

The Road to Adulthood

Raising Emotionally Healthy Children

New Trier ~ Wed., Feb. 21st, 2007

Presented by **Dr. Joseph Shoshana**, Director,

CENTER for PARENT EDUCATION

3800 N. Wilke Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois 60004

847-686-4440

The Parent-Centered Family

Parent-Centered

- Parents are the leaders
- Parents take care of their marriage
- Communicate well with each other
- Act with authority and support each other
- Set rules and reinforce them consistently

Child-Centered

- Children are in the driver's seat
- Discord between parents
- Lack of direction; conflict between parents and kids
- Tension and confusion in the home

The ROPES ~ Roadmap to Parent Effectiveness

Four Principles of The Ropes:

- 1 – Who's on First?
- 2 - What children need?
- 3 – Actions speak louder than words.
- 4 – The child is the seed of an adult.

The Parent-Centered Family (cont.)

Parent-Centered

- Parental unit is united and can not be split



- Happier and healthier children who are better equipped to have a successful life of their own

Child-Centered

- Kids pit parents against each other to "benefit themselves"



- Chaotic home with children who are frustrated and unhappy with what they got



The Terrible 2's

- "I" realization – that I am me, separate entity
- Child begins to establish autonomy
- Parents begin the process of socialization, i.e. boundaries and limits to govern independence.
- A period of wanting to be more independent or clinging more to parents
- Parents at this time, need to run the show even more than before, be firm and gentle. If we respond to these small rebellions with lack of control of ourselves due to fear or anger, we increase the child's anxiety and may make him feel more powerful than us.
- Power struggles may follow and this pattern may endure for years to come.



Stages of Development: 4 and 5 year olds

- Beginning setting goals and more directed activities. One more step towards mastering the environment.
- ◆ Role identification with same sex parent
 - ◆ Discovering body pleasure and touch
 - ◆ Beginning of moral standards – mainly based on approval of parents, not a general understanding. Kids this age understand better words that refer to things and actions they grasp with their senses (e.g. no concepts like "wrong" or "respect")



3 Year Olds

- Build on autonomy and trust from early stage they developed initiative and self confidence. "me" is still fragile and there is over reaction to any threat to it such as a scratch or mild injury.
- Increase in fears due to still fragile sense of identity.
- Starting to learn to delay gratification (increase in self control).
- Rise in creative thought and ability to represent social scenarios
- Changes in coordination (trying to negotiate thinking, language and movement.)
- Playing with others and sharing
- Some regression to infancy type of behaviors can also be expected.
- Some confusion between fantasy and reality
- Stealing may be an attempt to resolve questions of possession and belonging.



Stages of Development: 6 to 11 year olds

- ◆ The main themes found in these years are one's acceptance and achievement.
- ◆ The child draws on his achievement from previous stages of autonomy, trust and imaginative playfulness.
- ◆ They develop more interests, expand their social base, learn to negotiate their social interaction.
- ◆ They begin to understand social cues and limits set by others as they learn to socialize.



Adolescence

Physical Development:

Girls enter puberty at 11 on average (with a range of 8 to 13)

Boys enter puberty at 13 (with a range of 10 to 14)

- Maturation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal-gonadal axes
- Secretion of sex hormones



Adolescence

Peer Group:

School experience accelerates and the degree of separation from the family

- Adolescents often view themselves through the eyes of the peers
- The most important relationships are with those persons of similar ages and interests
- Home is a base



Adolescence

Adolescent Turmoil:

Identity crisis with rebelliousness, mood swings, and impulsiveness is a normal process

- Role confusion – such as running away, criminality, and severe mental illness – may result if it is not negotiated successfully
- 20% experience significant psychological problems or diagnosable psychopathology



Adolescence

Risk-taking Behavior

Belief in their omnipotence and invulnerability may lead to dangerous behavior:

- * alcohol, tobacco and other substance use (up to 28% of HS students endorse heavy drinking)
- * promiscuous sexual activity
- * fast driving, skydiving etc.
- * vehicular accidents account for 40% of all teenage deaths



Adolescence

Family Relationships

- * Gradual independence and autonomy from from the nuclear family
- * Normal increase in parent-child arguing
- * Increased criticism of their parents
- * Oppositional and provocative
- * In Western culture young adolescents are not emotionally or financially prepared to leave home, although they are biologically ready



The Function of Acting-Out Behavior

- Maladaptive solution to a “complicated” problem
- Releases the internal tension
- Transfers Pain
- Shifts Responsibility
- Temporarily distracts attention from the underlying issue



Important Factors in Evaluating the Problem:

- Age appropriateness of the behavior
- Biological Factors
 - Physical Diseases
 - Psychiatric conditions
 - Disabilities or deficits
- Setting in which problems occur
- Recent environmental change
- Degree and frequency of the problem
- Family constellation



Parent Training

- Parent-Centered Family
- Importance of parent leadership: Guidance and Discipline
- Teaching limits and responsibility
- Helping kids deal with the frustration
- Making positive choice about recreational activities
- Normal development vs. problems and possible disorders

Rules of the Game

RULES should be:

- **CLEARLY STATED** - without complicated explanations
- **CLEARLY DEFINED** – “clean up your room” means make your bed, put things away, etc.
- **BE REASONABLE** - in accordance with your child's physical and/or mental ability
- **ENFORCED CONSISTENTLY** - Children, as a rule, will break the rules. They are even more likely to break new rules to make sure that they are actually rules.

RESULT:

→When good rules are made and enforced, it creates a relaxed emotional environment where children can thrive.

Parents need to:

- Anticipate the problem before it occurs.
- Develop a strategy for dealing with the problem.
- Talk with the child about the problem and let him know to anticipate your response.

Clear Communication

- Parents need to be **clear** and **commanding** by being direct.
 - For example, ‘You need to....’ or ‘It's time for you to...’
- Be **short** and **to the point** - no lectures, please.
- Be **concrete** - refer to specific behavior that's expected rather than attitude (which is more abstract).
 - For example “I want you to behave well in the store” is too abstract. “I want you to hold my hand and walk next to me” is more concrete.

Learn to Tolerate Frustration

- Let children do for themselves – Don't do for them.
- Don't rescue them from disappointment or consequences of poor choices.
- Let your child experience some discomfort by their doing things they don't like.
- Don't overindulge your child with material things – If not necessary, say “No.”
- Fair doesn't mean “Me First” for the best things – Don't always be fair.
- Don't overdose child with too much attention.



Self Test

1. Children are the most important members of the family and should be accommodated before everything else. **True or False**
2. Ultimate goal of parents is to help children out of our life and into a successful life of their own. **True or False**
3. Children's behaviors are primarily motivated by:
 - a. gaining pleasure and avoiding pain.
 - b. reaching a higher moral ground.
 - c. pleasing their parents.
 - d. a higher intellectual ability not always understood by parents.



Self Test (cont.)

5. To help your child learn to tolerate frustration, (select 2)
 - a. Let your child experience some discomfort by doing things they don't like.
 - b. Give your child attention every time they ask for it.
 - c. Do not over indulge your child with material things.
 - d. Do things for your children even if they can do it for themselves.



Self Test (cont.)

4. Rules should be {True or False}
 - a. clearly stated. _____
 - b. changed from one parent to another. _____
 - c. clearly defined. _____
 - d. be expected to always be followed, therefore, consequences are not necessary. _____
 - e. be reinforced consistently. _____