

SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S PASSION AND DEVELOPMENT

Handbook for Parents to Support their Child's Interest



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As a cancer survivor himself, Hilman dedicate part of his time to counsel cancer patients and their caregivers.

During his free time, his favourite hobby is to sit in a cafe and writing future scripts for his upcoming films.

A capable and diverse filmmaker who used to produce and direct in the past, Hilman is an avid fan of Crime Movies and thrillers.



How Can You Build Your Child's Self Esteem

As a parent, you know that building your child's sense of self esteem is important. Child development specialists tell us so. However knowing it is important is not the same as knowing how to give your child a strong sense of self worth. There is no simple strategy but there are several effective techniques parents can use to help boost self esteem in their child.

Let Them Know Their Value

The most important strategy is to show and tell your child how much you value them and appreciate them. Spend time with them, talk to them and really listen to what they have to say, and appreciate the things that interest them.

Empower Them To Make Decisions

You should also teach your child about decision-making and recognizing when they have made a good decision. Children make decisions all the time but often are not aware that they are doing so. There are a number of ways parents can help children improve their ability to consciously make wise decisions. Start first by giving children the ability to make decisions, for example about what to wear for the day, and then letting them live with the consequences, such as being too hot in a long sleeve shirt on the beach. Then gradually expand the scope of their decisions and discuss the problems and solutions involved to help the child evaluate the decisions they make.

Make Them Responsible For Their Emotions

Let children know they create and are responsible for any feeling they experience. Likewise, they are not responsible for others' feelings. Avoid blaming children for how you feel. Model appropriate ways to respond to their emotions.

Help Them Find Their Niche

Encourage your child to develop hobbies and interests which give them pleasure and which they can pursue independently. These can help them develop various skills which may help build confidence as well as provide comfort and distraction during difficult times. Also, these may well provide common ground to further social interaction with others.

Let Them Work It Out With Peers

Children must learn to work out disputes with siblings, friends, and classmates without adult intervention. As they grow older they won't always be under direct adult supervision, but also learning to work through social challenges can help build confidence and self esteem. Another important social tool is the ability to cope with teasing. Help your child develop "tease tolerance" by pointing out that some teasing can't hurt and exploring the reasons why some kids tease.

Show Them Their Strengths

When your child succeeds at something, reinforce that success by pointing out how far he has come by not giving up. When your child fails, point out the other successes he has enjoyed, especially those that were accomplished after a failure.

Teach Them To Laugh

Laugh with your children and encourage them to laugh at themselves. People who take themselves very seriously are undoubtedly decreasing their enjoyment in life. A good sense of humor and the ability to make light of life are important ingredients for increasing one's overall enjoyment. Laughter is a great stress reliever and a good way to make friends. Laughing at your mistakes and at life's challenges help teach children to put trouble in perspective and cope with challenges.

Using these seven strategies can help build your child's self esteem and help them lead a happier and more successful life.

The Not So Perfect Parent Or Lose The Guilt

All of us have that guilty feeling from time to time and yet it is the most wasted emotion of all. We can't take back words or actions, no matter how hard we wish.

If you are a parent, this guilt seems to be present even more. This useless feeling is a universal phenomenon.

Why does this "guilt trip" seem to be an expanding epidemic?

I believe the answer to that is (1) More women work away from home (2) Single-parenting is on the rise and (3) There are so many books written on how to be a "good" parent. The first two things I have mentioned will sometimes keep you away from the time you would be spending with your child. I firmly believe in quality, not quantity.

Now don't get me wrong. There are many excellent books that have been written regarding child-rearing. I'm sure they are helpful. The point I am driving at is this; there seems to be a lot of pressure to be a "good parent." We certainly should all keep trying but also, keep in mind that you have your own inner voice that tells you what is best for you and your child. What works for Ahmad may not necessarily work for Siti. If in doubt, follow your heart!

Guess What? When you are not perfect, you are letting your children know that you are human. You are also teaching them to forgive, as you forgive them.

Worried about being perfect? Think about the person who reared you? Were they perfect? Do you love them today?

Children can tell if they are truly loved. It is not measured by how many hours are spent with them or if you were tired that day and lost your cool. It is certainly not measured by how much money you can spend on them.

Your child already knows that you are not perfect. He or she also knows how much you love them. You can't fool a child. They are spirits like you and I. They are the most honest people on this earth. Believe me, they are honest and will forgive your mistakes.

Please forgive yourself. No one has ever been a perfect parent...not ever. If you love yourself, you forgive yourself.

As Oscar Wilde, an Irish playwright and poet wrote: (1843-1900)

"To love oneself is the beginning
of a lifelong romance"

If you love yourself and forgive yourself, that is another lesson your child will pick up from you. It's a win, win situation!

So, relax. Bask in the fullness of your reciprocal love with your child.

Some day he/she may be telling a story...."remember when Mom did....."

Six Ideas To Help You Discipline Your Kid

Got a kid? Love him or her? Of course you do. So when he or she misbehaves on a consistent basis, what's the best way to administer discipline?

Well, as you may be aware, there is a wide range of thought on this subject. One school of thought teaches essentially hand's off, and says, the little darlings are very intelligent, so let them figure it all out on their own. No punishment or reward systems. Still another extreme says that the Singapore model of "caning" people for littering is a good one.

Most of us find ourselves in between these two nutty positions...and the word "nutty" is being charitable. If you don't think so, then stop reading. You're a lost cause and should find yourself a nice rubber room somewhere so that you don't hurt yourself or anyone else.

The fact is that anyone who actually watches children behave – without preset mental filters – will almost certainly come to the conclusion that different children respond differently. Some kids have a very high "pain" threshold. They can take whatever penalties you exact as they stubbornly refuse to do what they should do. There are others who can be easily motivated by various token systems.

So how do you find out what method of discipline will work for your kid(s)?

In a word: experiment! Here are six ideas for proceeding.

#1 – Put on your "scientist hat." Research what's out there. No author knows your kid better than you do. But many researchers have seen thousands of kids and had opportunities to try various strategies with kids and their families. So knowing what's been done before is a very good strategy in and of itself.

#2 – Once you have a sense of what is possible, start interacting with your own kid(s). Bear in mind that we live in societies that are increasingly filled with busybodies who do everything they can to blur the lines between discipline and abuse. So be careful as you try different discipline ideas.

Important note: as you try these ideas, it is critically important that you (a) remember your main goal: raising good, intelligent children. If this isn't your main goal, please find that aforementioned rubber room for yourself. And (b) be patient. This is as much an experiment for them as it is for you. They've never been where they are right now. It's their first time being a kid at the age they are. And remember, you're not dealing with lab rats here. You're dealing with *your* children. Never lose sight of that.

#3 – When you find something that seems to work, don't think you can finally relax. Nothing of the sort, my friend. Don't confuse short term hits to the bull's-eye with long term success. Your child may be responding to novelty as much as to the discipline. When the novelty wears off – and it will – your child may very well revert to the old behaviors that you tried to change. Novelty has a tough time lasting more than a few weeks. So give things at least 3-6 weeks to see if the changes are enduring.

#4 – Tweak before you make major changes in your efforts. For example, suppose you are rewarding your kid(s) with pizza at the end of the week if certain things are done right. And suppose you have reason to believe they are responding to novelty rather than the measures themselves. Rather than junking the measures, tweak them a bit to determine if your suspicion is valid. For example, you might vary the food rewards and say, “Look – if you do the right things, you get to pick what we have for Friday dinner.” You might be on the right track and tweaking gives you a chance to really find out.

#5 – If tweaking doesn’t work, then by all means try new approaches, keeping in mind all of the above.

#6 – Finally, be humble enough to know that you might need professional family help in the form of therapists and other counselor types. You’ve got to be careful here because these professionals vary widely in terms of competence and also in terms of appropriateness for your family. For example, some therapists suggest Ritalin as the first line of therapeutic intervention if the child is having trouble in school. You have a right to be skeptical in such situations. Listen to your own inner voice here. No matter how well intentioned, many therapists simply get things wrong. If the one you’ve initially selected isn’t right for your child or your family, try another.

