you love me. I can then feel loveable and will be able to love myself and others.**

~~~Author Unknown



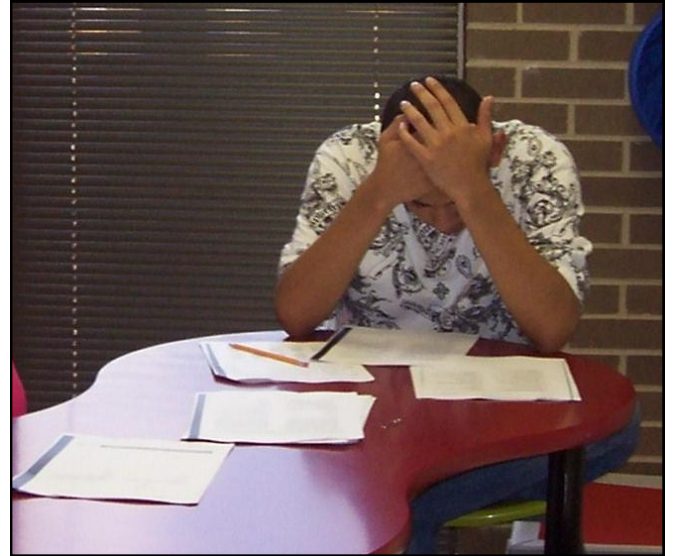
Testing Anxiety

Test anxiety is a very common experience. It can cause physical problems such as upset stomach or headaches as well as fear, anger and even depression. This anxiety can prevent a student from being able to think, comprehend and learn. Research has shown that providing students with tools and strategies to deal with this overwhelming feeling can improve their ability to prepare and perform on tests.

Here are some tips to share with your child:

- ✓ Avoid cramming—prepare a little each day.
- ✓ Get an adequate night's sleep, at least 8-10 hours. This will provide the energy needed to focus on the test.
- ✓ Eat a nutritious breakfast such as eggs, cereal or whole wheat toast. All of these foods can energize the brain to think better and longer than quick energy foods such as cookies or sodas.
- ✓ If negative or "what if" thoughts enter the mind, take a deep breath. Breathe in and out for several seconds to calm down. Picture something in your mind that feels good like playing a game with friends, a hug from your mom or your cute little dog. Think of positive answers to "what if" questions, such as, "What if I know more than I think I do?"
- ✓ Make sure you listen very closely to the directions, and you read carefully the instructions as well as each item on the test.
- ✓ Follow the strategies provided by your teacher to do your best on the test.
- ✓ Take time to enjoy the completion of the test with your child that evening.
- ✓ When the test results are in, discuss them with your child. A lot can be learned from mistakes. Make positive suggestions.

Confidence in test-taking skills can really cause your child to have less test anxiety and ultimately show what he or she has learned.



"Listen earnestly to anything your children want to tell you, no matter what. If you don't listen eagerly to the little stuff when they are little, they won't tell you the big stuff when they are big, because to them all of it has always been big stuff."

Catherine Wallace

Moms

3 Big Bedtime No-No's for Moms

As I was tucking my 9-year-old daughter into bed last night, I have to admit, I was ready to get out the door. Not that I don't love her, I was just tired and wanted to be done. But as I was making my move to leave she asked, "Can we just talk?" She wanted to forgo our usual tucking in and back massage ritual for just talking. How could I say no?

As moms, sometimes we feel like we have nothing left to give. By bedtime, our well has run dry. But that's often when our kids want to connect - the toddler who wants you to read book after book, the tween who wants to talk about her day at school, and the teenager who doesn't even consider going to bed until midnight. What's a mom to do? I think you know, and so do I. We need to be available and present.



Dads

How do you communicate with your kids when they're hurting?

With five teenagers, I've learned that one of the most important things I can do when my children are going through a tough time is to ask caring questions, like "You seem very sad, how are you feeling?"..."I can see that you're hurting; what's going on in that heart of yours right now?" Or, I'm hurting because I can see that you're hurting...what's causing your pain?" After you've asked the question, be sure just to listen. Show them with your caring face and expressions that you're really, really listening and identifying with them in their grief. Grief is tough at any age.



These tips are found at www.imom.com and/or <http://www.familyfirst.net/>

Watch for "Mom" and "Dad" tips in each issue of the *Parental Involvement Connection*.

General Homework Tips For Parents

- **Make sure the child has a quiet, well-lit place to do homework.** Avoid having your child do homework with the television on or in places with other distractions, such as people coming and going.
- **Make sure the materials your child needs, such as paper, pencils and a dictionary, are available.** Ask your child if special materials will be needed for some projects and get them in advance.
- **Help your child with time management.** Establish a set time each day for doing homework. Don't let your child leave homework until just before bedtime. Think about using a weekend morning or afternoon for working on big projects, especially if the project involves getting together with classmates.
- **Be positive about homework.** Tell your child how important school is. The attitude you express about homework will be the attitude your child acquires.
