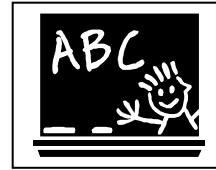


Parenting 101: How to Help Your Child
November 2008 Edition
Jen Hegerty, School Counselor



November is here and hello to raking! I am Mrs. Jen Hegerty, School Counselor at Brookside and Wilson Hill Schools. During October I have been busy training Buddy Team Members at Wilson Hill and getting Student Council up and running at Brookside as well as teaching in Kindergarten and First Grade. I will be finished up First Grade and moved into Second Grade. I will finish up Kindergarten at the end of the month and move into third grade in December. During October I went into each classroom and either discussed or showed the Worthington Schools Youth Safe Video that was selected by the district elementary school counselors. Each DVD is age appropriate and helps kids understand about personal safety and stranger danger. Email me if you have any questions or would like information on the copy of the DVD's shown at each grade level.

I will be starting my fall groups in the next couple of weeks. If you see a group your child can benefit from, please email me and I will make sure to include them. I run the **chicken little group** (worrying and anxiety), **friends group** (friendship skills and problem solving), **girlfriend group** (bullying and relational aggression), **volcano group** (anger), **study skills group**, **good grief group** with support from Riverside Hospice Outreach Program, and **family changes group** (divorce, remarriage, separation, or any relationship termination). If you ever need to reach me about a concern or problem or even just need to pick my brain for resources, I can be reached easiest by email: jhegerty@worthington.k12.oh.us. I am at Wilson Hill on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and Brookside on Tuesdays, and Thursdays.

The BIG, BAD 3's and The GOOD 5's

I have been teaching the 1st and 2nd graders about the Big Bad 3's and the Good 5's. This is an old teaching method but new to Wilson Hill and Brookside. Kathy Moore, retired school counselor from Evening Street and Brookside has taught elementary students for years and shared some of her awesome secrets that goes great with the curriculum we teach in our district. Here is what is being implemented:

The Big, Bad 3's: (say it with attitude!)

- 1. You don't have the right to hurt yourself! (Point at yourself)**
- 2. You don't have the right to hurt others! (Point at someone else)**
- 3. You don't have the right to hurt property! (Move your hands away from each other in a circle)**

If someone does one of the BIG BAD 3's, you choose:

The Good 5's: (we smile when we say this)

- 1. Walk away. (Two fingers walking away)**
- 2. Take deep breaths. (Hand on belly, breath in and out)**

3. **Count to 10. (Press fingers together, count forward to pinkies and tap again for #6 and then back)**
4. **Feelings Talk, “I feel....” (Tap your chest with your right hand and your left hand make it talk then add “I feel”**
5. **Walk away again! (fingers do the walking)**

This seems pretty simple but it works and kids remember it. I have even gotten reports that they are using it! It teaches kids what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior and to 3 quick ways to calm down so they can think of what to say. They say their “Feelings Talk” (I feel angry because you took my ball!) and then walk away again to show they mean it! Not only are children communicating what is bothering them but they are handling the little problems by themselves and not relying on adults to solve their problems. It also reduces tattling because they are empowered by the Good 5’s. Use this technique at home and see if it helps reduce little scuffles on the home front!

Buddy Team and Greeter Team

Wilson Hill and Brookside are starting something new to promote kindness and help for new students! Buddy Team is a program started by Kathy Moore, retired school counselor from Slate Hill School. Slate Hill has had this program for years and it has helped new students become familiar with their school with the help of student Buddy Team Members. Buddy Team members are trained in greeting, meeting, and introducing others to the new student. They are responsible for helping the new student meet others, become familiar with the school, facilitate someone to sit with at lunch and play with at recess. Wilson Hill has finished its training and Brookside will begin their training as soon as possible.

The one thing added to Buddy Team is students will also be trained in how to mediate playground problems. They will follow a simple script that will help students work out their problems by talking it out and problem solving what they can do to make things better. Buddy Team don’t solve the problem, they just guide the students to solve the problem by coming up with a good solution to try. This is replacing the student mediation program by giving more students training between 2nd-6th grades that can be performed on the playground or in the classroom.

Greeter Team is a pool of Buddy Team members who wish to greet guests and students who come to school. They stand at the front door of the school and welcome people to their school. They also make announcements about the word of the month and the manner of the month. This will be started in December.

Optimism

It is more than just "seeing the glass half full." According to author Martin Seligman (see *The Optimistic Child*, HarperCollins, revised 2007) optimism is a key resiliency skill, helping children in many aspects of their development. Seligman and his colleagues at the Penn Prevention Center have defined optimism as "the skill of seeing the positive

aspects of a situation, the belief that things can change for the better and that one can control the direction of one's own life."

