

Children First

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By

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“Working with education leaders to keep children first.”

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Choice and Consequences

One of the more critical skills parents can teach their children is to help them understand that they were given a free will at birth. An important supporting point is that along with free will comes enormous responsibility. Every choice a child makes (us too for that matter) has a consequence attached to it. The consequence may be good or it may be bad but a consequence will result from a choice made.

As one shapes the choice mechanism of their child, it’s important to have them understand this gift of choice. When poor choices are made, sometimes it is best to let the child experience the consequence. Often times, we want to “spare our child” and we either protect them or take on the consequence ourselves. I’m not suggesting letting your child get physically hurt. Certainly we must protect children.

For example, if they misbehave in school and it’s clear they are at fault, let them experience the consequence of their action. Speaking poorly of their teacher, going to school to argue with the Principal and/or teacher is not setting a good example.

Always spend time to explaining consequences (both good and bad) so lessons can be learned and behavior shaped. Listen to what your child has to say. Criticize their behavior, never them as a person when they make poor choices. Offer encouragement when they make good choices.

Finally, always remember that the choices you make greatly influence the choices your children make. Make sure you are setting the proper example to follow.

Consistently following this parental role can be difficult but, when done properly, can be the most valuable lesson you can ever teach as a parent.

Be A Supporter of Your Children

Throughout their school years, encourage your children's participation in extra curricular activities. These types of activities help develop future leadership, social, responsibility, teamwork, and relationship skills—all important for personal and career success. Studying hard and achieving good grades are basic expectations all parents should have for their children. But sometimes parents don't see the important contribution membership in school organizations, athletic teams, and student leadership experiences bring to their child. I'm firm in my belief that it was these experiences that laid the foundation for most successes I've experienced since graduating from college.

Encourage your child to run for a class officer position. If they have any inclination for athletics, let them participate. If they are musically talented, the band might be a welcomed experience. Let them join the 4-H club or some other similar organization. Involvement beyond academics brings balance and rewards that have lifetime benefits.

The final and most important point is that you should be there to support your child when they participate in these types of activities. Go to a football or basketball game. Be in the audience for their band concert. Support activities sponsored by school organizations that permit parental involvement. Become their cheerleader. You will forever keep these memories in your mind and so will your child.

A Simple “I Love You”

When was the last time you told your child that you loved them? As a child growing up, I knew my parents loved me but I can count the times on one hand that I actually heard those words. I'm not looking for pity here. Rather, I feel many in my generation went through the same experience. It just was not something parents did during those times. My father was six weeks away from death when he hugged me and told me he loved me. I was 52 years old. It confirmed what I always knew but, even at that age, those words were tremendously emotional and very important to hear.

Today, we have very busy parents. In most homes, both parents work. In at least 50% of homes, there is only one parent. When you read this column, why not go over to your children and tell them how much you love them. Perhaps they'll be surprised. Hopefully, it will be just another repeat of an often played out scene.

“I love you” are just three little words. But to a child, they are magical and reassuring. I encourage you to carry it one step further. Give them a hug! You'll both be glad you did.

Some Words About Your Thinking (Author Unknown)

The way one thinks is significant relative to the successes one achieves. There is a great poem that talks about the power of our thoughts. Perhaps you're familiar with it. But have you shared it with your child?

Let this way of “thinking” become the lesson you teach your child. Perhaps you might even check out your own “stinking thinking” and use these words to brighten your outlook on life.

If you think you are beaten, you are. If you think you dare not, you don't
If you like to win but you think you can't, it is almost certain you won't

If you think you'll lose, you're lost. For out in the world we find
Success begins with a fellow's will. It's all in the state of mind.

If you think you are outclassed, you are. You've got to think high to rise
You've got to be sure of yourself before you can ever win a prize.

Life's battles don't always go to the stronger or faster man
But sooner or later, the man who wins, it the man who thinks he can

Never Compare

If you have more than one child, there are probably times when you at least think silently that they are different. Whether you say it out loud or not, they are. Each of us is a unique creation and your children are no exception.

What we sometimes do as parents is that we compare (out loud and to a child) that they are different from their sibling. And usually, that comparison is done in a negative way. We may say things like "You're not as smart as your sister." "Your brother never talks back to me." "You don't keep your room as neat as your sister and brother."

Thinking in such a manner is quite normal and, in some cases, accurate. The only error here is that you are comparing people, not behavior. When you confront your child for unacceptable behavior, focus your words on the behavior. Don't make it personal. Always love your children. It's the behavior that you don't have to always love.

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 fast becoming one of the premier speakers for business meetings, educational conferences and governmental strategic planning sessions. His philosophy of removing politics from the decision making process of school boards 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. Send your \$ 15.00 check now and receive a signed copy in time to fill your Christmas stocking.

Value Added Ideas

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