- **When your child does homework, you do homework.** Show your child that the skills they are learning are related to things you do as an adult. If your child is reading, you read too. If your child is doing math, balance your checkbook.
- **When your child asks for help, provide guidance, not answers.** Giving answers means your child will not learn the material. Too much help teaches your child that when the going gets rough, someone will do the work for him or her.
- **When the teacher asks that you play a role in homework, do it.** Cooperate with the teacher. It shows your child that the school and home are a team. Follow the directions given by the teacher.
- **If homework is meant to be done by your child alone, stay away.** Too much parent involvement can prevent homework from having some positive effects. Homework is a great way for kids to develop independent, lifelong learning skills.
- **Stay informed.** Talk with your child's teacher. Make sure you know the purpose of homework and what your child's class rules are.
- **Help your child figure out what is hard homework and what is easy homework.** Have your child do the hard work first. This will mean he will be most alert when facing the biggest challenges. Easy material will seem to go fast when fatigue begins to set in.
- **Watch your child for signs of failure and frustration.** Let your child take a short break if she is having trouble keeping her mind on an assignment.
- **Reward progress in homework.** If your child has been successful in homework completion and is working hard, celebrate that success with a special event (e.g., pizza, a walk, a trip to the park) to reinforce the positive effort.

http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/involve/homework/home_worktips.pdf

Family Mealtime Conversation Starters

1. Tell me about something nice you did for someone today.
2. If you had 3 wishes, what would they be? (You can't wish for money!)
3. Would you rather be able to fly, read minds, or live to 100?
4. Can you name the favorite color, movie, and food of everyone at the table?
5. If you could snap your fingers and be anywhere in the world right now, where would you go?



Mark Your Calendar

Mark Your Calendar
for the
2012 Statewide Parental Involvement Conference
San Antonio!
November 29th - December 1st
Crowne Plaza River Walk Hotel

Protecting Your Child from Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a repeated attempt from a child or teen to scare, threaten, embarrass, or otherwise victimize another child or teen through technologies. Because cyberbullying often occurs “behind the scenes,” parents may not even be aware that it is happening. In fact, 58% of students report that they did not inform their parents when something mean or hurtful happened to them online. Unfortunately, this new form of bullying is becoming very prevalent. Statistics indicate that 90% of middle school students have considered themselves victims of cyberbullying at some point (statistics from www.isafe.org).

Discuss cyberbullying with your child

Some children may be afraid to discuss instances of cyberbullying with their parents because they are afraid that they will lose access to their cell phones and/or internet. Parents can assure their children through calm discussion that they want their child to be able to maintain their freedom with these technologies but in a safe way.

Set cyber safety rules

Just as you teach your children safe ways to navigate the physical world, it is important to teach them safe ways to navigate the cyber world. Some points to emphasize with your child might include:

- ✓ Because you cannot see or hear them, you can never really be sure who is on the other end of cyber communication—it could be a predator or a bully.
- ✓ Never give out personal information on the internet, including phone numbers, addresses, passwords, photos, or physical descriptions of yourself.
- ✓ Be cautious when sharing personal details on the internet. These could be used by bullies to embarrass or ridicule you.
- ✓ Never share your IM (instant messaging) or email account with anyone, including close friends. If other people have access to your password, then private messages may become public. Additionally, with your password, others can pretend to be you and cause damage to your reputation.
- ✓ Keep your cool. Responding to cyber bullies with angry messages may only get you in trouble.

Use safety measures

If your child maintains a blog, encourage them to make it “private” so it can be viewed only by people they invite. Invite them to use social networking websites that require viewers to obtain the author’s approval before viewing their page. Help them to choose passwords that are difficult to “crack” and have them change their passwords regularly.

Block out bullies

If someone is bullying your child, block their email address, screen name, or phone number.

Know what your child is doing online

While privacy is important, safety is more important. Parents should keep the computer somewhere in view, such as the family room or kitchen. If your child participates in blogs or social networking sites, find out how to access them so that you can monitor his or her communications.

Document and report

Document any evidence of cyberbullying by printing inappropriate emails or web posts and contact your child’s school or the police. State law requires districts to have anonymous reporting procedures in place and prohibits retaliation against any person who reports incidents of bullying, harassment, or intimidation. Schools are required to investigate once a complaint is received and to take appropriate disciplinary action.

Some information from www.pacer.org and www.stopcyberbullying.org

Children Learn What They Live

- If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.
- If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.
- If a child lives with ridicule, he learns to be shy.
- If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.
- If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.
- If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence.
- If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.
- If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.
- If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.
- If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.
- If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, he learns to find love in the world.

~ Dorothy Law Neite





10 TIPS



To healthy eating and physical activity for you.

- 1. Start your day with breakfast.** Breakfast fills your “empty tank” to get you going after a long night without food. And it can help you do better in school. Easy to prepare breakfasts include cold cereal with fruit and low-fat milk, whole-wheat toast with peanut butter, yogurt with fruit, whole-grain waffles or even last night’s pizza!