Note: there are professional organizations that can help you find a decent therapist if there is a need. Singapore and many other nations are rich in resources to help families. Look to them if your problems grow too intense for you to handle on your own.

Finally, use common sense. Sounds strange perhaps, but the fact is that no matter what professional help you may seek out, no matter what books you read, and no matter what online forums you participate in – YOU will be making the decisions. You are responsible, like it or not. Use the best intelligence you can and proceed with caution.

The Importance Of Learning And Discovering New Things

The world of parenting is intriguing and new. Every day you have the opportunity to learn and discover new things. Why is this important?

As much as your children will grow during their lifetime, you grow too. You have the opportunity to learn right along with your children!

You can learn to re-discover the mystery and uniqueness of the world at large. As your children discover the joy of rain drops for the first time, you too have the opportunity to re-discover your sense of awe and joy of a world not fully uncovered.

Why is it important that you learn and discover new things? There are many reasons you should be interested in discovering new things.

Your Children Will Learn From You – The first person children learn from is their mom and dad. When you take an active interest in learning and discovering, your children will too. You have to lead by example. As a parent you have a duty to inspire your children and encourage them to explore the world they live in. The best way to do that is to constantly seek new learning experiences yourself.

Continual Learning and Discovery Activities Promote Bonding – With society constantly going at a faster and faster pace it is hard to find time to bond with your children. However if you take the time to actively participate in learning and discovery, and share those experiences with your children, you'll help solidify the bond that started when you gave birth to your children.

Learning Helps Sharpen Your Skills – No one is born a parenting expert. Practice makes perfect. Over time the more you learn from others, the better a parent you will become. You should take the time to learn as much as you can as you go along. This will help you sharpen your skills and enable you to be the best parent you can be.

The world will present you with continual opportunities for learning. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of each and every one that comes your way.

Remember in your quest for knowledge you will not only become a better parent, but you'll also inspire your children and teach them to love learning!

You should also remember that learning comes in many forms. Don't get bogged down by a closed mind. Remember to keep an open mind and take into consideration every new experience as a learning experience.

You'll find your life is much richer because of your efforts, and parenting much more rewarding when you take the time to learn and discover by yourself and with your children.

Learning is fun. Simply by reading this letter you are encouraging your natural learning and discovery ability.

Re-discover the child in you, and start your journey of daily discovery and learning!

Your life and the lives of your children will be much richer and more rewarding for all your learning efforts!

The Most Crucial Parenting Techniques

No matter who we are, or what we do in life, most of us have kids. And there are numerous theories floating around regarding parenting. The two I have found that are crucial above all else: teaching your kids that everything but love, shelter, clothes, schooling and food are privileges, not rights, and more importantly is to be consistent with them.

It is imperative that you are consistent with EVERYTHING starting when the child is very small. Sounds easy, but it's very hard to do. We all get caught up in our lives, get frustrated or angry and threaten things we don't mean, are too tired to deal with keeping our word, or don't have the strength for the temper tantrums and begging. Besides, those little buggers are so darn cute when they plead for something, and have a unique way of melting your heart at the most inopportune times. How do we resist caving in? It's not easy! I can tell you that it can get worse. Because if you aren't consistent in the beginning, they learn you will cave, that you don't follow through and if they wait it out long enough, beg or plead enough, you'll give in. As an example, I have been telling your child for years to raise their grades or they won't be allowed to get the things they want. They sure blew you off, they'll start begging or even floored, you still refused to let them get it. At first, they thought for sure you will cave, but you didn't. You stand by your words. Now we'll see if their grades improve or not.

You might not have been consistent with your children while they were growing up. It's not your fault, you tried very hard, but you have work full time, and other commitments, parenting is indeed tiring and can leave you worn out! However, your children know from past experience if they do well, you will go ahead and reverse your previous decisions regarding grounding, etc. Add to the fact that you're not home half of the time they are, because you're working, so you're not home to enforce anything. This makes being consistent extremely difficult. But it is do-able. Try going to the extremes. If they got in trouble for not doing their homework, tell them no X-Box privileges till they raised their grades. In order to keep that restriction, take the X-box console to work with you! Sounds extreme, but it's the only way you can enforce that rule. They might get mad at you, but we all need to remember that we are their parents, not their friends. We are here to produce happy, contributing citizens to our communities/ societies. Keep telling them that "they're not as worried about their happiness as you are for their safety." You as parents have to make priorities, and your kids should be your number one priority, not how tired you are or anything else. Keep reminding yourself of that more while your kids are growing up.

If your child gets involved in truancy, bad company, drugs or any other negative influence. Of course you got every excuse in the book... Such as "It's not me, I didn't do it, my friend told me to follow him" etc. etc. blah blah blah. So you might consider bringing them to a drug test and tell them if they do it again you'll send them to Boys/ Girls Home. Sounds harsh, but it can be effective. If you could go back to when they were smaller, you would change the way you raised them and would have MADE the effort to be more consistent, no matter how worn out you are. Because as they get older, so do you, and you'll find yourself more and more tired each year. You'll be lucky that they turned out to be relatively good kids. They have their good days and bad days, but all in all you'll be very proud of them.

My Teen Is A Runaway What Do I Do Now

If your child is a teen runaway, there is a problem. Before you jump to the conclusion that they are just a bad kid, determine what really pushed them in this direction. As a parent, there is nothing more fearful than knowing that your child is out there, facing whatever scum walks the earth and that you cannot protect them. But, before you can get them to stay home with you, you need to work with them to determine why they left in the first place.

To do this, you need to do several things. First, stop accusing and leave the anger at the door. You need to have a frank but fair conversation with them. Determine why they left. Do not yell at them, punish them or demand answers. Calmly determine why they left, they must tell you here.

Tell them why being a runaway teen is dangerous. Explain why this is not something that is okay and that you will not allow it. Make sure they know that you are open to helping them to work through problems they have at school, with their peers or with you so they can avoid being a runaway teen.

Get them help. Physically, they need to be examined. Emotionally they need to work with a child therapist to determine what they need to resolve with you or their problems to keep them at home, safe. In fact, the biggest benefit they will need is working with you side by side to determine what the solution is.

A teen runaway is a call for help. In some form, they can no longer handle what is in their lives threatening them. They are looking for a way to run, to hide or to start over because something is pushing them to do that. You do not have to be a bad parent to face a runaway teen. In fact, most will deal with this. Yet, what you need to be is an open parent that will welcome your teen runaway back into your home and work on repairing problems so that they will stay at home with you.

How You Handle Your Child Development

Having children is a life long commitment and it can be a daunting task when you think of all the different ways you can go about raising your child. Nowadays you need all the good help and information you can get when it comes to the development of your child, and there are many great websites on the internet that will give you a wealth of information. Whether you are just starting out with your first child, or maybe you need help with your teenager, you will find what you need to help you do the right thing for your child no matter what age they are or how many children or even grandchildren you are raising. There are hundreds, if not thousands of books out there that say they can help you with your child's development. Most of them are reputable however, they are supposed to be a tool to help you and give you some idea of how to help your child grow up healthy and strong. You should rely on your instincts too because you probably know more than you realize.

There are also many schools and training centers that you can enroll your child in that will help them with their school work and teach them the study skills they need to get ahead in school. There is help out there for parents who want their children to be the best they can be in all they do. Many websites can answer questions you have from doctor visits to separation anxiety. The first thing you will need to do to solve a specific problem is to find out what that problem is. So clarify the problem with your child's development before you start looking for a solution. So identify the key elements of the problem before you start looking for a solution. Visualize the problem or relevant process or situation. Sometimes, when we can see the problem with a child's development and all its important details right in front of us this will help us understand the problem better. Other times we can't see important elements because they have already occurred or are not visible. In these cases, it is valuable to visualize important elements of the problem. Sometimes things said about problems are easier than the actual problem itself.

