



Skip Forsyth

**"Whether you think you can  
or think you can't, you're right." – Henry Ford.**  
**"I think I can. I think I can.  
I think I can...  
I knew I could." –  
The Little Train That Could**

We have arrived at, perhaps, the most challenging time for the school year. Up until the winter holiday students and teachers are filled with energy striving to climb a summit of academic goals. Teachers are encouraging students, "I know you can!" Students are nervously repeating, "I think I can." But, what's next?

For some, like a roller coaster, they have arrived at the first big hill and now it's time to coast into May. "It's downhill, baby, enjoy the ride." Effort begins to diminish. Attitudes and behaviors show unexpected twists and turns. Eventually the ride concludes with enough success to pass STAAR and advance to the next grade level but learning new concepts has diminished. For some, the summer slide begins in the spring.

Others recognize the winter holiday is a brief plateau to recharge, because there are more summits to conquer. STAAR. Graduation. Resilience to endure homelessness or a bully. Improving reading proficiency while dealing with dyslexia. Fortitude in the face of immigrant biases and language barriers. If you think you can reach the summit of success, you're right.

Therefore, what is next? Reinforce the ideas that lead to success:

- Eat healthy, balanced meals
- Get adequate rest and sleep
- Complete homework assignments daily
- Read a book or magazine of interest every day
- Monitor the use of social media and time playing electronic games
- Exercise daily
- Extra-curriculum activities are beneficial and fun, but do not overcommit

Also, now would be a prime time for a parent-teacher conversation about a child's progress. As a child I excelled in science and math – I lagged in language arts – I was disinterested in history but loved geography. Each child has unique strengths and weaknesses. Children develop, both academically and physically, unevenly with spurts and pauses. Talk to your child's teacher about how to help your child during this spring semester. You want to see your child finish strong. You want to say to your child, "I knew you could." You want to hear your child say, "I knew I could too."

## Lessons For Living

*Alora M. Knight*

*I see you looking at your children,  
Wondering what their lives will be.*

*If you verify some answers  
Then their future you might see.*

*Have you taught them to be truthful?*

*Have you taught them to be kind?*

*Have you given them the wisdom  
Needed to be color blind?*

*Have you taught them to be caring*

*For those handicapped some way?*

*Do you read to them at bedtime?*

*Have you taught them how to pray?*

*Have you taken time to tell them*

*What a miracle life is?*

*How to be aware of nature,*

*Share the beauty that it gives?*

*Have you taught them how important*

*It is to have respect for one another?*

*To be grateful, not be prideful*

*When good fortune you discover?*

*Do you let them know you love them*

*In a way that leaves no doubt,*

*So they know that is one thing*

*That they will never be without?*

*We like to think we've done our best.*

*Sometimes that's very true.*

*Can you say 'yes' to all my questions?*

*I will leave that up to you.*

*I hope your answer is affirmative,*

*For then I know that you will see*

*A future filled with happiness*

*Like it's supposed to be.*

## FUN THINGS TO DO WITH YOUR KIDS DURING SPRING BREAK

If you're a parent of school-aged children, you're probably on the lookout for inexpensive, entertaining and (dare I say) educational activities to keep your kids occupied during spring break. Sure, you could just plop 'em in front of the TV, phone or game stations and 10 bags of Doritos, but there might just be better ways to keep your children entertained. Here are a few alternatives to the TV sitter that you and your kids will actually enjoy!

### 1. Be tourists in your own town

When you're spending time in a new town or city, you tend to see things and visit landmarks that the locals have learned to ignore, things that give it character and charm and which color much of the outside world's view of that place--so it can be a fun departure from routine to put on a tourist's hat in your own backyard.

Growing up in the Twin Cities, my parents planned regular family field trips to the various tourist attractions around town, and even as a child I loved learning about the history of the place I called home.

### 2. Have a backyard picnic

Taking lunch out of the dining room and into the backyard can be a fun and easy way to spice up an otherwise uneventful day. Bust out your favorite checkered blanket, whip up some sandwiches, and for extra nostalgia points, have your kids help you pack it all into a classic picnic basket then head outside for a lunch in the sun!

### 3. Take a mini vacation

Of course, everyone would love a casual week in the Bahamas, but your kids don't need their spring vacation to look like something out of a movie in order for them to have a good time. Instead, take a road trip and visit your parents, your siblings or an old college friend who's got kids around the same age as yours. Even if it's just 45 minutes down the road, the change of scenery will be exciting departure from everyday life, you'll get to catch up with people you might not see very often, and your kids can make some new friends.

