

THE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT CONNECTION

Home & School

Together We Can Make a Difference



February, 2015

Vol. 11, Issue 3

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT NEWSLETTER



By Skip Forsyth

A famous speaker stood before the audience. A large sheet of butcher paper hung on the wall. Without saying a word the speaker turned away and drew a large black dot in the middle of the paper. The speaker turned back toward the audience and asked, "What do you see?" The audience stared and murmured. First one, then another, "A dot!" "A black dot!" "A large dot in the middle!" "A blackened circle!" "A period!" The speaker asked, "What more do you see?" The audience was silent. Unexpectedly, a teenager sitting unnoticed in the corner of the room, hesitantly spoke out, "I see lots of paper for more dots or other artwork."

As you commence 2015 what do you see? Does it begin with empty resolutions like a whisper in the wind? Do those resolutions go in one year and out the other like a forgotten dream? OR, are you looking at a blank page full of possibility? On January 1 each person is given 365 blank pages. Every day you and your family write your story. Perhaps it is a story of laughter and love, of success through struggles, of dreams being realized. Today is the day to look forward with expectation rather than look back with regret. Robert F. Kennedy said, "There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask why... I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?"

What is your dream for your family and children? I do not suggest you write an exhaustive list of resolutions which frequently are little more than a rewind of bad habits from the previous year. Rather, get a piece of paper and write one goal for yourself or family in ten words or less. Post the goal on the refrigerator or bathroom mirror so you see it every day. As much as possible make it a S-M-A-R-T goal: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely. Work toward that goal one day at a time, one week at a time, one month at a time. Be patient with yourself but be persistent. When you achieve that goal write a new goal.

Henry David Thoreau reminds us, "What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals." Look to the future wide-eyed and confident. Carl Bard urges us forward, "Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new ending." May each parent, family, and child have a productive and satisfying 2015.

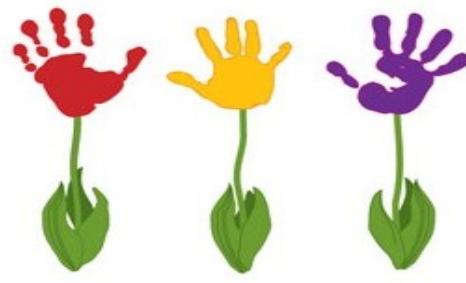


MY TINY HANDS

Sometimes you get discouraged
because I am so small,
and always leave my fingerprints
on furniture and walls.

But everyday I'm growing
and I'll be grown up someday,
and all these tiny fingerprints
will surely fade away.

So here's my final handprint
so you can recall,
exactly how my fingers looked,
when I was very small.
It's my Valentine's gift I made
just for you from me,
to show how much "I love you"
and for everyone to see!



HELPFUL FAFSA TIPS

APPLY EARLY & APPLY ONLINE. If you apply online, your application will be processed faster and will likely be more accurate because the FAFSA website is designed to catch common errors. The Department of Education also provides a Pre-Application Worksheet that will help you collect and proofread the information for your application before you submit it.

AVOID COMMON ERRORS. Making mistakes on your FAFSA could delay your application and possibly make you lose out on some financial aid. Be sure to read all of the questions on the FAFSA application carefully to avoid confusion and submission of incorrect information.

THE MOST COMMON ERRORS MADE BY STUDENTS AND FAMILIES ARE:

Leaving blank fields: Enter a '0' or 'not applicable' instead of leaving a blank. Too many blanks may cause miscalculations and an application rejection.

Using commas or decimal points in numeric fields: Always round to the nearest dollar.

Listing an incorrect social security number or driver's license number: Double check these entries and have someone else check them too.

Failing to use your legal name: Your name must be listed on your FAFSA as it appears on your social security card. Entering nicknames or other variations on your name will cause processing delays.

Entering the wrong address: Do not list a temporary campus or summer address as your permanent address.

