Helping Parents to Give Their Kids "Wings" for Success

Website: www.debbiesilver.com
FB: www.facebook.com/drdebbiesilver
Twitter: @DrDebbieSilver
There are two things children should get from their parents: roots and wings.” --Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (German writer, poet, and philosopher).

Research that clearly indicates:

1. When parents are involved, students achieve more, regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnic/racial background, or the parents’ education level.

2. The more extensive the parent involvement, the higher the student achievement.

3. When parents are involved, students exhibit more positive attitudes and behavior.

4. Children from diverse cultural backgrounds tend to do better when parents and professionals collaborate to bridge the gap between the culture at home and the learning institution.

5. Secondary students whose parents remain involved make better transitions, maintain the quality of their work, and develop realistic plans for their future. Students whose parents are not involved are more likely to drop out.

6. The most accurate predictor of a student’s achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which that student’s family is able to:
   a) create a home environment that encourages learning.
   b) communicate high, yet reasonable expectations for their children’s achievement and future careers
   c) become involved in their children’s education at school and in the community.
Albert Bandura (1925 -) popularized the term *self-efficacy*. He defines it as the part of our "self system" that helps us to evaluate our performance. Perceived self-efficacy refers to one's impression of what one is capable of doing. This comes from a variety of sources, such as personal accomplishments and failures, seeing others who are similar to oneself, and verbal persuasion.

Verbal persuasion may temporarily convince people that they should try or avoid some task, but in the final analysis it is one's direct or vicarious experience with success or failure that will most strongly influence one's self-efficacy. For example, a teacher may "fire-up" her students before a standardized test by telling the kids how great they are, but the enthusiasm will be short-lived if the test is completely beyond their ability or their perceived beliefs that they can actually do well.

People with high-perceived self-efficacy try more, accomplish more, and persist longer at a task than people with low perceived self-efficacy. Bandura speculates that this is because people with high-perceived self-efficacy tend to feel they have more control over their environment and, therefore, experience less uncertainty.
Zone of Proximal Development…ZPD

Zone of Proximal Development, an idea developed by Lev Vygotsky over one hundred years ago, seeks to define the process through which students effectively learn in cooperation with a teacher.

A student’s Zone of Proximal Development, or ZPD, is defined as the student’s range of ability with and without assistance from a teacher or a more capable peer. On one end of the range is the student’s ability level without assistance. On the other end of the range is the student’s ability level with assistance.

A classroom that makes the best use of all of its students’ ZPDs should follow the following guidelines:

1. The teacher should act as a scaffold, providing the minimum support necessary for a student to succeed. The idea is to assist without denying the student’s need to build his or her own foundation. The challenge for the teacher, then, is to find the optimal balance between supporting the student and pushing the student to act independently. To effectively scaffold the student, the teacher should stay one step ahead of the student, always challenging him or her to reach beyond his or her current ability level. However, if instruction falls outside of the zone (above or below a student's ZPD), no growth will occur.

2. To effectively scaffold students within their ZPDs, a teacher should also have an awareness of the different roles students and teachers assume throughout the collaborative process. The roles roughly resemble the following:
   - teacher modeling behavior for the student
   - student imitating the teacher’s behavior
   - teacher fading out instruction
   - student practicing reciprocal teaching (scaffolding others) until the skill is mastered by all students in the classroom.

Every child deserves a reasonable chance at success.
ESSENTIAL EIGHT

Name

Instructions: Sign your name by the one task that would be easiest for you to do. Then find a different person to perform one of the remaining tasks and sign they name by the task they demonstrate. You must have your own signature and those of 7 different people in order to complete the activity.

Find Someone Who Can:

1. recite a poem from memory.

2. finish this numerical sequence: 64, 49, 4, 36, 9, 25, ____, and explain the logic behind it.

3. Name 6 ways to categorize rocks.

4. recall at least one dream from the last 3 weeks.

5. with hands on head, stand on one foot with eyes closed for at least seconds.

6. hum the first line of a Silent Nigh on key.

7. honestly say that he/she has more strengths than weaknesses and name 6 strengths in less than 15 seconds.

