

# **Children First**

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By

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

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### **Parenting—*It Never Stops***

When one works on their “real job,” there is a quitting time. When one is a parent there is no quitting time. It’s a 24/7 responsibility. The reality is that once you are a parent, you remain a parent until the day you die. Even when your children grow up and go out on their own, they remain your children and you remain their parents.

The most critical period of parenting is in the first five years. It is during this period that one forms the basic values that follow us throughout our life. For parents, that means that we must constantly demonstrate, reinforce, and incorporate strong moral values in what we do so our children can learn from our example and guidance. We must walk the talk. It’s an awesome responsibility but one of the most critical a person can undertake.

As children grow older, outside influences become stronger. TV shows, video games, movies, magazines, music, and teen idols are but a few of the major influences bombarding the mind of your children. You must stay tuned to what is happening in the life of your child. A teenager amassing a collection of guns without a parent ever realizing this is going on says it all. I struggle to understand how this could happen, but it does almost on a daily basis.

The financial burdens facing households today remove parents from the home and place them in the workplace. But, at the same time, it heightens our obligation to pay attention. Working parents and a strong family structure are not incompatible. It simply requires that we remember parenting never stops.

### **Today’s Reality**

I’m currently teaching a Junior Achievement course to help high school students develop job skills. Admittedly, I’ve been out of the classroom for many years and am probably a bit out of touch with today’s generation of teenagers. But the lack of knowledge about real job and life skills; the quick “boredom” they experience and the missing desire to excel in the workplace are a real source of worry for me. I’m further concerned that three of the young ladies in this class are already parents. Fortunately, they came back to school in order to graduate. But imagine the difficulty these girls face having to raise a child while still teenagers!

I do not wish to judge. We all err. But this is the reality of our world today. These examples amplify the need for development of strong parenting skills and a personal commitment to become the best we can. They also amplify the need for a lot of praying as well!

## Show the Way

The ancient philosopher, Aristotle, maintained that the way to teach good character was to expose children to it and invite imitation. Former Secretary of Education and successful author, Dr. William Bennett, says, **“We simply need to put students in the presence of adults of sound character, adults who know the difference between right and wrong, who will articulate it to children, who will remind them of the human experience with that difference, and who will live that difference in front of them.”**

*How are you showing the way?*

## Take a Moment To Listen

(Author Unknown)

Take a moment to listen today  
To what your children are trying to say.  
Listen today, whatever you do  
Or they won't be there to listen to you.

Listen to their problems, listen to their needs.  
Praise their smallest triumphs, praise their smallest deeds.  
Tolerate their chatter, amplify their laughter,  
Find out what's the matter; find out what they're after.

But tell them that you love them, every single night  
And though you scold them, be sure you hold them.  
Tell them, “Everything's alright  
Tomorrow's looking bright!”

Take a moment to listen today  
To what your children are trying to say.  
Listen today, whatever you do,  
And they will come back to listen to you.

## Checkout Billy

Billy Arcement, MEd. is one of the premier speakers for business meetings, educational conferences and governmental strategic planning sessions. His work helping school boards make all decisions for the benefit of children is a refreshing change from “business as usual.” He also has quality messages for 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.

His *“wisdom makes a difference”* as he consults with leaders in the business, government and education communities.

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!

## Parenting Your Teenager

God bless all parents with teenagers!!!! That is probably what you pray each night if you are the parent of a 13-19 year old child. Actually, it's really not that bad to raise teenagers—I exaggerate a bit. We raised three teenagers at the same time and survived. Here are a few tips to help you raise children in those potentially trying times.

1. **Don't be embarrassed to set limits.** Children are looking for a well defined limit list. Yes, they protest but in their heart of hearts, they are more comfortable with knowing the limits.
2. **Be consistent with enforcement of rules.** Get together with your mate and agree on how each of you will enforce rules. Children will play one parent against the other. Get in the habit of consulting on major decisions before committing to your teenager. Nothing is so urgent that a few moments wait will hurt.
3. **Let your child become who they are.** Our job as parents is not to create a clone of ourselves. Each child has their own personality, set of talents and desires. Your job is to nurture the best from your child as that relates to who they are. I believe this is the most difficult “letting go” task of parenthood.
4. **Using a car is a privilege, not a right.** It doesn't matter who bought the car, buys the gas or pays for the insurance. If your child lives under your roof, they drive by your rules. It really is that simple.
5. **Don't abandon your child when they become teenagers.** Many parents feel like they've earned a “break” when children become teenagers. The truth is that this is a most critical period in their upbringing. Rather than abandon, commit more time. This time and interest investment has a lifetime of rewards. No matter what they say, they appreciate you taking an interest in their activities and supporting their efforts in athletics and other school activities.
6. **Know their friends.** Better to have no friend at all then only one of the wrong kind of friend. That statement says it all. Know who your children hang around with. Know their parents. Know their values. Learn all you can about their friends. It's your responsibility and right.
7. **Drinking and Drugs.** Here the rule is quick simple—engaging in these activities is off limits. However, if they see you drinking excessively or using drugs, this rule is impossible to enforce. Remember, we must “Walk the Talk.” Don't allow a drink in your presence for any reason period! Keep your antennas very high regarding drugs. Awareness of a change in behavior is often a signal. Be open in your opposition to both and consistent with your message of how each can destroy their life. Never forget, you are in a war against the world when it comes to drinking and drug use.

## 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. Send your \$ 15.00 check now and receive a signed copy in the mail within a few days.

## There's Another Newsletter for You

Some of you may not be aware that we publish a second monthly newsletter, *News from the Swamp*. It is filled with practical ideas on personal and organizational leadership topics. You'll find value to help with your career and personal success strategies. Read how you can start getting this valuable information source each month below.

## 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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