Listing Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) as equal to total income from working: AGI and total income from working are not necessarily the same. In most cases, the AGI is larger than the total income from working.

Listing parent marital status incorrectly: The custodial parent's marital status is needed. If this parent has remarried, you'll need the stepparent's information too.

Failing to count yourself as a student.

Failing to register with Selective Service: If you are a male, aged 18 to 26, you must register with Selective Service. Failure to do so will make you ineligible for federal student aid.

Forgetting to list the college: Obtain the Federal School Code for the college you plan on attending and list it along with any other schools to which you've applied.

Forgetting to sign and date.

Sending in a copy of your income tax returns: You will be contacted by your school if your information needs verification. You do not need to send a copy of your tax returns in with your FAFSA.

http://www.angelo.edu/services/financial_aid/documents/FAFSA%20Tips.pdf



YOU'RE BRAVER THAN YOU BELIEVE,
AND STRONGER THAN YOU SEEM,
AND SMARTER THAN YOU THINK.
-A.A. MILNE/CHRISTOPHER ROBIN

TOP TEN SCHOLARSHIP TIPS

Ever wonder what the folks who award the scholarships want to see? [FinAid](#) and [FastWeb](#) have polled scholarship providers across the country asking for their tips on applying for scholarships.

TIP 1: GIVE CONCRETE EXAMPLES.

If your answer to an essay question is abstract, support it with a concrete example that illustrates your point. The scholarship sponsor wants to see evidence that you satisfy their criteria, not just unsupported statements.

TIP 2: APPLY ONLY IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE.

Read all the scholarship requirements and directions carefully, and make sure that you are eligible before you send in your application. Your application will not be considered if you are not qualified to apply.

TIP 3: IDENTIFY THE SPONSOR'S GOALS.

Try to understand the sponsor's motivation in offering the award. Do they want to promote interest in their field? Do they want to identify promising future researchers and business leaders? If you can identify their goals, you can direct your application toward satisfying those goals, increasing your chances of winning the award.

TIP 4: COMPLETE THE APPLICATION IN FULL AND FOLLOW DIRECTIONS.

Many students fail to follow directions. You can give yourself a competitive advantage by reading the directions carefully.

TIP 5: NEATNESS COUNTS.

Make several photocopies of all the forms you receive. Use the copies as working drafts as you develop your application packet.

Proofread the entire application carefully. Nothing is less impressive than an application with misspelled words or grammar errors. Ask a friend, teacher or parent to proofread it as well.

TIP 6: WRITE AN ACCOMPLISHMENTS RESUME.

Compile a list of all your accomplishments. This will help you identify your strengths and prepare a better application.

Give a copy of the resume to the people who are writing letters of recommendation for you. They will be able to work some of the tidbits into their letters, making it seem like they know you better.

TIP 7: WATCH ALL DEADLINES.

Impose a deadline for yourself that is at least two weeks before the stated deadline. Use this "buffer time" to proofread your application before you send it off.

TIP 8: TAKE STEPS TO MAKE SURE YOUR APPLICATION GETS WHERE IT NEEDS TO GO.

Make sure your name (and social security number, if applicable) appears on all pages of the application. Pieces of your application may get lost unless they are clearly identified.

TIP 9: ASK FOR HELP IF YOU NEED IT.

If you have problems with the application, do not hesitate to call the sponsor. But do not expect anyone to do the work for you. Completing the application is your job.

TIP 10: REMEMBER - YOUR SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REPRESENTS YOU!

Your ability to submit a neat, timely, complete application reflects on you. It is the face you present to the sponsoring organization.

Taken in part from: <http://www.finaid.org/scholarships/>

PARENT MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT COLLEGE MAJORS



This decision determines everything: That's not just wildly dramatic, it's completely inaccurate. "Within ten years after graduation, most people are working in careers that aren't directly related to their undergraduate majors," Penn State academic adviser Michael Leonard writes. For some, it's because their interests change or new opportunities present themselves. But it's also that the job market is changing so quickly. Some career paths have become obsolete, and new types of jobs appear every year. So advisers at Boston College tell their students to choose a major that excites and inspires them: "If you choose a major based on economic concerns or predictions about future job openings, you may find that, at some point in the future, the economy has changed and the career you had prepared for is obsolete."