### 4. Cook with your kids

Quick! What's your child's favorite homemade food? Mac and cheese? Spaghetti? Chocolate chip cookies? Whatever their culinary preferences, they can probably be convinced to spend a few hours with you in the kitchen to help whip up their favorite meal. Cooking with your kids instills them with the fuzzy feelings of responsibility and accomplishment, and it helps teach them real life skills they'll use for years to come. Some of my fondest childhood memories arose from helping my parents prepare family meals: stirring fragrant chicken noodle soup, stealing spoonful's of cookie dough, and squinting into the oven window trying to watch the biscuits rise.



### 5. Spend the day at your local library

In the immortal words of Arthur, the Aardvark: "Having fun isn't hard when you've got a library card!" Show your kids the whimsical magic of the public library by spending an afternoon browsing the shelves. Most libraries have both a children's reading room with lots of comfy chairs AND a ton of weekly scheduled events for kids. Check the calendar before you go, and make sure you let them sign up for their very own library card before the day is up. I still remember how important and grown-up I felt the day I received my first library card, and I actually keep it in my wallet to this day.

### 6. Explore nearby museums, zoos and conservatories

A museum day is a great way to keep kids entertained and educated while they're out of school. While some can be pricey and boring for kids, if you know where to look, you're sure to find at least a few options for cheap (or free!) in your area. Look for aquariums, greenhouses, petting zoos, and any museum with stuff to keep kids occupied (like a Children's Museum, Discovery Center or a Science Museum). Even a day at the local art museum can be fun for kids if you make it a scavenger hunt! Make a list of 25 different pieces inside the museum and have your kids try to find every single one before they leave.

### 7. Take hikes and nature walks

Nothing's better than the great outdoors. Peel your little ones off the couch and take them on a walk through the local forest, on a stone-skipping trip to the river, or on a hike up the nearest mountain. There's nothing like the smell of the air on a crisp spring day, and if you're lucky, you might even spot some exciting wildlife along the way! Make sure to pack snacks and plenty of water, and don't hesitate to let your kids stop and explore their surroundings as often as they like.

*Excerpt from Brad's Deal, 10 Fun Things to do With Kids During Spring Break by Caroline Thompson*

## NUTRITION FOR KIDS:

### Guidelines for a healthy diet

Nutrition for kids is based on the same principles as nutrition for adults. Everyone needs the same types of nutrients — such as vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, protein and fat. Children, however, need different amounts of specific nutrients at different ages.

So what's the best formula to fuel your child's growth and development? Check out these nutrition basics for girls and boys at various ages, based on the latest Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

#### Consider these nutrient-dense foods:

- **Protein.** Choose seafood, lean meat and poultry, eggs, beans, peas, soy products, and unsalted nuts and seeds.
- **Fruits.** Encourage your child to eat a variety of fresh, canned, frozen or dried fruits — rather than fruit juice. If your child drinks juice, make sure it's 100 percent juice without added sugars and limit his or her servings. Look for canned fruit that says it's light or packed in its own juice, meaning it's low in added sugar. Keep in mind that one-quarter cup of dried fruit counts as one cup-equivalent of fruit. When consumed in excess, dried fruits can contribute extra calories.
- **Vegetables.** Serve a variety of fresh, canned, frozen or dried vegetables. Aim to provide a variety of vegetables, including dark green, red and orange, beans and peas, starchy and others, each week. When selecting canned or frozen vegetables, look for options lower in sodium.
- **Grains.** Choose whole grains, such as whole-wheat bread, oatmeal, popcorn, quinoa, or brown or wild rice. Limit refined grains such as white bread, pasta and rice.
- **Dairy.** Encourage your child to eat and drink fat-free or low-fat dairy products, such as milk, yogurt, cheese or fortified soy beverages.

#### Aim to limit your child's calories from:

- **Added sugar.** Limit added sugars. Naturally occurring sugars, such as those in fruit and milk, are not added sugars. Examples of added sugars include brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, honey and others.
- **Saturated and trans fats.** Limit saturated fats — fats that mainly come from animal sources of food, such as red meat, poultry and full-fat dairy products. Look for ways to replace saturated fats with vegetable and nut oils, which provide essential fatty acids and vitamin E. Healthier fats are also naturally present in olives, nuts, avocados and seafood. Limit trans fats by avoiding foods that contain partially hydrogenated oil.

