

Ten Concepts Every Working Parent Needs to Know

Handout

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Introduction

- Target/Focus**
 - Manage Stress**
 - Manage expectations
 - Time-saving
 - Raise Awareness**
- Practical**
- Skill-set Expansion**
- Avoiding Parental Perfectionism**

Overview

- Findings from Ellen Galinsky's Research related to Working Parents**
 - Eight Critical Parenting Skills
- Common Mistakes to Avoid**
 - The 7 Worst Things Parents Do
 - Age Appropriate Expectations
 - Age Appropriate Chores
- Parent Stress = Kid Stress**
- Communication About Work**
- Consistency: Color Codes for Parents**
- High Risk Zones -- Managing Transitions: Departures and Reunions**

Overview

- Special Time/Focus Time
- Problem-Solving and Family Meetings
- Q/A

Ellen Galinsky, ASK THE CHILDREN: What America's Children Really Think About Working Parents (1999)

- Research on children's experience of working parents based on interviews with 1000 children (3rd-12th graders)
- "Navigating" versus "Balancing"
 - "**Balance**" implies equal division of time & energy
 - "**Navigating**" connotes the on-going process vs...an ideal state
 - Acknowledges the fluid interchange among individual, work, family & community rather than treating them as separate spheres.
 - ...to stay our course and maintain an even keel we need to be well attuned to the environment around us.

Related Findings - Galinsky

- Galinsky found that...
 - "Maternal employment is not linked to children's assessments of their parents; that in not a single analysis is the mother's employment status related to the way a child sees his or her mother or father (neither is working part-time or full-time).*
- Childcare
 - ...Good childcare can add value to parental caregiving and bad childcare can diminish the best of parenting.*
- Galinsky also found...
 - ...When mothers are doing what they think is right for themselves and their families, their children are more likely to prosper...*

Ellen Galinsky

- Interviewed 1000 children (grade 4-12)
- Question posed to children:
 - *What is one thing you would change about your parents' work?*
 - *What do you think they said?*

Ellen Galinsky

- Kids did not request more time with their parents;
 - ***They wanted the time they spent with their parents to be with less stressed parents.***
- Implications for Stress Management

Related Findings - Galinsky

- Ending the debate over whether “to work” or “not to work” outside the home
- New focus:
 - ***HOW WE WORK?***
- Parental and Kids Stress Levels
 - Implications for Stress Management Skills

Eight Critical Parenting Skills - Galinsky

- Making the child feel loved and important.
- Responding to the child's cues & clues.

- Accepting the child for who s/he is but expecting success.
- Promoting strong values.

- Using constructive discipline.
- Providing routines and rituals.

- Being involved in the child's education.
- Being there for your child.

Most common mistakes

- Understanding Normal Child Development
 - Age Appropriate Expectations
 - Is this normal?
- Resources for Developmental information
 - Growing Child – www.growingchild.com
 - 1 800 927-7289
 - Ames & Ilg Series - Chapter 1
- Friel and Friel, The 7 Worst Things Parents Do (Handout)
- Working Parents and Chores (see Age Appropriate Chores Handout)

Communication About Work

- Do you like your work?*
- Stress Level Implications – Galinsky
- “*Do not make work the bad guy.*”
 - Child worries about parent
 - Send a clear message

Consistency: Color Codes for Parents

- Red/Green/Yellow
- Consistency = match between words and actions
- Inconsistency = *Las Vegas*
 - Intermittent Reinforcement
- Pause Button
 - Proactivity versus Reactivity
 - Pick Your Battles

High Risk Zones = Transitions: Departures and Reunions

- Temperament Traits: Adaptability, Intensity, Persistence
- High Risk Zones
- Good-Bye Rituals
- Entry Rituals
 - Debrief from work
 - Compartmentalize
 - "I receive you in whatever state you are .."
- Routine/Structure
 - Give attention in first 20 minutes (after arrival)
 - Reduce attention seeking behavior;
 - Charts

Focus Time

- No longer the *quantity* versus *quality* debate
- Focus
 - Child knows when we are physically and mentally present
 - Focus time
 - No distractions
 - "Bottomless Pit"/Post Focus Expectations
- 1 on 1 time = Antidote for Sibling Rivalry

Teach Problem Solving

- Teach children how to solve problems rather than solving problems for them:
 - 4+ years
 - Empowers
 - Life Skill
 - Reduces Resistance/Increases Cooperation
 - "Timing is everything"
 - Model
 - Generate options
- Diane Ehrensaft's research on "Spoiling Childhood"
 - Parental Perfectionism – "Perfect Parents/Perfect Kids"
 - Overprotection

Problem Solving Faber and Mazlish

- Talk about the child's feelings & needs.
- Talk about your feelings & needs (briefly).
- Brainstorm together to find mutually agreeable options.
- Write down all ideas without evaluating.
- Decide which suggestion(s) to try.
- Re-evaluate.