<http://youngadults.about.com/od/collegelife/qt/Parent-Misconceptions-About-College-Majors.htm>

8 WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILDREN AFTER DIVORCE



Divorce often means that children move to a new living situation, change schools, change child caregivers, and so on. These changes have lots of implications for the kids. They'll have to make new friends, they may not be able to see extended family as much as they're used to, and they'll have to create a new life routine between two homes. Even under the best co-parenting arrangement, these changes are stressful for kids. And while there's no way you can eliminate the stress that comes with having parents divorce, there are ways you can mitigate and counteract the stress of these changes. Here are some suggestions:

1. Keep the kids in the same school if possible, even if you have to move to accomplish that.
2. Make every effort to allow them to continue in their extracurricular activities: band, dance, swimming, scouting, sports, and so on.
3. Help them find someone to talk to: a guidance counselor at school, a children's counselor, another trusted parent with whom your child is comfortable, a youth pastor, or a coach. Kids always need an outlet other than parents, and kids who find a caring adult who can fill that role are blessed. Those relationships often extend well into adulthood. Be intentional—find someone with whom they can air their pain and frustration.
4. Don't over-schedule your life. Allow time and space to relax and enjoy the children, to take walks around the park and be together. Even though you may find it's better for you to "keep busy" to keep your mind off the divorce, it's best to follow that pattern when the kids are at the other parent's house. When they're with you, try to slow down. Take time to bake cookies, plant flowers, walk the dog together, go hiking, and just relax.
5. If you do have to move, help the kids keep in touch with friends, either by arranging visits or weekly chats on Skype.
6. Let your kids grieve -- they feel it and they need to say it. Listen to them with love.
7. Keep as many "familiar" things in their environment -- bedspreads, toys, etc. -- as you can.
8. Remind them that you are a family, no matter what walls you live within.

Written by Tammy Daughtry for Imom.com

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

2015 Statewide Parental Involvement Conference

Together **E**veryone **A**chieves **M**ore

December 10-12, 2015
Arlington, TX

Online Registration Coming in March!
www.esc16.net
 (Click on the Title I Statewide Initiative,
 2015 Parental Involvement Conference)

CONFERENCE
HEADQUARTERS
ARLINGTON
CONVENTION CENTER
1200 BALLPARK WAY
ARLINGTON, TX 76011
(800) 433-5374
(817) 459-5000

HOST HOTEL
SHERATON ARLINGTON HOTEL
 1500 CONVENTION CENTER DRIVE
 ARLINGTON, TX 76011
 (817) 261-8200
 (888) 950-5062

Ask for the 2015 Parental Involvement Conference block of rooms.
 Register early for best rates!

A B C's Of Student Success

Written by Addie Gaines, principal at Kirbyville (Missouri) Elementary School, these mini-essays emphasize the important role that parents play in the achievement of your school's students.

(The previous issue featured letters A thru G. Featured in the next issue will be letters O thru T.)

H is for HOMEWORK.

Homework provides practice, and it enables parents to know when a child is having difficulty with schoolwork. Parents can support a school's homework policy by...

- ⇒ Providing a "homework area" that is well lit and free of distractions.
- ⇒ Setting a daily "homework time." Some parents call it "schoolwork time" so kids know the "I have no homework" excuse won't work.
- ⇒ Offering a snack or play break before homework; or using it as a homework completion incentive.

I is for INDEPENDENCE.

As parents, our job is to work out of a job! One of the most difficult days in parenting is the day we send children off to school for the first time. We swallow hard and let our children go. It must be harder to wave good-bye than to leave, we think. We wonder if our children will miss us. We worry about how they'll behave. We remind ourselves that our children are old enough to handle this challenge, and that they are going to face many more challenges in their lives. This one is practice for the next, so we cheer them on as we let them go!