By Mayo Clinic Staff: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/childrens-health/in-depth/nutrition-for-kids/art-20049335>

## KIDS AND EXERCISE

When most adults think about exercise, they imagine working out in the gym, running on a treadmill, or lifting weights.



But for kids, exercise means playing and being physically active. Kids exercise when they have gym class at school, during recess, at dance class or soccer practice, while riding bikes, or when playing tag.

### THE MANY BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

Everyone can benefit from regular exercise. Active kids will have:

- Stronger muscles and bones
- Leaner bodies
- Less risk of becoming overweight
- A lower chance of getting type 2 diabetes
- Lower blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels
- A better outlook on life

Besides enjoying the health benefits of regular exercise, fit kids sleep better. They're also better able to handle physical and emotional challenges, from running to catch a bus to studying for a test.

### THE THREE ELEMENTS OF FITNESS

If you've ever watched kids on a playground, you've seen the three elements of fitness in action when they:

1. Run away from the kid who's "it" (endurance)
2. Cross the monkey bars (strength)
3. Bend down to tie their shoes (flexibility)

Parents should encourage their kids to do a variety of activities so that they can work on all three elements.

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/exercise.html>



## Ways to Motivate Your Child

Some kids are self-motivated. And other kids are less motivated and need a little push here or a lot of prodding there. If you're wondering how to motivate your child, you might automatically think of rewarding your child for every step he takes in the right direction, and applying negative consequences for steps he takes in the wrong direction. In reality, the best approach is to go easy on the rewards and punishments and cultivate his internal motivation—help him to tune into the feelings of accomplishment and the pride he feels for a job well done. To find out what motivates your child, take a look at these 10 ways to up the motivation:

- 1. Set Goals.**  
Have them set goals. Make a list of short-term goals and one for the long-term goals. Make sure the goals are reachable but require effort to obtain.
- 2. Make a Plan.**  
In order to reach goals, you need a plan. Help your children create a strategy for reaching their goals. Make a step-by-step plan to reach them.
- 3. Celebrate Accomplishments.**  
When your children accomplish their goals, let them know that you are proud of them. Celebrate these successes together.
- 4. Make Things Competitive.**  
Encourage healthy competition. Cheer on your child to beat another runner in a race or to take home the trophy from the spelling bee. Make competition about positivity and strength in regard to your child and never about negativity and weakness towards the competitor.
- 5. Encourage Them.**  
Let your children know you believe in them. Tell them how great they are going to do. Dismiss any self-doubt or fears they may have.
- 6. Take Interest.**  
Learn about your child's interests. Talk to your child about them and listen. It will show your children that you care and that they are free to talk to you about their interests.
- 7. Discover Passion.**  
Encourage your children to discover what he or she is passionate about. It may take a few tries along the way. Support your child on the journey toward passion and urge him or her to keep going until he or she finds out what it is.
- 8. Remain Positive.**  
Maintain a positive and optimistic outlook for your children. If they see fear or doubt in your eyes, they likely will lose self-confidence. Having a positive approach will brighten their outlooks on a situation.
- 9. Excite Them.**  
Excite your children about their goals and ambitions. Show that you are excited for them, too. The positive energy and adrenaline will push them to continue their hard work and be happy with their efforts.

Excerpt from 10 Ways to Motivate Your Child. Used with permission by Dr. Scott Turansky

## TEACHING CHILDREN PERSONAL SAFETY

### Relate These “Stranger Danger” Safety Tips to Your Children

- Stay away from dark or deserted places.
- Don't answer the door if you are home alone.
- Don't tell anyone on the phone that you are home alone. Say your parents are busy. Can you take a message for them.
- Don't trust strangers unless you are with another trusted adult.
- If a stranger tries to give you something or take you somewhere, say “no,” run away, and tell an adult you trust.

### Obtain the Details

Insist that your children always tell you or another trusted adult where they are, with whom, and when they will return.

### Seek Information

Teach your children to always tell you if someone tries to touch them in a way that makes them uncomfortable.

### Set Computer Guidelines

If your children surf the Web, monitor the Web sites they visit. Tell them never to give anyone personal information unless you say it is OK and not to stay at any site or in any chat room that makes them feel uncomfortable.

### Discuss the Rules

Make it a part of your regular family meetings to ensure everyone knows your safety rules and how to follow them. Praise your children for knowing the rules and obeying them.