Research shows that parents are a major influence on their child's development. When looking for help, make sure the program you choose will include you in the process. It has also been found that parents who take time to play and read with their child will have a positive impact on them. Providing a stimulating home environment and using discipline strategies instead of spanking your child will have a more positive impact on them also. Most programs give free information on the best ways to promote a better education for your child. You want the best for your child's development and there are many websites out there that will help you get the best development you can find for your growing child.

Fighting Childhood Obesity Starts At Home

It is a fact that people are generally getting fatter in many societies. This is reflected in the popularity of diet books and fitness equipment. But while most of us realize it would be good to lose a bit of weight, we are only vaguely aware of the staggering levels of “obesity” in our societies. We are even less aware of the impact this is having on our children, and the widespread existence of childhood obesity.

****What is Obesity?***

Generally speaking, a person is considered “obese” when the amount of fat stored in his body endangers his health. Here are some recent OECD statistics that show just how widespread the problem of obesity is:

Percentage of Population (over 15 years of age) who are obese

U.S.A. – 30.6%

Mexico – 24.2%

U.K. – 22.4%

Australia – 21.7%

New Zealand – 17%

Canada – 14.9%

Germany – 12.9%

France – 9.4%

In other words, almost 1 in 3 Americans and roughly 1 in 5 Australians are so grossly overweight as to have health problems because of it.

****Causes of Obesity***

As individuals we have a tendency to rationalise our inclination to be overweight or obese. We often blame such things as heredity, or glandular imbalance, and while these things often do make a difference, the primary cause for most obesity is quite simple. A person gains weight when he or she consumes more calories than they burn.

In other words, there are two important factors involved – diet and activity level. And it seems pretty obvious that in countries with a high obesity level, both things are taking a hit. Western diets are oozing with more fat and sugar than ever before, while people are generally becoming more sedentary and getting less physical exercise – sitting in front of computers all day, and in front of the TV all night.

****Consequences of an Obese Lifestyle****

Obesity has overtaken infectious diseases as the most significant contributor to ill health worldwide.

Illness such as type 2 diabetes mellitus, hyperlipidemia, high blood pressure, obstructive sleep apnea, asthma, heart disease, stroke, back and lower extremity weight-bearing degenerative problems, certain types of cancer, and depression, have been attributed to obesity.

In fact, it has been estimated that roughly 500,000 deaths now occur annually due to poor diet and physical inactivity. If this trend towards obesity is not reversed in the next few years, it will likely overtake tobacco as the leading preventable cause of death.

Even more troubling, when adults adopt an obese lifestyle, they are more likely to pass their eating and activity habits along to their children. This has given rise to a dramatic increase in obesity in children.

****Obesity in children****

Obesity in children has become commonplace in many countries.

The reasons are obvious. Children are subjected to the obese lifestyle from all sides. Many families have substituted high fat, high sugar junk food and soft drinks for regular well-balanced meals. Or they have simply stopped preparing meals in the home – the proportion of foods that children consumed from restaurants and fast food outlets increased by nearly 300% between 1977 and 1996.

Children are also the targets of a constant barrage of advertising that promotes highly processed junk food. And in many cases the normal physical activity that has been a part of childhood for many generations has been restricted by concerns for safety, or completely replaced by sedentary activities like playing video games or watching TV.

****Consequences of childhood obesity****

Obesity is never a good thing. But obesity in children is especially bad. Once fat cells are created in the body they cannot be gotten rid of by normal dieting or increased physical activity. So an obese child normally carries their obesity through into adulthood.

On the other hand, if a child learns good habits for diet and exercise as children, they will very likely carry these habits and this knowledge into adulthood as well.

****What Can be Done about Childhood Obesity?*****

It is up to parents and other adults to teach responsible alternatives to the obese lifestyle. Parents must first become aware of the problems with their own personal and family eating habits and activity levels, and then they must make adjustments that will have a positive lifelong impact on their children.

One effective way is to adopt the “AKA” approach – AWARENESS of the problem. KNOWLEDGE of what to do about it, and ACTION designed to bring about lifestyle changes. Children have an innate thirst for knowledge, a deep desire to improve their self-image, and will love the attention you give them as you develop a plan for a more healthy lifestyle for your entire family.

Teens And ADHD

Teens with ADHD have a very difficult life. This condition is one that you may not even realize that your child has. In many cases, the symptoms are so few that you do not see that it is there. In fact, they know it is, but you do not. ADHD is a learning disability and a behavior disability that causes many more problems than just a temper tantrum when they are five years old. ADHD teens face many problems throughout their childhoods and well into their adult lives.

What should be done for teens with ADHD?

Here are some things you, as parents, can do for your teens with ADHD.

Get them tested for the condition. If your child struggles with remaining focused, seems to be smart but fails tests, or struggles with some of the simplest of things but excels in those that are more difficult, he may have this condition. Talk to their doctor about how to get the test and find out.

Medication.

Medication is available to help children with ADHD. Before you questions if your child needs it, determine what the benefits of taking it would be. For some children, it can give them self control, self worth and help them to finally feel good about what they are doing. For others, it does not provide a noticeable benefit.

Give them time.

Many ADHD teens will do well if they are given enough time to finish tasks and problems. For that reason, it is essential to clue your child's school in on your child's problem. They can provide extra help and encouragement for them.

Take the time to understand what it is like to be a teen with ADHD. Unless you have this condition yourself, you need to realize that it is hard. It is not their fault they can not pay attention. It is not their fault that they do not understand what they teacher is saying. And, it is not their fault that these things frustrate them so much so that they explode. Take the time to really understand them.

ADHD teens need extra learning help and they need emotional support. The teen years are already hard to deal with. Teens with ADHD have it just that much harder as it is.

Games For Children How To Develop Their Analytical Skills Using A Deck Of Cards

One of the most investigated subjects currently is children's mind development and analytical skills. More and more studies are being made and more lessons, programs and games are being developed in order to boost early stages of growth and increase existing skills.

There are more options and possibilities now than ever, starting with different educational facilities suited for different levels of development, and carrying on with special TV shows, books and games. These games are especially built to work on the growing and developing areas in a child's mind.

These skills can be developed in all kinds of different ways and not necessarily in a structural program or a special kindergarten. It can also be done in the simple and fun way of gaming. Considering the fact that there are hundreds of mind developing games for children, in this article, we will focus on card games.

Card games can come in different shapes and sizes and at different difficulty levels. The most basic card game is the card memory game. The game is played with half a deck or less spread on the table, while each card is facing down. Each player, on his turn, chooses to peek at one card at a time in order to eventually form couple or groups (based on what was decided earlier to be a group). This game helps to develop the child's memory skills and his ability to divide logically the symbols into groups.

Another game similar to the memory game, but one that focuses and handles a completely different area of your child's brain is the group game. At this game, the deck of cards is divided to the number of player so all the players receive an equal amount of cards. Each player on his turn form groups (based on what was decided earlier to be a group) and place them on the table. The players' goal at this game is to get rid of their entire cards by adding them to the groups already exists on the table. The players have the total freedom to change the position of the cards on the table as long as none of them gets left out of a group.

This game is more complicated than the other card games and therefore it contributes more to the child's growth more. The game teaches the players to make decisions based on optional following moves and to solve problems using their giving cards, which is in this case literally speaking. The game is highly recommended for children and adults as one, for it is competitive and suspenseful as much as it is friendly and fun.

Another popular game that most kids enjoy is war. But do not let them play it the usual way where the stronger card beats the weaker one. Instead, set different rules for each round. You can determine such things as that a two of clubs and a six of hearts beat any cards. You could even make it more challenging by setting a range of cards as jokers.