8. name five very close friends in less than 30 seconds.
Checklists for Assessing “How Students Are Smart”  
Adapted by Debbie Silver from *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom* by Thomas Armstrong

Name of Student- ____________________________________________  

*Check all the items that apply*

**Linguistic Intelligence (Word Smart)**

1. Is a good reader.  
2. Enjoys word games.  
3. Is a good joke teller/ storyteller.  
4. Has a good vocabulary for age.  
5. Enjoys listening activities.  
6. Likes to write stories and/or poems.  
7. Communicates with others in a highly verbal way.  
8. Appreciates rhymes, puns, and/or nonsense words.  
9. Has a good memory for words, stories, details.

Other linguistic strengths:

**Logical-Mathematical Intelligence (Number Smart)**

1. Asks a lot of questions about how things work.  
2. Has a good sense of cause and effect.  
3. Finds math games interesting.  
4. Can see and repeat patterns easily.  
5. Enjoys working puzzles and brain teasers.  
6. Understands computer programming.  
7. Is a logical thinker.  
8. Can estimate things involving numbers with relative ease.  
9. Can work math concepts in head.

Other logical-mathematical strengths:

**Visual-Spatial Intelligence (Picture Smart)**

1. Reports clear, visual images (or dreams).  
2. Can envision objects from more than one perspective.  
3. Daydreams more than peers.  
4. Likes to draw and/or create art projects.  
5. Has a good eye for detail and color.  
6. Is good at spatial games like chess and Tetris.  
7. Likes movies, slides, or other visual presentations.  
8. Can move between 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional representations with ease.  
9. Can read and/or create maps.

Other visual-spatial strengths:
Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence (Body Smart)
__1.  Is very coordinated.
__2.  Exceptionally mobile: moves, twitches, fidgets, taps when seated for long.
__3.  Enjoys working with clay, finger-paint, and other tactile media.
__4.  Can mimic others' gestures, posture, and movements.
__5.  Must touch anything new or interesting.
__6.  Loves to take things apart and put them back together.
__7.  Uses dramatic body movements for self-expression.
__8.  Enjoys running, hopping, climbing, wrestling, or similar activities.
__9.  Exhibits fine motor control (crafts, painting, etc.).

Other bodily-kinesthetic strengths:

Musical Intelligence (Music Smart)
__1.  Can detect music that is off-key, off-beat, or disturbing in some way.
__2.  Remembers melodies of songs.
__3.  Taps rhythmically as he/she works or plays.
__4.  Sensitive to environmental noise (rain on the windows, etc.).
__5.  Plays a musical instrument and/or sings in a choir.
__6.  Has a good singing voice.
__7.  Responds favorably when music is played.
__8.  Sings songs that he/she has learned.
__9.  Unconsciously hums much of the time.

Other musical strengths:

Interpersonal Communications Intelligence (People Smart)
__1.  Establishes meaningful peer relationships.
__2.  Seems to be a natural leader.
__3.  Empathizes with others.
__4.  Likes to play with others.
__5.  Shows good teamwork skills.
__6.  Others seek this student’s company.
__7.  Has two or more close friends.
__8.  Frequently acts as a mediator and/or peace maker.
__9.  Enjoys teaching others.

Other interpersonal communication strengths:
Intra-personal Awareness Intelligence (Self Smart)
__1. Displays a sense of strong will.
__2. Enjoys playing or working alone.
__3. Has high self-esteem.
__5. Does not mind being different from others.
__6. Has a realistic view of his/her strengths and weaknesses.
__7. Is able to deal effectively with successes and failures.
__8. Has an interest or talent that is not readily shared with others.
__9. Seems to “march to the beat of a different drummer.”

Other intra-personal awareness strengths:

Naturalistic Intelligence (Nature Smart)
__1. Likes to identify and classify living and nonliving things in nature.
__2. Cares for pets or animals.
__3. Understands repeating patterns in nature and the universe.
__4. Seems more “in tune with nature” than peers.
__5. Would rather be outside than inside.
__6. Has a demonstrated appreciation for a part of the natural world
   (i.e. dinosaurs, clouds, rocks, etc.).
__7. Likes to garden and/or appreciates plants.
__8. Understands and appreciates the environment.
__9. Loves to collect things from nature.