*Excerpt from Smart Parenting: Guide to Everyday & Emergency Situations, Positive Promotions®*

## 2020 Statewide Parental Involvement Conference



SAVE THE DATE!

December 10-12, 2020  
Waco Convention Center  
100 Washington Ave. | Waco, TX 76701

Host Hotels  
Hilton  
Courtyard by Marriott

<http://www.implanners.com/parents>



# CHECK IN CALENDARS

## Getting Past “Nothing”

When you ask your child “What did you do at school today?” You always get the same answer: “Nothing.” Hopefully, you know that your child is doing more than “Nothing.” However, by using the following questions you might get more details about your child’s day and more than “nothing.”

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
What is your best time of day?	Where is your favorite place to read at school?	Tell me three numbers you used at school today outside of math class.	If you could collect anything you wanted from school, what would it be?	Would you rather walk, run or ride a bike to school?	What do you think makes your teacher a great leader?	What would be a silly super-power and what would you call the superhero that had it?
If you could live anywhere, where would it be?	What sounds did you hear at school today?	How were you honest at school today?	How was light used today at school?	Did any of your classmates do anything funny?	What song did you hear today at school?	If you could play any professional sport, what would it be?
What is the first book you can remember?	Name three things you can do with math.	What have you learned about animals?	Name the four directions on a compass. Name eight directions.	How does science make our house better?	How many fingers are in our house right now? What about eyes, toes and noses?	Tell me a word that sounds funny when you say it.
Describe today’s weather.	What is the best gift you ever received?	If you could make another language, what would you call it? How would it sound?	How fast can you count to 100?	In which direction does the sun move across the sky?	Can you draw a map of your bedroom?	What do you think is on the moon?
What is the best breakfast cereal? Why?	How many words can you make with the letters: s-n-o-w-f-l-a-k-e	Where is your favorite place to read at home?				

Strong Fathers-Strong Families, LLC provides monthly calendars for Early Childhood Activities in English and Spanish as well as a "Check In" Calendar (available in English and Spanish) which are academic questions to ask your child EVERY DAY instead of "What did you do in school today? Click on the link to sign up to receive free calendars every month for YOUR family or the families in your school.

<https://www.strongfathers.com/txcalendars>

## See Something Tell Someone

**Students are the ones most likely to first become aware of a possible problem in their school.**

Make sure your child knows that if he/she sees something strange, suspicious, or dangerous that it is important to report it.

Remind your child that reporting something isn't "snitching" or "ratting." It's taking measures to keep everyone safe.

Encourage your child to report any of the following to a teacher, counselor, or administrator:

- Someone in school who isn't usually there, or who is acting in a way that makes your child feel uncomfortable.
- Threats or "hate speech" posted online.
- A student being bullied or harassed.
- Rumors of someone planning to bring a weapon to school.
- Someone talking about doing harm to him/herself or to others.
- Anything else that's of concern to your child.

### Work with your school

Sometimes students are reluctant to report something they see or hear, but they will tell a parent. If your child reports something to you (bullying, threats, etc.), contact the principal.

### School Safety Drills

Safety drills are meant to prepare students if an emergency or crisis actually happens. Too often, students don't take these drills seriously, and instead use them as opportunities to take a break from class – or joke around with friends.

Lockdown drills help students know what to do in case there's cause for a real lockdown, and evacuation drills teach students how to quickly leave the building in an orderly manner – so confusion and chaos are avoided.

**Make sure your child understands the importance and seriousness of safety drills.**

Whenever your school has a safety drill, ask your child to tell you about the procedures that were followed and describe what happened. Also ask your child if he/she finds safety drills upsetting in any way.

Safety drills are designed to keep students safe, but unfortunately, they can cause anxiety in some students. If you have concerns regarding how drills are affecting your child, reassure him/her that these drills are completely precautionary. If your child seems to be overly anxious or concerned about his/her safety, talk to your child's counselor, principal or physician.

*If you have questions or concerns about specific emergency/crisis procedures at your child's school, be sure to contact a school administrator.*

*Excerpt from Student Safety & Security: A Guide for Parents, Woodburn Press*

## Teaching Children Anger Management

Anger is a natural emotion expressed by children. It gives them an outlet for frustration, fear, sadness, and many other feelings. Children who learn how to manage anger also learn to express the feelings that prompted their anger. This is a crucial step in achieving healthy adulthood. Here are some ways you can help your children master anger control.