Family Meetings

- See handout – "Family Meetings"
- 4+ year olds
- Begin with positive exercises
- Always end with fun activity
 - Take turns selecting
- Rotate leadership
 - Example: Pass the wooden spoon
- Write things down
- Teaches/Models Conflict Resolution
 - Interdependency of Family
 - Problem-Solving Skills

Conclusion

- What is one idea, thought, concept, strategy you are taking with you?*
- Q/A

Thank You

⌘ Please take a moment to complete the evaluation form provided. Your input is appreciated.

**Excerpt from: Friel, John, Ph.D. and Friel, Linda, MA,
The 7 Worst Things Parents Do**

The 7 Worst Things Parents Do

Mistake 1: Putting Your Marriage Last

**Mistake 2: Babying Your Child
Balance Between Preparing and Protecting**

Mistake 3: Failing to Give Your Child Structure

Mistake 4: Being Your Child's Best Friend

Mistake 5: Pushing Your Child Into Too Many Activities

Mistake 6: Expecting Your Child to Fulfill Your Dreams

Mistake 7: Ignoring Your Emotional and/or Spiritual Life

Excerpt from: Covey, Stephen R. The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Families. New York: Golden Books, 1997.

Seven Habits:

Habit 1: Be Proactive

Becoming and Agent of Change in Your Family

Habit 2: Begin with the End in Mind

Developing a Family Mission Statement

Habit 3: Put First Things First

Making Family a Priority in a Turbulent World

Habit 4: Think “Win-Win”

Moving from “Me” to “We”

Habit 5: Seek First to Understand...Then to Be Understood

Solving Family Problems Through Empathic Communication

Habit 6: Synergize

Building Family Unity Through Celebrating Differences

Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw

Renewing the Family Spirit Through Traditions

Chores and Tasks That Your Child Can Do

Adapted from: Shaevitz, Marjorie, The Superwoman Syndrome, Warner Books

3-4 years of age

(Children of this age need lots of reminders and guidance)

- **Dress self (Put on pants, socks, shoes, sweater, shirt)**
- **Pick up and put away toys**
- **Empty wastebaskets**
- **Help set table, clear dishes**
- **Put dirty clothes in hamper**
- **Close drawers in room**

5-6 years of age

(Continue to guide and remind)

- **Set and clear table**
- **Feed pet**
- **Help put away groceries**
- **Dust**
- **Put away games, toys, clothes**
- **Take out trash**
- **Water plants**
- **Assist in meal preparation**
- **Make bed**
- **Clean out pet box, cage, etc.**

7-8 years of age

- **Sweep floors, walks**
- **Help with grocery shopping**
- **Rake leaves; help with yard work**
- **Walk dog**
- **Polish shoes**
- **Vacuum**
- **Wash, dry and put away dishes**
- **Fill and empty dishwasher**
- **Help with parties, meals**

9-10 years of age

- Wash car
- Prepare simple meals
- Bathe dog
- Use washer/dryer with directions
- Fold and put away clean clothes/laundry
- Put out trash for garbage collector
- Water yard or plants
- Straighten up rooms
- Paint
- Clean and organize drawers, closets
- Clean up bathroom

12 and over

(Children over 12 need and want to feel independent. Whenever possible, encourage your children to select tasks and choose the time when they will do them. Rotate unpleasant tasks.)

- Shovel snow and mow lawn
- Iron
- Do laundry, wash clothes by hand if necessary
- Wash floors, windows
- Purchase own clothing (allow more independence as child grows)
- Run errands
- Clean refrigerator
- Clean own room thoroughly (dust, vacuum, straighten up, change bed linens)
- Plan menus, prepare and serve meals
- Replace light bulbs
- Baby-sit for younger siblings
- Clean basement, closets, garage, etc.

Excerpt from Galinsky, ASK THE CHILDREN: What America's Children Really Think About Working Parents. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1999.

Eight Critical Parenting Skills

- 1. Making the child feel important and loved.**
- 2. Responding to the child's cues and clues.**
- 3. Accepting the child for who he/she is but expecting success.**
- 4. Promoting strong values.**
- 5. Using constructive discipline.**
- 6. Providing routines and rituals.**
- 7. Being involved in the child's education.**
- 8. Being there for your child. (Illness and important events)**

This seminar was presented by
Chris Essex, MA

Chris has a Masters Degree in Counseling Psychology and is a mental health counselor, work/life strategist and parenting educator with over 25 years of experience. She is the director of the Center for Work and the Family, and a trainer and consultant on the LifeWork Strategies team.

She develops psycho-educational models and services to support the challenges facing working professionals navigate the combined demands and responsibilities of career and personal/family life. In addition to consulting with corporations, Chris also consults with media. The Center has been featured in the following: CNN, The Wall Street Journal, Newsweek, National Public Radio and the Oprah Winfrey Show. Chris was interviewed by the Franklin Covey Company (Stephen Covey) and is featured on Stephen Covey's audiotape, "Balancing Work & Family" (1998).

In addition, Chris was a contributing author to the book, *Having It All Having Enough* (Amacom, 1997, Deborah Lee, Ph.D.). Chris is married and the mother of a college-age son. She resides in Rockville, Maryland.

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