Other naturalistic strengths

Listen for Clues About Your Child’s Identity

Embrace The Child You Have In Front of You!

“Why did parenting change from preparing our kids for life to protecting them from life, which means they’re not prepared to live life on their own?”
FOR PARENTS

What to Expect from Children
Lindsay Hutton, “I Did It All by Myself! An Age-by-Age Guide to Teaching Your Child Life Skills,” (n.d.)

AGES 2 TO 3: SMALL CHORES AND BASIC GROOMING. This is the age when your child will start to learn basic life skills.
By the age of three, your child should be able to:
• help put his toys away
• dress himself (with some help from you)
• put his clothes in the hamper when he undresses
• clear his plate after meals
• assist in setting the table
• brush his teeth and wash his face with assistance

AGES 4 TO 5: IMPORTANT NAMES AND NUMBERS. When your child reaches this age, safety skills are high on the list.
They know her full name, address, and phone number
• know how to make an emergency call
They should also be able to:
• perform simple cleaning chores such as dusting in easy-to-reach places and
• feed pets
• identify monetary denominations, and understand the very basic concept of
how money is used
• brush her teeth, comb her hair, and wash her face without assistance
• help with basic laundry chores, such as putting her clothes away and bringing
their dirty clothes to the laundry area
• choose her own clothes to wear

AGES 6 TO 7: BASIC COOKING TECHNIQUES. Kids at this age can start to help with cooking meals, and can learn to:
• mix, stir, and cut will a dull knife
• make a basic meal, such as a sandwich
• help put the groceries away
• wash the dishes
• use basic household cleaners safely
• straighten up the bathroom after using it
• make his bed without assistance
• bathe unsupervised

AGES 8 TO 9: PRIDE IN PERSONAL BELONGINGS. By this time, your child should take pride in her personal belongings and take care of them properly. This includes being able to:
• fold her clothes
• learn simple sewing
• care for outdoor toys such as her bike or roller skates
• take care of personal hygiene without being told to do so
• use a broom and dustpan properly
• read a recipe and prepare a simple meal
• help create a grocery list
• count and make change
• take written phone messages
• help with simple lawn duties such as watering and weeding flower beds
• take out the trash

AGES 10 TO 13: GAINING INDEPENDENCE: Ten is about the age when your child can begin to perform many skills independently. He should know how to:
• stay home alone
• go to the store and make purchases by himself
• change his own bed sheets
• use the washing machine and dryer
• plan and prepare a meal with several ingredients
• use the oven to broil or bake foods
• read labels
• iron his clothes
• learn to use basic hand tools
• mow the lawn
• look after younger siblings or neighbors

AGES 14 TO 18: MORE ADVANCED SKILLS ARE LEARNED. By the age of fourteen, your child should have a very good mastering of all of the previous skills. On top of that, they should also be able to:
• perform more sophisticated cleaning and maintenance chores, such as changing the vacuum cleaner bag, cleaning the stove, and unclogging drains
• fill a car with gas, add air to and change a tire
• read and understand labels and dosages
• prepare and cook meals

YOUNG ADULTS: PREPARING TO LIVE ON HIS OWN. Your child will need to know how to support himself when he goes away to college or moves out. There are still a few skills they should know before venturing out on his own, including:
• make regular doctor and dentist appointments and other important health-related appointments
• have a basic understanding of finances, and be able to manage his bank account, balance a checkbook, pay a bill, and use a credit card
• schedule oil changes and basic car maintenance

How We Hurt Our Kids
From Dr. Madeline Levine (2012)
1. when we do for our kids what they can already to for themselves;
2. when we do for our kids what they can almost do for themselves, and
3. when our parenting behavior is motivated by our own ego.
HELPING YOUR CHILD FIND HER SENSE OF PURPOSE
from How to Raise An Adult (2015) by Judith Lthycott-Haims

1. **Accept that it’s not about you, it’s about your kids.**
   Set aside your definition of successful career, what you be proud to say to others about your kid, or what you’d assumed or hoped your kid would do.