The variety of these kinds of games is relatively big and it is growing more and more as people are constantly looking for new games to play. As for the kids, they may be participating for a whole different reason, but the outcomes are the same.

Childhood Obesity

Childhood obesity, what was once shocking and disturbing has now become a fact of life, as adult obesity increased childhood obesity is growing and rapidly increasing. With bad eating habits and fatty diet and some hereditary influence some kids are doomed to battle childhood obesity late into their twenties, childhood obesity has become a wide spread phenomena and the risks involved in childhood obesity are becoming clearer with time.

The numbers present a sad reality, one of five children is considered overweight, and this tendency only increases with time, childhood obesity is increasing in different ethnic groups, in both genders and all across the world, North America and Western Europe are leading the charts in regards to childhood obesity, but other regions of the world are not to far behind.

Some expert claim that if something is not done to stop childhood obesity immediately we will witness a whole generation becoming twice as heavy as its parents and grandparents were, with this gain of weight other health risks are becoming more and more evident and have a huge effect on larger groups.

It is clear that we have an epidemic of obesity in our country, and that, as we get used to seeing more overweight people at work, in school and on the streets, we are accepting this condition as reality, rather than working to change the situation.

For this increase in childhood obesity we can blame our way of life first, the car has replaced a lot of walking which was very important for our hearts and muscle mass, most of us spend most of our free time in front of the television or the computer, and most of the time we are in front of these appliances we also indulge in eating fatty food such as pizza and ice cream. Junk food has become an acceptable meal, what was once considered a last option for children meal has become the default in choosing our kids meals.

Lets consider the dangers of obesity, and bare in mind that we usually think of adults when we talk about these risks, which makes this even worst. Too little exercise.

And too much of the wrong kind of food is associated with Type II diabetes, all sorts of heart disease and blood pressure problems, joint problems related to weight bearing, self esteem and confidence issues, high cholesterol, mental problems such as depression and sleep disruption, unstable mental stamina, pulmonary problems. The research in this field points to one clear fact, if you are obese as a child you start a far higher chance to be an obese adult, so childhood obesity is not some childhood problematic phase that goes away after some time, childhood obesity can lead to a very problematic adulthood.

What can be done to prevent childhood obesity and how can we stop this dangerous tendency? First thing we could do right away is to stop using our cars so much and walk a little more, any kind of physical exercise is good for young children, we are not talking about gym and pushups, even an enjoyable basketball game, 45 minutes three times a week can do wonders, and the great thing about kids is that they enjoy playing – they sometimes just need a little encouragement to get them going. This alone can start you off in your battle against childhood obesity. Take childhood obesity seriously, it is not something that will go away, exercise and healthy eating are vital for a young body to develop well and to enjoy longevity and healthy life. Good luck fighting – and beating childhood obesity.

Your Children Are On Their Own Soul Searching Journey

In a phone session with Hameed, one of my clients, he expressed to me that he was feeling very sad about his son, Raihan. Raihan, 29 years old, was not doing much with his life, and Gerald was berating himself for how he had parented Luc.

“I should have spent more time with him. I should have motivated him more. I should have been a better role model. I should have been more firm with him.” On and on he went, judging himself for how he had been as a parent.

“Hameed,” I said, “Raihan is on his own soul’s journey. Even if you had been a perfect parent – and none of us really knows what that means – Raihan might still be having the challenges he is having.”

“Really? Wow! That makes me feel much better! I never thought of it that way. Tell me more about what you mean by his own soul’s journey.”

“I mean that each of us comes here to learn certain soul lessons. Regardless of how good or bad your parenting was, Raihan is on his own journey, making his own choices. You can take responsibility for how you were as a parent, but you cannot take responsibility for the choices he is making for his life.”

“But I keep feeling that if I had been a better parent, he would not be struggling the way he is.”

“Maybe and maybe not. You have no way of knowing this. Your self-judgment is your attempt to have control over something you have no control over – Raihan’s choices. You are trying to avoid your feelings of helplessness regarding Raihan. But you are helpless over him. You cannot make him be different.

“Each child is different and each child will respond differently to our parenting. We do the best we can for our children. Most parents want the very best for their children and feel deep pain when their children go through pain. Yet we cannot prevent them from their own soul’s journey.”

“So what can I do to help him?”

“The very best thing you can do is to continue doing your own inner work, while praying for him. Even though he is 29, you are still a role model for him. Certainly judging yourself is not good role modeling. Raihan needs to see you doing all you can to take loving care of yourself. When he sees you feeling really good about yourself and happy with your life, he might decide to make some changes. Aside from becoming a loving role model and praying for him, there is really nothing you can do about his choices. You need to accept your helplessness over him instead of trying to have control over him. Any attempts to control him will likely result in resistance.”

“Yes, he seems to be very resistant to anything I say. This is part of my frustration and sadness.”

“Right. That’s why you need to let go of trying to control him. You need to let go of being invested in the outcome regarding his choices and just keep on your own journey. The more you let go of him, the better chance you have of him making loving choices for himself, especially when he sees you making loving choices for yourself.”

Most parents want to think that they have more control over their children than they do. We want to think that if we “do it right” we can control the outcome we want for our children. It will make it much easier to let go of trying to control our children and just be the very best parents we can, when we understand and accept that they are on their own soul’s journey.

It Just Takes A Little Creativity

If you are a parent, particularly of an elementary or junior high aged girl, then you know all about sleepovers. The chances are that your daughter has both attended and hosted many of these blessed events. The problem with sleepovers is that they are mostly the same. Girls gather at a home, pizza and other snacks are served, silly games are played, a movie is watched and then the girls stay up way too late into the night. We can try to think of ways to host a unique sleepover, and all it takes is a little creativity.

We can begin to brainstorm new ideas for sleepovers. It won't be long for your daughters to come home saying that every sleepovers had been boring and pretty much the same. If you don't mind hosting sleepovers for your daughters friends, try to discuss with your daughter and determined to let your creativity have the best of you and your daughter.

Your creativity might quickly led to one of the best ideas that you'll have for their next big sleepover: a themed "party". It might be fun for you and for all of your daughter's friends to come to your home to center the sleepover around a theme. Especially when the school holidays are quickly approaching. Have them await for something to look forward to. Use your creativity though, because any theme will do depending on the time of year and on the age and interests of the children attending.

Once you have determined the theme, the next important thing is to determine: the menu. Your creativity will quickly led to a long list of meal and snack ideas that would reinforce your theme and make the sleepover fun and unique for both your daughter and her friends. For example, you can have frozen fruit drinks and other snacks that might be found on in the theme. Instead of ordering pizzas you can try going to take time to let each girl make an individual pizza with any toppings she chooses.

After you nailed down your sleepover menu, you can now focus your creativity on coming up with fun games and activities to keep the girls entertained without using movies or television. You can decide on a hula-hoop contest and on making bags out of scrap pieces of fabric. You might want to let the girls spend use their own creativity during the sleepover as well.

The sky is the limit when you use your creativity to plan the next sleepover or party happening at your house. Involve your kids in the process and enjoy it. For once you might have a little fun with so many kids running around.

Tv Is A Drug Are Your Kids Addicted

For most of us, hearing about different types of addiction is a common occurrence. Even more difficult to bear is that most of us are close to someone affected by an addiction. When addictions are related to the abuse of a substance such as alcohol, our understanding that there is a problem may be rooted in clear and serious signs of a life out of control. But what about an addiction related to something more subtle? Could a behavior as seemingly normal as watching television become an addiction? You bet it can!