**Identify Signs of Anger in Children.** The most common signs are:

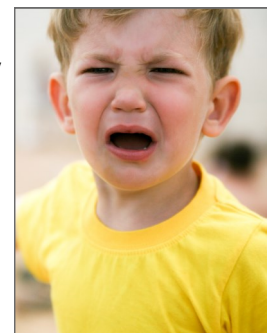
- Body signals – fast heartbeat, feeling hot or cold, feeling stomach or back tighten up, face feeling hot, hands tightening up
- Thoughts about violence that are expressed indirectly through drawings, dark humor, and reactions that are out of proportion
- Behaviors of a violent or threatening nature.

**Analyze Your Children's Anger.** Ask questions to help you understand the following aspects of your children's anger.

- The situation causing anger
- Your children's thoughts or beliefs about the situation
- Your children's feelings that go with the anger
- What your children are saying to themselves (This is "self-talk," such as "I am so stupid!" Teach children to cancel negative self-talk and replace it with positive self-talk)
- How your children behave when angry
- Your children's understanding of the consequences of their angry behavior

**Suggest Healthy Anger-Management Techniques.** These can include:

- Calling a time-out
- Walking away from a potentially violent situation
- Counting to 10 (or 20 or 50)
- Asking for help from a safe adult
- Talking things out. Encourage your children to put angry feelings into words rather than into physical actions



**Help Prevent Unnecessary Anger.** By improving your children's communication skills, you can help them avoid or deal effectively with anger. Children who can clearly express their feelings, needs, and opinions reduce the incidence of not being heard correctly and thus, the feeling of anger. Teach them to:

- Stand up for themselves when safe to do so, saying "no" to inappropriate behaviors in themselves and others
- Take the time to think before they act. Talk with your children about the important difference between reaction and response
- Respect the rights of others
- Be an active listener. Help your children learn to listen well so they avoid misinterpreting what others are saying

**Remember, You are the Example,** keep your cool and handle anger in the best way possible.

*Excerpt from Smart Parenting: Guide to Everyday & Emergency Situations, Positive Promotions®*



## 2019 Promising Practices

The Title I, Part A Parent and Family Engagement Statewide Initiative accepted applications from PK-12 schools on specific PFE strategies that have helped to increase parent and family engagement and student outcomes. Applications were reviewed and scored by a statewide committee and initiative staff. Winners were recognized and presented with their awards at the 2019 Statewide Parental Involvement Conference. Below are the 2019 Promising Practices winners.

**NACOGDOCHES ISD** is being awarded as a district, but two schools made the top ten.

**Emeline Carpenter Elementary School**

Promising Practice submitted by:

• Sumer Davis, PFE Liaison

Promising Practice:

• Book Bingo



• **Emeline Carpenter Elementary School - Principal, Lola Moore**

Book Bingo Literacy Night focuses on family engagement with a goal of encouraging a love of reading. Book bingo is an interactive way to get students excited about books they are familiar with and books they may be interested in reading. It encourages family engagement while also providing parents with a deeper understanding of their child's reading level and ways they can help their student become a stronger, more independent reader at home. Each student receives a new book that is on their reading level to take home. The desire is to ensure parents have a solid understanding of where their child's reading level should be.

• **Fredonia Elementary School - Principal Melinda Wiebold**

Dragon Dinners are monthly parent discussion dinners at the school that provide families education and support in areas related to parenting and academics. Childcare is provided and the children receive help with their homework while parents participate in the parent training. Some of the topics included at the Dragon Dinners are: Fredonia 101, so parents can get to know all about the school and the staff and learn ways to be involved and engaged with their child's learning, getting help with math, reading and homework, communication, behavior and discipline, STAAR ready, and summer strategies. These topics are determined by surveys and discussions with parents. Their input drives the trainings.



**ARLINGTON ISD**

Promising Practice:  
Parent Café



PFE Specialist: Suzanne Stevenson



The focus of the Parent Cafés have been on educating parents on the protective factors that keep families strong. Cafés create a safe place for parents and caregivers to talk about the challenges and successes of creating and raising a twenty-first century family. Through self-reflection and peer-to-peer learning, participants build their resilience, positive social connections and knowledge of parenting and child development. The most compelling aspects of the Parent Cafés are that parents learn that they are not alone in their struggles and that

families are more alike than they are different. Parents learn how resilient they are, and leave encouraged, connected and inspired!