2. **Notice who your child actually is.**
   What are they good at, and what do they love? What are they so into that it becomes hard to tear them away? What are they bothered about in this world?

3. **Explore with diagnostic tools.**
   Use a strength-finder survey from the internet or a book.

4. **Be interested and helpful.**
   Support them and talk with them about it. Help them seek opportunities to enhance their interests.

5. **Know when to push forward, know when to pull back.**
   If your child lacks interest, that’s a red flag no matter how talented she might be.

6. **Help them find mentors.**
   According to William Damon (2008), p. 131 “virtually all the highly purposeful youth whom we studied had mentors outside the homes, and those mentors contributed importantly to the youngsters’ quests for purpose."

7. **Prepare them for the hard work to come.**
   Talk with them and model Deliberate Practice.

8. **Don’t do too much for them.**
   Your kid should be in “the driver’s seat.” They must be the one to make it – whatever “it” is – happen.

9. **Have your own purpose.**
   Let your kids know about your work, your passion, your contributions.
STEPS IN DELIBERATE PRACTICE

■ Remember that deliberate practice has one objective: to improve performance. “People who play tennis once a week for years don’t get any better if they do the same thing each time,” Ericsson has said. “Deliberate practice is about changing your performance, setting new goals and straining yourself to reach a bit higher each time.”

■ Repeat, repeat, repeat. Repetition matters. Basketball greats don’t shoot ten free throws at the end of team practice; they shoot five hundred.

■ Seek constant, critical feedback. If you don’t know how you’re doing, you won’t know what to improve.

■ Focus ruthlessly on where you need help. While many of us work on what we’re already good at, says Ericsson, “those who get better work on their weaknesses.”

■ Prepare for the process to be mentally and physically exhausting. That’s why so few people commit to it, but that’s why it works. (Pink, 2009, p. 159)

Alternative to Saying “Good Job!”

1. Say nothing. Sometimes praise calls attention to something that does not need it. Overzealous praise may give the child the idea that

2. Say what you saw. A simple evaluation-free acknowledgement lets the child know you noticed. “You went the extra mile in helping your friend.” “You did it!” Or describe what you see. “Wow, you’ve got this room looking a maid was here.”

3. Talk less, ask more. Better than describing is asking questions about the work. “So what made you decide to clean your room like this?” “How did you select such an interesting topic to write about?” (adapted from Kohn, 2001)
Undermining Thinking At Home
from How to Raise An Adult (2015) by Judith Lthycott-Haims

1. **We Overprotect.**
   We are risk adverse for them. We praise them at every turn. We take their side over law enforcement officers, teachers, judges, and others who find them subpar.

2. **We Overdirect.**
   We tell them when, how, and with whom to play (play dates). We choose their extra-curricular activities, their courses, their colleges, their majors, and their careers.

3. **We Hand-hold.**
   We go to bat with them. We act as their personal concierges. We correct their homework, hire tutors, and write their applications.

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**Attribution Theory**

- **Task Difficulty**
- **Luck**
- **Innate Ability or Talent**
- **Effort**

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**External (Controlled by other than Self)**
- **Task Difficulty**
- **Luck**
- **Innate Ability or Talent**

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**Internal (Controlled by Self)**
- **Effort**

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*Inappropriate praise can do more harm than good.*
Implicit Personality Theory
Dr. Carol S. Dweck, Stanford University

Fixed Mindset (Entity Theory)

- Either I am smart or I am not.
- One is born with a certain amount of intelligence.
- Smart is making no mistakes, going fast, and about the outcome being perfect.
- Failure is not an outcome, it is an identity.
- If I fail, people may realize I was/am an imposter, and I am not as good as they think I am.
- So if I fail, I might not just be judged, but I might also be unworthy of love.