I believe television can be a “drug” because it is literally a mind-altering experience. Like any drug, it has the potential to be used responsibly or abused. Did you know that the Pediatrics recommends no television for children under two years of age, and no more than two hours of television per day for older children? Here’s why. It is not only because of the potential for inappropriate content. In fact, for young children especially, it is the incredible stimulation that TV provides that makes it so potentially damaging. All of the flashing bright colors, loud sounds, and frequent fragmentation of reality that television encompasses is far too much stimulation for most young minds to manage. At the same time, children are like a magnet for this type of gratification, and as most parents know, can become addicted to the neurological stimulation of television very quickly. Although some people have tried to justify overexposure to electronic media by claiming it makes children smarter, those theories are little more than rationalizations for indulging in what science indicates is bad for us.

What’s the effect of repeated exposure to television stimulation? Just like what happens when a person is exposed to any drug, repeated exposure to television has the effect of dulling a person’s senses. This is precisely what we as parents experience when we ask our kids to tear themselves away from the television and in return get a blank stare or grunt and shrug! With younger children, requiring them to make a transition away from a stimulation source to which they are “hooked” often results in an instant melt-down. Noticing your child’s ability to transition between watching television and attending to the environment around him or her is a good way to determine if he or she is over-stimulated, or even possibly addicted. Kids who are addicted to television care increasingly less about the content of what they are watching, and more about getting another “hit” of electronic stimulation. The brain is an organ that is unique in that it develops in response to its environment – and if you’re continually “blasting” a young, developing mind with rapid-fire images, you may be creating a mind that craves high level stimulation but lacks the ability to focus its attention – sound familiar?

Here’s What You Can Do:

- 1) Make television a family activity. Discuss what you and your child are watching together. Turn down or mute the volume during commercials to ensure you are sustaining social contact. And relate events on television shows to real events in the life of your family.
- 2) Limit television watching to a specific period of time and to specific times of the day. Kids do better when they are required to do things before they watch TV, such as getting dressed, teeth brushed, breakfast eaten, etc., before the television set goes on. Don’t let television become the constant background to family life. Turn the TV on to watch specific shows, and then turn it off when the show is over.

Discuss alternatives to television with your children. Kids do much better accepting that they can only watch a limited amount of TV when they know you are prepared to spend time playing a game, going to the park, or helping with homework instead. When we use TV to occupy our kids so we can get other things done, we are inadvertently becoming enablers of their addiction.

3) Not all television is created equal. Look for shows that are paced appropriately for children. There are great programs for kids that don't rely on seizure-inducing graphics to keep their attention. Don't be afraid to censor shows; if you start when children are young by simply saying, "this show isn't good for your brain, and I'm proud of what a smart girl (or boy) you are," you'll get them on the right track.

Back When I Was A Kid

We must eliminate from our minds a few phrases when we are making decisions about how we will be raising our kids. They are the sayings like: “When I was a kid...” and “If I had done that when I was a kid, my dad would have...” or “Back when we were in school they used to...”

There is an important distinction here. As parents you must never allow yourselves to fall into the trap of using “because it was done before,” or “it has always been that way,” or “that was the way my parents did it,” as the sole justification for your actions with your kids. It is imperative that you have a sound behavioral, moral, spiritual, ethical, or legal justifications for the actions you are teaching to or demanding of your children. You must be able to explain to your kids in a very logical way, why you are asking them to behave in a particular manner. In essence, you must not only decide: 1) WHAT it is that you want your kids to do but you must also decide, 2) WHY you want them to do it! “Because it was done to me,” is never a good enough reason to repeat it with your children.

There have been a ton of mistakes made in the past and you are doomed to repeat them if you are not careful to think long and hard about the justification for duplicating those actions with your kids. Following are a couple examples to demonstrate what I am talking about.

Two historical events demonstrate the obvious problems with doing what has always been done before. Slavery was common in early America. We certainly would not advocate the continuation of that practice today simply because it was done before. Neither would you want to teach your children that women should be second-class citizens. Simply saying that women should not vote only because they never had in the past was a ludicrous idea.

Likewise, it is foolish for you to tell your children that they should wear certain types of clothing simply because that has been an appropriate style in the past. The same goes for hairstyles and many other standards and customs for behavior. Let’s look at establishing dress codes for kids.

We are not proposing abandoning all standards of dress for young people but rather, we are saying that we ought to make the standards logical and explainable in a reasoned sort of way and not just on the “If I had dressed that way my Dad would have killed me,” sort of an explanation.

We can have dress codes... but why do we have them is the critical question. Nobody, in their right mind would say that we scrap any sense of awareness of how our kids dress themselves. However, dressing in a certain way because a previous generation did is rather silly to impose upon your kids (unless, of course, you would like to go back and begin dressing like your forefathers, simply because “that’s the way they used to do it in this country.”) Hey, let’s get a few pictures of ourselves as teens and we can readily see that even we had some rather strange ways of dressing by today’s standards.

The issue is “why?” Why are you asking your kids to dress in certain ways?

Here is a possible discussion:

“But Dad, why can’t I dye my hair blue (wear spandex shorts to church, wear this provocative Jennifer Lopez top, use four letter words at the mall like the other kids, etc.)?”

“Well, my child, you probably could do that and in a perfect world it really wouldn’t matter. But, we do not live in a perfect world. We live in a world that has a few flaws: one of them being that most people in this world make a ton of snap judgments based upon some rather narrow preconceived ideas. It is a fact that most of the people you meet will not be able to see beyond the blue hair (or loud dress, etc.) to get to know you. Many of those same people are in a position to control the circumstances of your life or pass judgments about you that have a huge impact upon your life. For the same reason that it would be a bad idea to wear a ball cap to a funeral, it is a bad idea to dye your hair blue... most people would interpret it wrongly. A ball cap at a funeral would be viewed by most as being extremely disrespectful of the person being honored by the funeral. Blue hair would likewise be interpreted by most people as a sign of disrespect for others.”

“But dad, that’s just the point, I’m trying to show my individuality. I don’t want to just be like everyone else.”

“Great son, I am all in favor of you being a one-of-a-kind individual, but anyone can dye their hair. Why not distinguish yourself by being truly excellent at something? Or why not try to undo some terrible wrong done by society? Why not distinguish yourself by making the world a better place? I’d love to help you. What is the cause that you would like to choose? If the only way that you can come up with to make yourself different is dying your hair, I would be disappointed in you because you are such a unique person with so much to offer.”

Let's become their teachers and give them some good solid reasons to choose to adjust their behavior in positive and productive ways simply because it makes sense to them.

Kids Internet Safety And Myspace Be Careful

Kids Internet Safety – Be Careful!

The Internet and Computers are becoming a necessity in our homes. Nearly everything we do be it registering a new appliance, paying bills, finding a movie, restaurant or an amusement park for location and hours, is easy online. Why “let your fingers do the walking” in the yellow pages as the phone book companies used to say, when you can find it with a few keystrokes and click of the mouse online?

Becoming computer literate is a must say in education standards. As early as in primary and Secondary School level, students are exposed and have been thought to use the computer labs! As a research and learning tool the computer, with the Internet and it's unlimited resources if used in a safe manner can make all the difference in how well your child does on homework and assignments.

There is temptation and danger Online

When kids sit down at the computer the temptation to venture out and surf away from homework into chat, blogs and MySpace is extremely high. What kid wouldn't want to see what their friends are talking about, listen to music and make their own free webpage? MySpace.com is a good example of the most inviting of these temptations. Nearly every internet savvy kid knows about MySpace. Opening with “what's your MySpace?” when they meet a new friend in person is very common as part of getting to know each other. A local English teacher who also works in the computer lab guesstimates one in four of her students has their own MySpace.

MySpace.com- Danger Danger Danger!

There are countless articles on how kids have gotten in trouble and endangered their lives by turning to MySpace as a way, initially to get to know other kids their age. Read your kids articles about teens who have really gotten in hot water with MySpace to help them understand how persistent and dangerous the predators really can be.

For an example of a good kid in trouble read the New York Times story of Justin Berry, who at age 13, innocent, lonely and computer-wise, behind the closed door of his room quickly exposed himself to countless pedophiles in a matter of minutes on MySpace.com. The scariest part of this Report was the video interview with the then 18 year old where he warns others of how much his experience “messed him up”.

