

# **Children First**

## **Issue # 2: November 2003**

By

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**“Working with education leaders to keep children first.”**

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### **Children and Money**

Read most articles on money and somewhere the author will probably refer to the large amounts of consumer debt. Daily, there are thousands of bankruptcy filings. In short, much of America is in financial chaos. The cause? Some will say it’s because we Americans must have it all. We want instant grits and instant gratification. Why put off until tomorrow what I want today? So, we spend money without thought of affordability. My guess is that it’s also partly due to the fact that most Americans never learn how to properly handle money.

As parents, we have an obligation to teach our children how to handle money well. This skill is one of the most critical skills a child can master. Knowing and appreciating the value of how to spend money wisely and save a portion of what they earn has lifetime benefits. It’s also a good idea to discuss giving some of that money away as well to worthy causes.

Start early (2-3 years old) talking about money. Teach your child how to save in order to buy something they value. I remember saving for over six months to buy a baseball glove. That was 1952. I still have the glove. Because I worked so hard and so long to buy that glove, I can’t stand to part with it even though it long has ceased to be functional. (OK, I’m a little weird!)

When we put effort into an accomplishment, we appreciate its achievement and get great value from the process. Being handed the prize without effort is valueless. Effort builds appreciation. Easy handouts make us lazy and irresponsible.

Parents take on a multitude of responsibilities. One important responsibility is to handle family finances in a prudent manner and, in the process, see to it that their children truly understand how money works. Mastery early eliminates years of anxiety and stress brought on by financial debt. There are few lessons more valuable for us to teach our children.

## Prepare Your Children for Emergencies

With two working parents, children often spend time alone between their arrival from school and the arrival of parents. Are your children ready if an emergency comes up during this period? Here are a few suggestions that can enable your children to get help quickly should an emergency occur in your absence.

1. Provide your telephone numbers (work /cell), the police, fire department, doctor, hospital, poison control center, a close by family member or neighbor and anyone else you can think of your children might need to call in emergencies. Be sure you teach your young children how to use the phone.
2. Keep a well supplied first-aid kit with syrup of Ipecac (poisonings), band-aids, adhesive tape, antiseptic, tweezers, safety pins, scissors, needles, cotton, petroleum jelly, rubbing alcohol, aspirin, and gauze. (Add other items you feel are important that I may have missed). Teach your children how to properly use these items.
3. Set aside a place for flashlights with extra batteries should power be turned off. Be sure your child knows how to replace batteries in the flashlight.

You also want to instruct them to never let strangers in the house or tell callers that you are not home. Have a prepared answer to cover for your absence that your child can readily provide callers. If they play in the yard, prepare them to deal with strangers who might around. Teach them to yell, scream, and fight off anyone who might attempt abduction. Make them aware of the danger of playing with matches. In short, go through the entire behavior patterns you want from your children in your absence. Being properly prepared makes emergency situations more easily controlled and reduces potential danger to your children. Better to be safe than sorry.

## Homework—How To Get It Done

There are times when children make doing homework a major undertaking. It's important for parents to start preparation for children doing their homework the very first year homework comes home. Set aside a designated quiet place in the house to do homework. This should be considered the "learning center" of your home. Ask about their homework assignment. Have them show you their work. Initially, you will have to help them but as soon as you can, get out of the homework game. You've been to school. Stress independence and help build the confidence level for homework to be done without you. The quicker you can establish this ground rule, the better. Trust me when I tell you that your child will let you do their homework if you volunteer.

Check homework when they are done and don't let them get by with a half-hearted effort. Speak of pride in doing homework well and with the achievement of learning new information. Be positive when you speak about their teacher, school and learning. Praise good work and make them accountable for laziness. You must train your child. Don't let them train you.

The real goal is to have children learn to appreciate the acquisition of knowledge and the benefits that brings to their life. Expect their best and they will give it to you. Let them slide and you'll both be in for many years of misery.

## **To A Little Boy's Father** (Author Unknown)

There are little eyes upon you and they're watching night and day;  
There are little eyes that quickly take in everything you say.

There are little hands all eager to do everything you do;  
And a little boy who's dreaming of the day he'll be like you.

You're the little fellow's idol; you're the wisest of the wise.  
In his little mind, about you no suspicions rise.

He believes in you devoutly, holds that all you say and do,  
He will say and do in your way, when he's grown up, just like you.

There's a wide-eyed little fellow who believes you're always right;  
And his ears are always open and he watches day and night

You are setting an example every day in all you do;  
For the little boy who's waiting to grow up and be like you.

## **You're A Parent First**

Many times when you hear a parent discussing the difficulties they might be having with their children, they say something like this, "I really only wanted to be their friend."

Certainly I don't want to dispel the belief that a parent should be friends with their child. However, there are times when being a parent overshadows being a friend. Discipline demands difficult decisions. And, sometimes that makes us unfriendly in the eyes of our child. Parenting demands that we make decisions that teach proper values. For example, setting a curfew to be in at a certain time is better than leaving that decision up to your child. Be ready to take fussing and fighting. Children test parents. Make a reasonably fair decision about curfew. Remember, you don't have to give a reason why. It helps but is not a necessity. You'll be amazed at how rapidly your child will comply when the sense you are set on your decision and that their best interest is the driving force behind it. Children want to know the limits under which they can operate. They don't want total freedom to do as they please even though they may tell you this.

Collaborate with your spouse when both live in the home so ground rules are consistent. Rest assured your child will play one against the other. In families where parents are divorced and both see the children regularly, come to an agreement on ground rules. Don't let your child get an inconsistent message no matter the situation.

In the long term, if you stand your ground, treat your child fairly, consistently and with much love, they will come to appreciate your concern. When they grow up, they will truly become your friend.

## **Your Input Appreciated**

If there is a burning question you might have about parenting, please pass the question on to me. I won't claim to be an expert on parenting having made my share of mistakes while raising my four children. But, I promise to research and validate answers

prior to sharing them. This newsletter is for you and the content should reflect issues important to readers. So, keep those cards and letters coming.

## Checkout Billy

Billy Arcement, MEd. is one of the premier speakers on school board leadership in the country. His philosophy of removing politics from the decision making process and making all decisions for the benefit of children is a refreshing change from “business as usual.” He also has quality messages for superintendents, school administrators, teachers and business leaders. He blends thought provoking ideas with his “Cajun Stories” to bring audiences a winning combination guaranteed to make your event a success. Call us. We’d love to help! Go to <http://www.searchingforsuccess.com> to learn more about Billy’s programs and services. Our results are guaranteed!

## Build Your Success Library

*Searching for Success* is a great book for parents to use to build a strong value system within their children. The content can also help make them better students. Why not make it part of your training process with your child. It also makes a great gift for your family and friends this Christmas.

## Value Added Ideas

**You may reprint content from this newsletter or from past issues. We’re also happy to provide you with articles from our archive of previously published articles to add value to your publications. Send an email request to [barcement@eatel.net](mailto:barcement@eatel.net) and specify your needs.**

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