

# Children First

## Issue # 4: January 2004

By

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

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### Renew and Refocus

For those of you who have been long-time subscribers to my other newsletter, *News from the Swamp*, (if you don't get it, see end of newsletter) you know that I love the month of January. It's not my favorite month because it is normally cold but because it symbolizes the feeling of renewal and refocusing. January marks the beginning of a New Year. January let's us start over.

No matter what type of year you had in 2003, consider this day as the time when you can start anew and begin new directions. The renewal and refocusing I'm thinking about is with your family (spouse, children, parents and siblings). Hopefully some of the ideas I'll share in this newsletter will help build that process.

### Let's Start With You

Before you can start to help others, you must be positioned well yourself. The positioning I'm referring to is the positioning in your mind. Commit in this New Year to work on your own personal growth and development.

There is a saying about teaching that you can only teach someone as far as you've taken yourself. On parenting, that means you can only help grow your child to the extent that you've mastered good parenting skills and the knowledge that goes with it. Those skills and knowledge can be grown through the process of daily examination of our interactions with our children. Now, I realize that those of you with young children are frazzled at end of the day and the last thing on your mind is to sit down and “think the day over.” So, here is an alternative.

Start the day by thinking though the activities you have on your schedule pertaining to your child. About mid-day, think about what happened in the AM. Did you kiss your child before you left for work or they left for school? Did you engage in at

least one moment of teaching and sharing ideas on life's responsibilities? Did you tell them that you love them?

Prior to going to bed, take a few moments to reflect on the PM interactions. What lesson did you teach? Were you encouraging? Did you hug them? Did you have a meaningful conversation about them and their desires?

Now, if you get distracted by the distractions of life and you miss a day, don't fret or lose it. Just put it on your calendar everyday and give it your best effort. If you repeat the process enough, it will eventually stick and become part of your daily habit pattern. It is our habits that make or break us so if we develop the right habits we can really make something of ourselves and our children.

## **Share With Your Child**

Use this time of the year to help your children look at refocusing their life as well. How well have they been doing in school? Could their study habits stand a boost? Sit down with them to help them develop goals for the year. Don't just focus on school. Look at their entire world. Stress the importance of dreaming and working towards the accomplishment of those dreams. Encourage them to use their gifts to make a better life for themselves. Encourage them to give of those skills and talents to others. Remind them that we are most happy in the service of others.

Use this time to re-enforce important relationship principles with family, friends and those they meet. Let them know the importance of spiritual growth. Educate them about good dietary habits (not just fast food consumption). Talk to them about career choices, fiscal responsibility, involvement in extra-curricular activities, peer relationships, and whatever else is important to them and you. Don't be nosy, be caring.

If you have a teenage boy, you know they have forgotten how to speak to their parents. But, you persist and engage in conversation. Remember make it about something important to them and eventually, they may even ask you a question about something that is important to you. Teenage girls don't need the prompting that boys do but they still need conversation. With either, be open, honest and patient. Trust me when I tell you that being able to engage in a meaningful conversation with your children is a high point life offers. If you have more than one child, each conversation should be directed at that child. Yes, there are lessons that all should hear. But, be sure that you have "special conversation" with each child on things that are important to them.

Don't miss the opportunity to teach what you know through conversation with your children. It's an experience you'll both cherish.

## **A Message for Fathers**

As the father of two sons and grandfather of five grandsons, the words of this poem resonate deeply in my soul. They are profound and extremely important to always remember. Ok mom, next month it's your turn.

### *A Little Boy*

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 all that 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 is waiting to grow up and be like you.

### **Children and Cars**

Now more than ever, teenagers have their own car. I'll not speak for or against this idea. That is not my right. But I'd like to share a thought about teens and cars.

Be sure that your teen sees having use of a car as a "privilege" not a "right." Get the ground rules understood from the start and hold to them. Make safety and responsibility the core messages. Set up, in writing, the rules of agreement between you and your teen. Any violation gets "ticketed" and the privilege is lost. Be clear and consistent with the process and you just may save the life of your child.

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

## 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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