Optimism is critical to kids today who face more challenges and stress than we did as children. Optimism enables children to achieve their goals, succeed in school, and cope better with stress, no matter what life throws in their path. Optimism also has long term, tangible benefits. Research shows that optimistic people perform better in school, are at lower risk for depression and have better overall physical health. While each of us is born with a predisposition to be more negative or more positive, research has demonstrated that optimism is a teachable skill that every person can learn and benefit from at any age. A very useful site for teaching optimism to parents and kids is www.fishfulthinking.com. If you are wondering what fish have to do with optimism, when you go to the site you will immediately find out: it is sponsored by the Pepperidge Farm product Goldfish®, and you will be reminded of this on just about every web page. If you can get past the heavy-handed advertising, you will find this site useful on many levels. There are activities for parents and kids that teach frustration tolerance, emotional awareness, mastery, and more. There are tips for parents and videos featuring Dr. Karen Reivich co-director of the Penn Resiliency Project. There are lots of positive activities and games on the [Fishful Thinking kid site](#), but again you will have to put up with lots of advertising for Goldfish®, crackers. Take some time to explore this site, and then bookmark it. You'll be glad you did. (Source: Dr. Shapiro's EQ Newsletter, Nov. 2008 www.parentstore.com)

Teaching Tweens and Teens Concern for Others

Here is a site Dr. Shapiro recommends for tweens and teens: www.FreeRice.com, for its simplicity and helpfulness, and now this site has gotten even better! As older kids or teens answer simple questions in different categories, they literally donate rice to feed hungry people all over the world with each correct answer. When it was inaugurated in 2007, the web site just had vocabulary questions, but now it has many categories, including famous paintings English grammar and vocabulary, geography, French, and the multiplication tables.

It takes just seconds to start playing and for every right answer the website donates 20 grains of rice to hungry people through the UN World Food Program. As players choose right answers, they see a virtual bowl of rice begin to fill up.

Twenty grains of rice may not sound like a big deal, but as of this writing, the site has donated 49,947,496,350 grains of rice, enough to feed more than 2 million people! This is a great computer game for the whole family or a classroom. Or try it yourself. Every question gets a little harder, so adults will enjoy it, as much as kids. What a great way to learn and help people truly in need. Visit this site every day! (Source: Dr. Shapiro's EQ Newsletter, Nov. 2008 www.parentstore.com)

Where's your manners and word of the month program.

In Worthington Schools we, celebrate the word of the month program in collaboration with the group Citizens for Characters and Citizenship and Circle of Grandparents. This year we have added the manner of the month to the mix to help students practice their manners. Help us help you by practicing the manner of the month at home. Ask your

student to use their manners and wait for them to say what they want or need by saying it appropriate.

Manner of the Month: Interrupting Politely

There are four simple steps to interrupting politely:

1. Approach the persons and stand nearby. 3-4 feet way will do.
2. Wait for a pause in the conversation. A pause is defined as stopping of speaking, a complete sentence ending, or a brief breath taken allowing conversation to stop.
3. Say, "Excuse me" or "Pardon me" and then say the person's name you are interrupting to speak to. Example, "Excuse me Mom, can you please pass the peas?"
4. End with a "Thank you" for breaking the conversation.

Things to remember:

1. Never interrupt to tattle on someone. It makes you look bad and inconsiderate.
2. Have patience and not blurt out what you desperately need. "But I really needed that ice cream!"
3. When it is an emergency, don't worry about the steps, and just interrupt: "Excuse me Dad, but Mom really needs you, it's an emergency!"

Talking to your children about interrupting politely can help you has less problems and alleviate frustration as well as teaching them some self-control and self-discipline to wait a minute before interrupting!

Word of the Month: Self-Discipline

Definition: Self discipline involves responsibility. A person with self-discipline takes responsibility for his own actions. To avoid unpleasant consequences or to accomplish a certain goal, a person often needs to exercise self restraint and/or self discipline. Self discipline may mean being quite when you want to talk. It may mean restraining from hitting your siblings when they have crossed the line. As a runner, in order to run faster, you may need to lower your weight. In order to do so, self discipline may need to be employed. From doing well in school to doing well in life, self discipline is an important ingredient for success.

Let's get talkin' about Self-Discipline: Family Discussions

1. How do you show self-discipline at school? Give examples.
2. How do you show self-discipline at the dinner table?
3. Look at the list below and decide how self-discipline can help:
 - overeating
 - speeding
 - spending \$
 - stealing
 - hitting someone
 - not following school rules
 - sleeping at work or in class

- not completing homework or classwork
- running a stop sign or light
- not getting enough sleep
- found guilty of bullying or harassment
- hanging around unkind kids
- graduating

(Source: <http://sps.k12.mo.us/phs/CharEd/mar-selfdiscipline/selfdiscipline.htm>)

www.KidsHealth.Org and www.TeensHealth.Org

Are you looking for a good website that gives you weekly parenting info? Here are two great sites that I subscribe and receive e-newsletters from. Check them out if you like it, sign up for the weekly newsletters. It may be the best thing to help you keep informed about health and parenting of kids, pre-teens, and teens.