- 2. Get Moving!** It’s easy to fit physical activities into your daily routine. Walk, bike or jog to see friends. Take a 10-minute activity break every hour while you read, do homework or watch TV. Climb stairs instead of taking an escalator or elevator. Try to do these things for a total of 30 minutes every day.
- 3. Snack smart.** Snacks are a great way to refuel. Choose snacks from different food groups - a glass of low-fat milk and a few graham crackers, an apple or celery sticks with peanut butter and raisins, or some dry cereal. If you eat smart at other meals, cookies, chips and candy are OK for occasional snacking.
- 4. Work up a sweat.** Vigorous work-outs when you’re breathing hard and sweating - help your heart pump better, give you more energy and help you look and feel best. Start with a warm-up that stretches your muscles. Include 20 minutes of aerobic activity, such as running, jogging, or dancing. Follow-up with activities that help make you stronger such as push-ups or lifting weights. Then cool down with more stretching and deep breathing.
- 5. Balance your food choices—don’t eat too much of any one thing.** You don’t have to give up foods like hamburgers, french fries and ice cream to eat healthy. You just have to be smart about how often and how much of them you eat. Your body needs nutrients like protein, carbohydrates, fat and many different vitamins and minerals such as vitamins C and A, iron and calcium from a variety of foods. Balancing food choices from the Food Guide Pyramid and checking out the Nutrition Facts Panel on food labels will help you get all these nutrients.
- 6. Get fit with friends or family.** Being active is much more fun with friends or family. Encourage others to join you and plan one special physical activity event, like a bike ride or hiking, with a group each week.
- 7. Eat more grains, fruits and vegetables.** These foods give you carbohydrates for energy, plus vitamins, minerals and fiber. Besides, they taste good! Try breads such as whole-wheat, bagels and pita. Bananas, strawberries and melons are some great tasting fruits. Try vegetables raw, on a sandwich or salad.
- 8. Join in physical activities at school.** Whether you take a physical education class or do other physical activities at school, such as intramural sports, structured activities are a sure way to feel good, look good and stay physically fit.
- 9. Foods aren’t good or bad.** A healthy eating style is like a puzzle with many parts. Each part - or food - is different. Some foods may have more fat, sugar or salt while others may have more vitamins or fiber. There is a place for all these foods. What makes a diet good or bad is how foods fit together. Balancing your choices is important. Fit in a higher-fat food, like pepperoni pizza, at dinner by choosing lower-fat foods at other meals. And don’t forget about moderation. If two pieces of pizza fill you up, you don’t need a third.
- 10. Make healthy eating and physical activities fun!** Take advantage of physical activities you and your friends enjoy doing together and eat the foods you like. Be adventurous - try new sports, games and other activities as well as new foods. You’ll grow stronger, play longer, and look and feel better! Set realistic goals, don’t try changing too much at once.

<http://www.fitness.gov/10tips.htm>

Successful Parenting: 7 Characteristics of Successful Parents

- ⇒ **Successful parents don't expect perfection either from themselves or their children.** Successful parents understand that, like themselves, their children aren't perfect either. This frees them to love their children unreservedly.
- ⇒ **Successful parents don't fear occasional failures.** They understand that mistakes are a normal, even healthy part of parenting. They make the best decisions they can and when they're wrong, they learn from their mistakes and try to do better the next time.
- ⇒ **Successful parents don't expect to have smooth sailing.** Children have their own opinions, personalities and preferences. Our responsibility to provide them with limits and guidance will sometimes clash with their growing desire for independence. Successful parents aren't surprised by them; they expect them. But successful parents understand that their responsibility to their children is not always to please them or make them happy - it's to make the hard decisions that will be for their best in the long run.
- ⇒ **Successful parents don't go it alone.** Successful parenting means trusting yourself, but not being a Lone Ranger. No one has the experience or answers to every parenting challenge. Successful parents aren't reluctant to seek out the wisdom of others. They know that, at the end of the day, the decision is theirs, but before they get there, there is plenty of wisdom along the way waiting to help them.
- ⇒ **Successful parents try harder.** They face the same pressures we all do - demanding jobs, spouses and children who need them. But they live by this rule: "You get back what you put in." They have a clear sense of priority for their family and are willing to put in the time to achieve it.
- ⇒ **Successful parents enjoy being parents.** Any parent of grown children will tell you "they grow up so quickly." Successful parents remind themselves of that and try to savor every day with their children. They immerse themselves in their children as much as possible and just enjoy them.
- ⇒ **Successful parents strive to be the person they want their children to become.** There are no formulas for parents. You can't just "program" children like a computer and be guaranteed of the result. But children are great observers and imitators. They watch, listen and absorb values and habits from the people who have the greatest influence on them - their parents. Successful parents resolve that they will set the best example they can for their children.



www.imom.com

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The Parental Involvement Connection

is posted on our web site four times a year for parents and educators of Texas.

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Title I Statewide School Support/Parental Involvement Initiative



<http://www.esc16.net/dept/isserv/title1swi/index.html>

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