J is for JOBS.

Giving kids jobs at home teaches them responsibility and other valuable lessons.

- ⇒ Young children follow directions as they sort socks or set a table. Older children take on bigger tasks.
- ⇒ Don't expect a job to be done right unless you take time to teach the child to do it right.
- ⇒ Don't take away from a child's sense of accomplishment by redoing a job.
- ⇒ With practice and encouragement, jobs help develop responsibility and a strong work ethic as they set the stage for success in life.

K is for KITCHEN.

Cooking with kids is a great way to spend quality time and teach lifelong skills.

- ⇒ Toddlers make simple recipes as they count items and follow a sequence of steps.
- ⇒ Young kids read recipes, follow directions, measure ingredients, and practice safety.
- ⇒ Older children double or divide recipes and help plan for a party.

Cooking enables parents and children to work cooperatively and share accomplishments.

L is for LISTENING.

"God gave us two ears and one mouth for a reason; we should spend twice as much time listening as talking!" As parents, we can spend quality time in our children's world by...

- ⇒ Listening - focusing on what a child is saying and on his or her body language.
- ⇒ Maintaining eye contact with the child.
- ⇒ Smiling and nodding, which will encourage the child to continue.
- ⇒ Paraphrasing what a child has said, and asking questions to be sure we understand.

M is for MONEY.

Children can start learning about money at a young age. Parents can help very young kids understand how money is used by letting them hand money to a cashier. Soon children will be able to make choices about how to spend money as they learn that it is a limited resource. Older children can compare prices. (How much can be saved by buying a generic-brand cereal?) Kids also need to learn about saving money. Young kids might use a "piggy bank" while older children will learn about interest by setting up a real bank account.

N is for NOTHING.

Was "nothing" your child's response to the question "what did you do at school today?"

- ⇒ Instead of asking about the day as a whole, ask about math or lunchtime or recess or...
- ⇒ Don't ask yes or no questions. Ask what did you think...? Or how did you decide...?
- ⇒ At dinnertime, ask each member of the family to tell the best and worst thing that happened that day. That opens the door to conversation, sharing experiences and tips for handling frustration, and emphasizing that something good happens every day.



The most important rule for a successful life is that you must create your own definition for success. Only you can determine if your goal has value and what it is worth to you.

Happy 18th Birthday, New Adult

Ways the Law Affects New 18-year-olds

Eighteen is a magic birthday, a milestone into adulthood accompanied by great privileges as well as serious legal implications. At 18, your teen can vote, buy a house or wed his high school sweetheart. He can also go to jail, get sued, gamble away his tuition via online poker, and make terrible stock market investments, just like you. That's because an 18 year old is considered an adult in nearly every state in the union.

An 18 year old can't rent a car, but he can buy one. He can also buy and sell real estate and stock, inherit property, enter into binding contracts, and get sued.



Youthful legal misadventures that once might have netted parental wrath and a stern lecture from the local police (toilet papering the neighborhood for example), shoplifting and even some minor drug possession charges can now land an 18 year old in jail.

In addition to voting, 18 year olds are eligible for jury duty, and they are responsible for paying their taxes on time. In addition, young men must register with the National Selective Service. Fail to register and your teen faces a \$250,000 fine and/or five years in jail plus the loss of student loans and any federal or state employment.

For more information go to <http://youngadults.about.com/od/legalissues/a/turning18.htm>

Taken in part from an article by Jackie Burrell

The Sedentary Problem

The percentage of overweight and obese kids and teens has more than doubled in the past 30 years. Although many factors contribute to this epidemic, children are becoming more sedentary. In other words, they're sitting around a lot more than they used to.