Help during the Holidays, Confidential Help for Families

Are you in need of helping during the holidays because you have lost your job, had a family crisis, or are struggling to keep up? If you or someone you know who attends Worthington School District can be referred to this program. For Christmas, **The Adopt A Family Program** is a program where local families adopt a family for the holidays and provide a holiday dinner from the St. Vincent De Paul Society Food Pantry and gifts for the children. The amount of gifts per child is limited. Also the Salvation Army **Cheer Program** is offered during certain days and hours at the Chapel at Worthington Woods. Please see Mrs. Hegerty immediately for more details!

Growing Up: Development and Changes of Age Seven and Eight

As children grow and develop, we as parents see certain behaviors and marvel over them. Here are some highlights that maybe going on in your kid's life:

Age Seven:

- Got Fears? Your Seven's attitude about school may be bit different this year. Seven may accept school without protest but may also be thinking, "This is too hard. Get ready for a year of self-inspection. Help by being a good listener and supporting and asking Seven questions about solving fears.
- Hurry up and wait! You may see Seven rushing and anxious about time. Help seven by calm his timing worries by setting alarms, pointing out time, and making a schedule together so Seven knows what to expect and worries are solved.
- "Why do I have to?" Resistance may be about reason. Seven thinks about the situation now. This maybe a reply to things Seven resents. If Seven acts out, he/she may think about it later and wonder why Seven acted foolishly. Respond to Seven's resistance after Seven is calm with a hug and a, "I don't like what you did, but **I still love you!**" (Growing Up K-3 www.growingchild.com)

Age Eight:

- Discovering and enjoying what make Eight tick! Eight may be high spirited, energetic, and judgmental all in one! You might notice Eight being more self-assured and action oriented, more a person by adult standards, a positive person, rapid in

Eight's responses, more perspective of other's responses, more conscious of what happens to Eight, curious and exploring, Drama king or queen, and hypercritical, especially of best friend and parents. If so, soak in the good stuff and set boundaries by problem solving with Eight about treatment of others, including you. Help the thinker learn and think!

- Talk, Talk, Talk! Eight may just talk your ear off. You may hear more details than you want to know. Listen to what Eight has to say. Use eye contact and reflect back what you hear. Help Eight practice being expressive.
- Punctual is the norm. Their increased speed and ease of movement make them less vulnerable to the demands of time. They look forward to school even if they don't like the work. Remember, Eight's friends are there! (Growing Up K-3 www.growingchild.com)

Next month: Ages Five and Six!

'Tween Years: Growth and Development of Age Eleven and Twelve

Age Eleven: School Phobia: When Eleven doesn't want to go to school.

- Eleven feels sick and stays home from school. By 9:00 AM, he/she is feeling fine. This may be the start of school phobia. Fear and anxiousness of school can cause children to have stomach aches, head aches, nausea, and other miscellaneous ailments because Eleven isn't working through the symptoms of stress he/she has created.
- First step is talking to Eleven about the symptoms. Ask questions about what may be going on at school to cause it and help Eleven to problem solve ways to work through it.
- Visit the doctor if symptoms reoccur and days are missed to rule out a health problem.
- Set up a schedule or a checklist of what needs done so work is completed and responsibilities are done to alleviate school stress.
- Use an incentive to get Eleven on track. Incentives can be as easy as inviting a friend home or movie night. Start out with 3 successful days for several times, then 4, then 5. After getting to a week for several consecutive weeks, go longer until you don't need an incentive and Eleven has made it a habit.
- Get the school involved. They may have some insight on what to do to help and can support you on the road to getting Eleven back on track.

Age Twelve: How important are peer groups?

- By the time Twelve is in the 6th Grade, the influence of the group of peers is changing. Self-awareness has increased and independence is developing. But peer groups may bring uncertain challenges.
- Let Twelve see you making decisions, everyday decisions. Let him/her see you consider your options. Talk about pros and cons and how they affect decision making.
- Talk about the satisfaction of thinking for yourself- taking responsibility for your actions not following what others do.
- Give recognition and praise when Twelve acts on a personal conviction instead of a group's opinion.

- Get to know Twelve's friends. Have them over and talk with them. Then talk to Twelve about things you see and he/she sees in friends.
- Listen to Twelve's opinions- particularly if they are different from your own. Twelve may need you to be a "sounding board" for some new ideas.

Next month: Age Nine and Ten!