“Constructive means helping the child to fix something, build a better product, or do a better job.” -- Carol Dweck

Growth Mindset (Incremental Theory)

- A belief that effort is a positive, constructive force.
- Development and progress is important – not just the product or achievement.
- One can substantially change, stretch, and grow, and that is desirable.
- Brains can become “bigger.” Challenge is good!
- Being on a learning edge is the smart thing to do.
Implicit Personality Theory

Leads to a desire to look smart and therefore a tendency to:

**Fixed Mind-set**

**Challenges:**
--avoid challenges

**Obstacles:**
--give up easily

**Effort:**
--see effort as fruitless or worse

**Criticism:**
--ignore useful negative feedback

**Success of others:**
--feel threatened by the success of others

As a result, they may plateau early and achieve less than their full potential.

Leads to a desire to learn and therefore a tendency to:

**Growth Mindset**

**Challenges:**
--embrace challenges

**Obstacles:**
--persist in the face of setbacks

**Effort:**
--see effort as the path to mastery

**Criticism:**
--learn from criticism

**Success of others:**
--find lessons and inspiration in the success of others

As a result, they reach ever-higher levels of achievement.
Helping Kids Grow Their Mindsets

• Strive to deliver the message, “You’re a developing person, and I’m interested in your development.” NOT “You have permanent traits, and I’m judging them.”

• Remember that praising children’s intelligence or talent sends a fixed-mindset message. Focus on the processes they used -- their strategies, effort, or choices.

• Remember that constructive criticism is feedback that helps the child understand how to fix something. It’s not feedback that labels or simply excuses the child.

• Help children set goals. Remember that having innate talent is not a goal. Expanding skills and knowledge is.

• Lowering standards does NOT raise a student’s self-esteem. Neither does raising standards without giving students ways of reaching them.

• Great parents believe in the growth of talent and intellect and are fascinated by the process of learning.
For the Parent to Take:

How Much Do You Know About Your Child?

1. If your child had a choice, what would s/he prefer to be called?
2. Who is your child’s closest friend?
3. Who does your child most admire?
4. Of what is your child most afraid?
5. What is your child’s favorite thing to do with his/her friends?
6. What is your child’s favorite kind of music?
7. What was the best movie your child ever watched?
8. At what age does your child plan to leave home?
9. What is your child’s favorite color?
10. If your child had to wear one outfit for a month, which outfit would it be?
11. What most embarrasses your child?
12. If your child could change one thing about herself/himself, what would it be?
13. If your child could change one thing about your family, what would it be?
14. What trait do you have that your child most values?
15. What trait do you have that your child would most like to change?
16. If there were suddenly no electricity in the world, what appliance would your child miss the most?
17. What is your child’s weight (within 2 pounds)?
18. What was your child’s proudest moment?
19. What was your child’s saddest moment?
20. If your child could make one wish come true, what would it be?

Compare your answers with those of your child. Score one point for each answer that is the same or reasonably close. If you score 16 or better, congratulate yourself for really knowing your child. If your score is 11 – 15, you may want to think about spending more time catching up with what is new with your child. If your score is 10 or less, you definitely need to spend more time finding out about what is going on with your child.

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For the Child to Take While The Parent Takes Her/His Test:

**About You**

1. If you had a choice, what would you prefer to be called?
2. Who is your closest friend?
3. Who do you most admire?
4. Of what are you most afraid?
5. What is your favorite thing to do with your friends?
6. What is your favorite kind of music?
7. What was the best movie you ever watched?
8. At what age do you plan to leave home?
9. What is your favorite color?
10. If you had to wear one outfit for a month, which outfit would it be?
11. What most embarrasses you?
12. If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?
13. If you could change one thing about your family, what would it be?
14. What trait do you have that you most value?
15. What trait does your parent have that you would most like to change?
16. If there were suddenly no electricity in the world, what appliance would you miss the most?
17. What is your weight (within 2 pounds)?
18. What was your proudest moment?
19. What was your saddest moment?
20. If you could make one wish come true, what would it be?

Now compare your answers to those of your parent. Give her/him one point for every answer that is the same or reasonably close (you be the judge). Your parent has the scoring code.

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