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, 8 to 18 year olds watch about 4.5 hours of television a day. And the average kid spends 7 hours on all screen media combined (TV, videos, and DVDs, computer time outside of schoolwork, and video games).

One of the best ways to get kids to be more active is to limit the amount of time spent in sedentary activities, especially watching TV or playing video games. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends these limits on screen time.

- Kids under age 2 should watch no TV at all
- Kids older than 2 should be restricted to just 1-2 hours a day of *quality* programming

How Much Exercise Is Enough?

Parents should make sure that their kids get enough exercise. So, how much is enough? Kids and teens get 60 minutes or more of physical activity daily.

Age	Minimum Daily Activity	Comments
Infant	No specific requirements	Physical activity should encourage motor development
Toddler	1 - 1/2 hours	30 minutes planned physical activity AND 60 minutes unstructured physical activity (free play)
Preschooler	2 hours	60 minutes planned physical activity AND 60 minutes unstructured physical activity (free play)
School age	1 hour or more	Break up into bouts of 15 minutes or more

TOP TIPS TO PROMOTE HEALTHY CHILDHOOD EATING

- **Have regular family meals.** Knowing dinner is served at approximately the same time every night and that the entire family will be sitting down together is comforting and enhances appetite. Breakfast is another great time for a family meal, especially since kids who eat breakfast tend to do better in school.
- **Cook more meals at home.** Eating home cooked meals is healthier for the whole family and sets a great example for kids about the importance of food. Restaurant meals tend to have more fat, sugar, and salt. Save dining out for special occasions.
- **Get kids involved.** Children enjoy helping adults to shop for groceries, selecting what goes in their lunch box, and preparing dinner. It's also a chance for you to teach them about the nutritional values of different foods, and (for older children) how to read food labels.
- **Make a variety of healthy snacks available instead of empty calorie snacks.** Keep plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grain snacks, and healthy beverages (water, milk, pure fruit juice) around and easily accessible so kids become used to reaching for healthy snacks instead of empty calorie snacks like soda, chips, or cookies.
- **Limit portion sizes.** Don't insist your child cleans the plate, and never use food as a reward or bribe.



KIDS AND JUNK FOOD

No matter how well parents promote healthy eating, it can be difficult for any kid to avoid the temptation of junk food. Instead of eliminating junk food entirely, which tends to increase cravings even more, try substituting some healthier alternatives.

How can I get my picky child to enjoy a wider variety of foods?

Picky eaters are going through a normal developmental stage, exerting control over their environment and expressing concern about trusting the unfamiliar. Many picky eaters also prefer a "separate compartmented plate," where one type of food doesn't touch another. Just as it takes numerous repetitions for advertising to convince an adult consumer to buy, it takes most children 8-10 presentations of a new food before they will openly accept it. Rather than simply insist your child eat a new food, try the following:

- Offer a new food only when your child is hungry and rested.
- Present only one new food at a time.
- Make it fun: present the food as a game, a play-filled experience. Or cut the food into unusual shapes.
- Serve new foods with favorite foods to increase acceptance.
- Eat the new food yourself; children love to imitate.
- Have your child help to prepare foods. Often they will be more willing to try something when they helped to make it.
- Limit beverages. Picky eaters often fill up on liquids instead.
- Limit snacks to two per day.

Think of exercise as a food group in your kid's diet

Add physical activity to your child's day, just as you would add fruit or veggies. To encourage physical activity, play with your kids -- throw around a football; go cycling, skating, or swimming; take family walks and hikes; and help your kids find activities they enjoy by showing them different possibilities. The benefits of lifelong exercise are abundant and [regular exercise](#) can even help motivate your kids to make healthy food choices.

Moms



TIPS FOR BETTER ONE-ON-ONE TIME WITH YOUR KIDS

- Create Traditions** – Traditions can help your child learn to count on you. If you have your monthly ice cream date together, then the child learns to trust that your time together is a priority and something you look forward to.
- Stay In the Moment** – When you do have coveted time alone with your child, try to stay in the present moment. Ask questions about what they're doing and feeling right now and listen to their answers.
- Be Ready for It** – One-on-one time isn't always planned. If your child comes to you excited about something or wanting to share an experience, whenever possible, set down what you're doing and be there with them 100%.