How do you keep your child interested in learning, doing productive things and away from the dangers online? That's a good question because the way they see it all the other kids are interacting on MySpace, sharing their favorite music and expanding their circle of friends there.

Begin by Educating Yourself and Your Kids!

*

Read up on articles or reports to see how to protect Kids on MySpace.

*

Sit with your child when they are on their MySpace.

*

If they switch screens or minimize the page and refuse to show you every time you try they are hiding something. This is when you have to either get software filters or a software program that tracks every keystroke, every page, every website they go to, to find out who they are chatting with and what they are saying.

*

Visit a page we here at JerSooz made a few years ago for more information on Kids Safety. Towards the bottom you will find a table with links that are designed help you get the information you need to keep your kids safe on the Internet.

*

Another option is to use your Browser History, Chat History, Cookies and Temporary Internet Files to figure out where they go yourself. See below on how to do this.

Use Cookies- From the Start button go to Search, then Files and Folders type in Cookies and Search Now. Usually they are found in the C Drive of our computer. There you can click on any of the files that have a suspicious name to see what websites they might have visited.

Check for saved images- Another thing most kids do is save pictures from the people they talk to and websites they enjoy. This is a way to get an idea of what they are really interested in when they are not telling you everything.

The Center for Missing and Exploited Children reported more than 2,600 incidents last year of adults using the Internet to entice children. With numbers like that, you'd think all parents would be hovering over their kids, demanding to know everything they're doing online. Check out your kids' and all their friends Chat and MySpace profiles.

Do yourself a favor and make sure their Login and Password are set on automatic when your child goes into chat and MySpace online. Even if you are accused of invading their privacy it is worth it to pretend you are them a few times and see what sort of conversations they have online and whom with.

You might be amazed and upset by who you find yourself chatting with and what is said but do not break your cover just yet! Above all things remember you are doing this to protect your kids safety. By doing this you will either find that your child is the perfect innocent kid just having fun online or...get enough proof that they need more strict guidelines, rules, parental controls, or to have the internet taken away until they can get a handle on it. It's for their own good!

Did You Know How Easily Your Location Can Be Found Online?

You are not anonymous online and your address can easily be found. This, of course means your kids on the internet in your home can be found by outsiders. It also means that you are responsible for trouble they might get into on your internet connection!

It's simple, really, every internet connection has an identifying number that shows where your internet connection is. IP or Internet Protocol addresses show in chats and when you send an email. Want to see how easy it is to find someone with their IP Address? Start with your own IP address, Visit [GeoBytes IP Address Locater](#) page, and see for yourself!

Is My Child A Target For Internet Predators

Thankfully, the answer is probably not. Most children use the internet to socialize with friends and pursue budding interests. They manage to steer clear of the dangerous predators lurking in chat rooms and other forums who slyly manipulate their way into electronic networks of school-age friends to find and groom the next vulnerable child for future exploitation. While most children are safe on the internet, as you read these words some are in danger. Is your child one of these unfortunate few? How would you know before it is too late?

Given the risks, parents cannot feel secure with the mere probability their child will be safe. Even “good” or “smart” children are still just children and make, or can be induced to make, bad decisions with tragic consequences. Short of physically being present during your child’s every encounter with the internet, there is no way for a parent to be 100% sure their child has not been contacted by a predator. Parents need to know the characteristics of typical victims, the warning signs a predator has entered your child’s life, and steps they can take to protect their children.

Characteristics of typical victims:

- * Most but not all victims are between the age of 12 and 15 years old.
- * Most victims have an instant message account (most kids do) but have not set up privacy or security settings to block strangers and, in fact, willingly engage in conversations with strangers.
- * Most victims tend to live in suburban or rural towns.

Helping Your Child Stay Fit

Would your child rather watch television and play video games all day than move an inch? Children are battling obesity and inactivity at alarming rates. It's time to get our kids in shape now, before they face serious health problems in the future. But how?

As you can guess, the plan includes lots of fun. Any time you can add excitement and laughter into an activity, you've got a winner. Let's take a look at some of the ways you can help your child not only become healthier, but enjoy the process!

First, plan some family nights out, and by that I mean Outdoors. Catching fireflies, passing football, even camping out to get the whole gang moving. Plus, you're making memories for a lifetime.

Secondly, kids love fun, unusual games. Check out a book of outdoor games at the library, and play some of the oddest ones. Use a tennis racket and large plastic ball for baseball, a giant exercise ball for kickball, and balloons for volleyball. The simple changes make the game more fun -sometimes downright hysterical!

Next, it's time to look for a physical hobby – something that requires movement. Gardening's a great one – plant giant pumpkins, King Sunflowers, grape tomatoes, mini carrots, and odd-shaped gourds for novelty. Check out a book on carpentry for kids, and let your child learn to build some simple items like birdhouses and feeders.

You may want to consider investing in one of these activities for them such as water sports or rock climbing. Some of these activities can occupy a great deal of their time and surprisingly provide hours of physical fun and exercise.

Finally, enhance your child's creativity as well by having him or her design an obstacle course in the backyard or some jogging challenges in which they can claim points for completing a certain quest. Beware! You may have to run through it, too! But activities that provide fun and fitness for the whole family can't be beat!

Who knows? Before long you may find the video games on a shelf gathering dust. Wouldn't that be a nice change of pace?

Introducing Children To Music Strategies For Success

I've heard a million parents lament the fact that they didn't get their children interested in music sooner.

There are also hundreds of adults out there that wish they had learned how to play an instrument when they were younger.

Studies actually support the idea that music stimulates certain brain connections and can actually help children grow smarter!

Music also provides an invaluable outlet for safe expression of feelings and emotions, and can also serve as an important learning tool throughout your children's lives!

Music helps educate in many ways, by developing children's memory skills and nourishing their spirit.

Now, some children are a bit resistant to music at first, but you can easily find ways to encourage them to enjoy music in many different forms early in life.

You need to simply adopt some creative ways to introduce music in your children's life without forcing them to take on a task they aren't interested in (Hint: don't go buy a saxophone and tell them to practice or else).

Here's how you can successfully and gently introduce music into your children's life:

- Allow them the opportunity to select an instrument they are interested in. Even if that instrument is something you consider too large or incompatible for them. Be willing to let your children make their own decisions and encourage them when they do.
- Play a variety of different music in the home whenever your children are around. Turn on the radio and turn off the TV, and make a point to try and play something different every day.
- Teach your children how to sing songs. Children learn through music. You can use songs to teach numbers, the alphabet and even help develop basic memory skills.
- Help your children make up their own songs. This will encourage them to use their natural creativity and talent.
- Hum a tune with your child. Praise them when they try something a little different.

- Consider taking your children to age appropriate concerts.

There are many concerts specifically designed with children in mind, chock full of songs and beats that will entertain and delight even the youngest of children.

Music is an important part of the developmental process children go through.

Children who are involved in activities such as band or other musical outlets are less likely to get involved in problematic behaviors and dangerous after school activities.

Music has even reportedly increased the intelligence of newborns, particularly building spatial reasoning.

Music also makes the world a happier place to live in.

You'll enjoy learning as much as your children will, and you can even explore music together!

By introducing your children to music while they are still young, you will ultimately improve their lives and their appreciation of the world in many ways.

View From Another Planet Learning To Talk To Our Children

Our goal in conscious communication is not to change the other person . . . Our goal is to establish connection.

Andrew LeCompte, author, *Creating Harmonious Relationships*

A parent of three attended a workshop I gave on managing conflict. A few days after the workshop, she emailed me to say that she'd had an "opportunity" to practice when her 15-year-old daughter came home an hour after the agreed upon time. As my friend put it, "I had an opportunity last night at home...and I blew it!"