Foster Uniqueness – Allow your child to dictate how you spend time together and what the two of you do. It's not necessarily important that you find something you both like to do. You can help your child embrace their interests and unique qualities by inviting them to dictate the time together.

Enjoy the Mundane – You and your child can bond while performing routine activities. Your child might lead some of the meal planning and preparation. Other joint activities might include gardening, exercising together, learning a new sport or walking the dog.

<http://childdevelopmentinfo.com/parenting/moms-five-tips/>

&

Dads



FATHERHOOD TIPS

Tips to become an even more awesome dad than you already are:

- ⇒ **Cherish your time with your kids.** Try to be present as much as possible while you're with them. Don't let your mind drift away, as they can sense that.
- ⇒ **Don't look at anything as "mom" duties.** Get involved with everything and share responsibilities.
- ⇒ **Love conquers all.** When you're upset, instead of yelling, show them love. When they are upset, show them love. When they least expect it, show them love. Everything else is just details.
- ⇒ **Kids like making decisions.** While it is easier to be an authoritarian parent, what you're teaching your child is to submit to orders no matter what. Instead, teach your child to make decisions, and he'll grow up much more capable and happier. Your job is to allow them to make decisions, but within the parameters that you set.
- ⇒ **Stand together with mom.** It's no good to have one parent say one thing, just to have the other contradict that parent. Work together as a parenting team.

<http://www.artofmanliness.com/2008/08/03/18-tips-for-being-a-great-dad/>

Two Truths and a Lie

This is a game to find out about your children's day. Here's how it works. Ask them to think of two things that actually happened and one thing that didn't happen that day at school. Mom, dad and brother (this is a great dinnertime activity) have to guess which one is the lie. Everybody takes turns, even the adults. So, not only do you find out about their day, but they find out about yours.

© 2015 by the Texas Education Agency

Copyright © Notice The materials are copyrighted © and trademarked ™ as the property of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and may not be reproduced without the express written permission of TEA, except under the following conditions:

1. Texas public school districts, charter schools, and Education Service Centers may reproduce and use copies of the Materials and Related Materials for the districts' and schools' educational use without obtaining permission from TEA.
2. Residents of the state of Texas may reproduce and use copies of the Materials and Related Materials for individual personal use only without obtaining written permission of TEA.
3. Any portion reproduced must be reproduced in its entirety and remain unedited, unaltered and unchanged in any way.
4. No monetary charge can be made for the reproduced materials or any document containing them; however, a reasonable charge to cover only the cost of reproduction and distribution may be charged.

Private entities or persons located in Texas that are not Texas public school districts, Texas Education Service Centers, or Texas charter schools or any entity, whether public or private, educational or non-educational, located outside the state of Texas **MUST** obtain written approval from TEA and will be required to enter into a license agreement that may involve the payment of a licensing fee or a royalty. For information contact: Office of Intellectual Property, Texas Education Agency, 1701 N. Congress Ave., Austin, TX 78701-1494; phone 512-463-9270 or 512-463-9713; email: copyrights@tea.state.tx.us.

THE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT CONNECTION

is posted on our web site four times a year for parents and educators of Texas.

EDITOR

Terri Stafford, Coordinator

Title I Statewide School Support and Family & Community Engagement Initiative

<http://www.esc16.net/dept/isserv/title1swi/index.html>



ADMINISTRATION

John Bass, Executive Director
Region 16 Education Service Center

Anita Villarreal

Division of Federal & State Education Policy
Texas Education Agency

Region 16 ESC

5800 Bell Street

Amarillo, TX 79109-6230

Phone: (806) 677-5000

Fax: (806) 677-5189

www.esc16.net