A colleague, in talking about conflicts at home, once said "Our family really knows how to push our buttons – because they installed them." I laughed because it was funny and because it is so true. It's more difficult to deal with family conflicts, because the patterns we've created with each other are so entrenched.

Conflict Does Exist

What happens to you when conflict arises? If your reactions are typical of most of us, you either prepare for a fight or do your best to avoid the situation.

We'd all like to be better at conflict because we sense the potential it holds – to strengthen our relationships; to teach our children that conflict can be an opportunity to learn and grow; and to learn and grow ourselves.

If you're alive, you will have conflict from time to time. You can become more skilled at handling conflict and gain influence over the outcome by becoming aware of your conflict "habits" and changing the ones that are not useful or purposeful.

The Art of Listening

One time-tested conflict management skill is listening. The next time you get into a battle with your child, try asking for their point of view, listening, and paraphrasing what they said. Ask questions to which you really don't know the answer, then listen again. State in your words what you heard him say. Step off your point of view for a moment and be curious.

Imagine your child just arrived from another planet. If ET really did land near your house and you knew that he was a friendly soul, wouldn't you love to have an exclusive interview? You'd want to know everything, wouldn't you? Pretend you don't know anything about your child's perspective (you really don't). Stand or sit side by side and face the same direction. Try to find out what is really important. For example, parents and kids often fight over chores or homework, yet when we take time to find out what is at the base of the argument, it's usually about responsibility, yours as a parent and your child's as a maturing adult. From this place, it will be easier to talk about your mutual needs and concerns.

A nice byproduct of your aligning with them is that they may be more willing to see your position. Now it's your turn to share the view from your planet. Talk, listen, talk, and listen again. Keep both viewpoints in mind as you search for solutions. Even when setting or reinforcing limits, you can acknowledge your child's point of view and stand firm. "I understand that Siti's mom lets her stay out that late, but you cannot." Avoid justifying and persuading.

Listening Does Not Equal Agreement

It's challenging to take the initiative to learn where our children are coming from, because we risk losing authority. Remember that listening does not necessarily mean agreeing. Being willing to consider their cause demonstrates empathy, understanding and the willingness to look for mutually agreeable solutions. Taking the time to listen and talk shows them you care, builds self-esteem, and gives them appropriate ways to handle troubling situations of their own.

"Oh well. Maybe next time I can get centered first," said my friend when we talked about the conflict with her 15-year-old. Reminding yourself to breathe and center before, during and after a conflict will have a beneficial influence on you and your child, while teaching your child a valuable skill. Be curious, listen and learn, and let your purpose be your guide. It may take two to tangle, but it only takes one to change the dance.

Security Expert Offers Tips For After School Safety

Smart parents know to do their homework today when it comes to home safety and security during the school year, especially if kids are coming home to an empty house.

“With more kids today ‘home alone,’ there really are some golden rules parents should follow to make the home a safe and secure place,” said Bob Stuber, nationally acclaimed security expert, whose work with kids and safety issues has landed him on countless national TV shows, including “Oprah,” “The View” and ABC’s “Primetime.”

Bob Stuber’s Home Safety

And Security Tips For

- **Safe Escape:** Designate a “safe place” in your home where your child can go in case of bad weather or a home break-in. This can be a closet, bathroom or any other space that will provide protection away from windows, debris or the view of people.
- **Calling Parents After School:** Teach your child to phone a parent or responsible adult as soon as he or she arrives home.
- **Morning Lock Check:** Every morning before your family leaves the house, all the doors and windows should be checked to make sure they are closed and locked. It’s very common for someone to open a door or window and forget to close and lock it. This is one of the first places a criminal checks to get into a house.
- **In Case of Emergency:** Teach your child to call 911 first and the neighbors on both sides and even across the street next. While the police or fire department is on the way, the neighbors can respond in seconds.

Teens And Sex 5 Must Ask Questions

What I am about to tell you may save the life of your child. In today's world the safety and well-being of your teenager depends on his awareness and knowledge of sex.

It is critical that you, as a responsible and loving parent address that issue in detail. Here are some key questions to broach the subject, to let your child know you care and want the best for him.

Recognize he may be reluctant to speak about something so personal with you if you are not accustomed to sharing feelings and intimate topics. You may feel embarrassed bringing up the subject.

Before you do, be sure you can answer these questions for yourself. Also, decide what you are comfortable sharing about your personal experiences and beliefs on the subject of teen sexuality and activity.

* To start, simply ask your teenager, "What kind of questions do you have or what do you want to know more about regarding sex?" You will certainly grab his attention.

* You may want to throw out some information he is unlikely to know, something like, "Do you know that the sex partners you choose can influence your vulnerability to certain types of cancer?"

The object here is to get your child talking-or at least willing to talk. He may tell you he knows everything he needs to know. Where do you go from there?

* Ask, "Do you know that sex is not the same thing as love?" Watch his face for acknowledgement, disagreement, or confusion. Follow up with, "Sex is physical while love is emotional".

Listen to him. Pay attention to what he says and to the words he does not speak. Notice his body language, hear the underlying message, the words between the lines, his tone, word choice and pace. Note his emotions, eye contact, and whether he is at ease or trying to conceal any discomfort.

If you do observe that he is uncomfortable, tell him you noticed and ask if he wants to talk about what is bothering him. Assure him that you are not here to judge him.

Most important, let him know you are having this talk because you love him and no matter what he has done or is thinking about doing, he is safe talking with you. Tell him nothing can change your love for him.

And then go where he takes you. If he chooses to be silent, let him be silent. It is okay to have silence. You do not need to speak. He may be processing.

Give him the time and space he needs to do what he needs to do. He knows you are available when he wants to talk.

Facts are key. If he has unanswered questions, where can he go for accurate information? The streets, his friends, and the media may not be the best place to find what he seeks on the subject of sex.

* Be sure you ask your child, "Do you know that protection is not a 100% guarantee of health, safety or an absolute deterrent to pregnancy?" Be sure he knows the consequences of the actions he may or may not take.

* Follow-up with, "Do you want help or advice in obtaining protection?" That question is especially important for girls who may want to see a gynecologist and may not know how to find a good one who can take care of her needs.

If your teen uses the Internet, know that more than 61,000 searches were done in the month of April on phrases dealing with teen pornography. What pages is your child visiting? Ask. Know that if you impose your will he will go elsewhere to pursue his desires. Build trust with your teenager.

The purpose in having this talk is education. I do not, in any way, shape, or form, advocate teen sex. However, statistics show that youngsters as young as 13 engage in sexual activity. Have the talk now.

When hormones and peer pressure kick in, a wise and educated youngster, who has previously given thought to and made decisions about his actions, has a better chance of living the life he wants than one who has not prepared himself for the inevitable emotions and situations that will come up in life.

Actions and results, desirable and undesirable, reflect self esteem. To change behaviors, treat the cause not just the symptoms.

What is the cost, to you and to him, of not knowing where your teenager stands on sex?

My Child Steals

Parents need to know that it is very common and normal for children under the ages of four and five to take things that do not belong to them without understanding the concept of stealing. Children need to be taught lessons in personal property and not taking something without permission. Children under the age of five are generally self-centered and their primary focus is often seeing and taking what they want. That's why parents need to begin teaching their child the manners involved in asking permission to take, borrow or use someone else's belongings. Parents who overlook these important lessons often receive embarrassing phone calls from their child's school, youth programs or neighbors in regards to their child's theft issues.

Monitor Children On The Internet

It is a fact that many children today have access to the World Wide Web which allows them to be in touch with a lot of information that is exposed every day in our society throughout this media. If you have children, it is very important that you have some sort of monitoring so that you may be able to be fully aware of their actions while they are connected to the Internet. To monitor children on the Internet is as important as giving your kids advices on several aspects of their lives; you will find out, if you talk to them, that they are exposed to many different topics and opinions which may have been impossible for them to acquire otherwise.

Monitoring children Internet gives you the option to be fully aware of the actions that your kids take while they are connected to the biggest and most impressive net of information that has ever been conceived by mankind. If you monitor children on the Internet you will find out many different things that you were unaware of; it is a proven statistical fact that more than half of the kids that surf the Internet today have been exposed to pornographic material which was handled in an unnatural manner, this means that your kids are getting wrong information about delicate subjects without your knowledge, that is why monitor children Internet is extremely important for anyone.

However, it is not pornographic content which is extremely dangerous for your kids to acknowledge, there are many other dangers that you need to have avoided or controlled while your kid is online, and the only way to accomplish this is by monitor children on the Internet using specific software or programs. Your kids are always exposed to danger while they are connected; for example, have you any idea of the amount of hours that your kids spend chatting with others? Of course you don't, and do you know that most of these conversations are out of direct control from your kid?

At least half of the time that your kid spends chatting with anyone he is talking to people that he doesn't even know, there are criminals that pretend to be someone else in order to get information from children and then using it for their advantage. That and many other reasons are why you should monitor children on the Internet for their own safety. It is also very important that you keep track of all of their activities while you are monitoring children Internet so that you may have all of the required knowledge to lead them in the right direction.

Dating Drugs And Alcohol

Dear Daughter,

I love you so much. I wish that I could always protect you from all dangers, but I know that I can't. You are growing up and you will have to face dangers and make some decisions on your own. However, I am always here and I can always be a pretty good coach. Please talk to me anytime about any problem you may have, even if you have messed up. I have messed up a few times myself.

I was thinking about my last letter on dating. I would like to continue those thoughts. As I think about the potential dangers to avoid, drugs and alcohol are at the top of the list.

The moment you learn that a boyfriend is using any type of illegal drug, begin choosing the location for the break up. Never let the relationship continue thinking that he will give up the drugs for you. I know this sounds cruel, but it is true. People who are using drugs will look you in the eye and convincingly lie about the drug use. The drug use actually alters their personality. They will lie and do things that they wouldn't normally do.

When you break up with someone over drug use, it's a little different situation. As described before, choose a semi-private but public location, such as a restaurant. Take your own transportation and enough one dollar bills to pay for whatever you order, if you are meeting in a restaurant.

Get straight to the issue. If you like him, tell him so. If he has some good points, compliment him. Then tell him that you cannot continue dating him because he uses drugs. Tell him that this is something you decided long ago and that you are sticking to it. If it is true, tell him that you still consider him to be a friend, but you will not date him.

He will try to minimize the drug use. He may say that he doesn't use drugs that often, and that it's no big deal, everyone does it. He may say that he can quit anytime he wants to quit. He may try to make you feel guilty for treating him so badly. Don't believe any of this. Tell him that only he can decide what he wants to do, you wish him the best and that you hope, for his sake, he does decide to give up the drugs. Get up and leave.

In about a week or so he may call to tell you that he is off all drugs and doing great. Congratulate him and tell him that you will not consider dating him until he has been drug free for at least a year. He will then try to make you feel bad for being so unreasonable. He may even try to make you feel guilty for not helping him stay off drugs by continuing the relationship. Without you he may start using drugs again. Don't buy any of this. Tell him that it is up to him to quit the drugs, not you. You are not responsible for his behavior. By the way, if you are thinking that everyone does some drugs so there is no one left to date, you are hanging around the wrong people.

While we are on the subject, do we need to talk about drug use? I don't think that we do, but if we do, please, please, let's talk. You need to know that there is a lot of false information out there, most of which comes from the people who are using the drugs. They make it sound really good. It's not. I have seen many people lose their family, friends, their productive lifestyle, and sometimes their life, because the drug became number one in their life.

Do you know what upsets me the most? Not a single one of those people set out to destroy their life. I am certain that if these people had known what destruction lay ahead, they would have never taken that first drug that seemed so harmless. In reality, the most dangerous illegal drug is the first one taken. It seems so harmless in the beginning.

In spite of the seriousness of drug use there is a simple solution; simply don't do it. Don't take that first drug. No matter how harmless it may seem or how good other people make it sound, don't do it. Make that decision now, before you find yourself faced with "friends" who are encouraging you to "just try it." Make the decision now so that you will not have to decide when under pressure. There comes a time when you have to make some decisions about yourself. Make good decisions.

By the way, what would you do if you were with a group of friends and suddenly alcohol or an illegal drug turns up? You may be thinking "Don't take it." That's a good answer, but you must do more in this situation. You must leave the group immediately. If the individual with the drugs or alcohol is caught and arrested, the whole group will be arrested. It is important that you choose wisely when it comes to friends. I will have more to say about this in a future letter.

Let me also mention a few things about alcohol. Alcohol is probably the most dangerous drug available in terms of destruction to individuals and families. The reason it is so destructive is because it is legal, socially accepted and readily available.

For those who have trouble with alcohol, the onset of problems is slow and not even noticeable to the victim. Victims of both drug and alcohol dependence often have their world falling apart all around them, and they are in total denial of the problem and the consequences.

You are under age. It is illegal for you to drink alcohol. This makes my advice simple for now. Don't do it. It's that simple. No doubt you will find yourself at a party and there will be alcohol present. Don't do it, leave immediately. It's illegal and you could be arrested.

When you become an adult and are living on your own, you will have to decide what you will do about alcohol. Some people can drink socially and never have a problem with alcohol abuse or dependence. Other people begin with social drinking and the use slowly increases until it becomes abuse with the entire range of social, and eventually, physical problems. Which group are you in? I don't know either.

I want you to know that there is a danger involved. To avoid the danger, the best thing to do is choose to not drink alcohol. This is the safest route and the one that I recommend to you.

As far as dating someone who is using alcohol, it is similar to the drug issue. You are under age. If your date brings alcohol around you, he is putting you in danger. You could be arrested. He is being irresponsible and this is your cue to plan the break up. What if he is older and is of legal age to use alcohol? It doesn't matter. He is still endangering you. Plan the break up.

What will you do later on, when you are of legal age to drink alcohol, and your boyfriend drinks alcohol? This is not a black and white situation. If you have chosen the safe route and you do not drink alcohol, you may have decided that you will only date people who, like you, do not drink alcohol. If so, this simplifies things.

On the other hand, if you wish to continue dating the person, there may or may not be danger. As discussed earlier, some people have trouble with alcohol and some don't. If the relationship becomes serious, discuss your concerns with him. If you have a good relationship, an in-depth discussion should not be a problem. Remember that you always have access to professional drug and alcohol counselors who can help you evaluate your situation. Be sure you are comfortable with the situation up front rather than after the marriage.

How Soon Should I Teach My Kid To Save

It's never too soon to teach your kids how to save! In fact, the sooner you teach them how to save the better they will be at learning how to manage their money in the future. If they start early saving, they will understand the value of money and how much can be accumulated over time by saving.

How should I start teaching my child how to save? A good way to start is to follow some of these tips to assist you with helping your child to save:

1. Give your child an allowance which will provide your child with money that they can manage. Encourage your child to save at least half of their allowance.
2. Show your kid how much interest they can earn over time on their money when they save it! Especially the power of compound interest.
3. By saving money today, your kids would have money saved, for a future purchase they might want to make.
4. Make saving fun for your kid. Have your child put their savings in a piggy bank or jar so they can watch their money grow.
5. Open a bank account for your kid and let them deposit money from their allowance or other monies received into their bank account.

You say this is all good information, however, you're unable to give your kids an allowance because you just don't have enough money. What should I do, I really want my child to learn how to save? Don't fret, they can still save! You can have them save by collecting bottles and cans to earn money so they can start saving. No matter, how much money your kids earn, every amount adds up!

So, it seems easy, It really is! Get your kids into the habit of saving today, so they will learn how to manage their finances now and for the future.

We Welcome Your Feedback

Feel Free to get in touch with us for any feedback or questions.