**THRALL ISD**

The Showcase of Excellence is an annual event that provides students the opportunity to showcase the amazing things they've learned and created throughout the year and is a wonderful opportunity for parents and community to meet and talk with the district leadership team and all that Thrall ISD has for parents and families. The event has food, entertainment, interactive exhibits, hands-on demonstrations, and much more. The parents are given opportunities to see what their children are doing and learning in the classroom and to learn ways to be more involved in the school at all levels.

Promising Practice:  
Showcase of Excellence



The Showcase of Excellence is an annual event that provides students the opportunity to showcase the amazing things they've learned and created throughout the year and is a wonderful opportunity for parents and community to meet and talk with the district leadership team and all that Thrall ISD has for parents and families. The event has food, entertainment, interactive exhibits, hands-on demonstrations, and much more. The parents are given opportunities to see what their children are doing and learning in the classroom and to learn ways to be more involved in the school at all levels

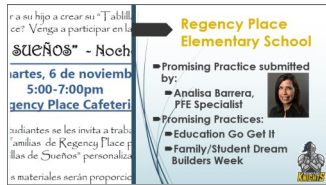


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**NORTH EAST ISD** is being awarded as a district and three of their schools were in the top ten.

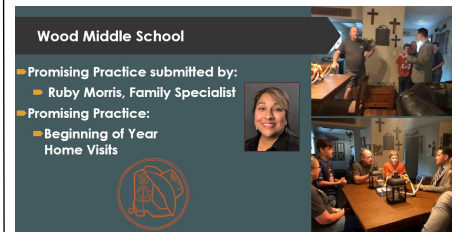
- Regency Place Elementary –**  
 Principal, Estellia Wallace  
**Family/Student Dream Builders Week** is a week dedicated to encouraging students to think about their futures and explore higher level education and careers of interest. The week is centered around promoting conversations among parents and their children that relate to college, careers, visions, and goals by creating a variety of opportunities and activities for them. The week includes parent group sessions and book studies, student and parent college tours, campus career day, family dream maker make and take nights. It is an extremely informative week for both the student and the family. Parents are given multiple opportunities to engage with their children at home and on campus and have meaningful discussions about their expectations and visions for future careers and educations.



- Olmos Elementary –**  
 Principal, Galia Booth  
 Olmos Elementary is a Title I campus with 98% economically disadvantaged. The **HSE Program** or **High School Equivalency Program** is for families and the surrounding community. It is a self-paced learning program and gives participants a second opportunity to earn the equivalent of a high school diploma. The program is offered to US and non US citizens. The program is available in different languages. This program has increased trust and has built stronger relationships between home and school. In addition, students whose parents attend the HSE classes have little to no tardies or school absences and has also greatly reduced disciplinary problems.



- Wood Middle School –**  
 Principal, Marcus Alvarez  
 At the beginning of the year, the school does home visits to set the tone for a successful year, they work especially hard to forge effective partnerships with students that have had discipline, attendance, and academic problems. Their goal is to establish a strong, nurturing relationship with the families to ensure a successful year. The school gets to know the families and seeks their input to important questions and start the school year with a plan for their child to flourish.



**ALIEF ISD** provides an annual **Family U Conference** hosting over 700 attendees. The conference is built upon building dual capacity, offering sessions for families and staff. The PFE program focuses on four goals: Families feel **welcomed, informed, engaged and equipped**. The conference includes 20+ sessions with a variety of topics for families who have children in all grade levels. Parents leave informed and equipped with new resources and strategies. The conference is used to build a strong bridge between home and school and thereby impacting and ensuring academic success for all students.



**TAYLOR ISD** wanted to develop strong, healthy intergenerational relationships with parents and their students who were struggling in school. They began by offering a free summer basketball camp (**Midnight Basketball**) and then attendance grew so large they had to add other sports and even included arts and crafts. The program also had a character education component that features a community leader discussing their profession and the skills needed to do the job. This event quickly turned into a community project that included volunteers from the Lions Club, Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, and other community groups. This event has broken down barriers between home, school and community.



The **Munch at Lunch Program** is a mentor program with a 3:1 student to adult ration. The mentor works with at-risk students. Community or parent volunteers attend a brief training and then are assigned students to mentor. The mentor spends time learning about the student and gives them an opportunity to develop relationships with a trusted adult. The student can relax in a safe environment and have fun while developing relationships and learning. Mr. Matthews stated that once the mentor and student form a bond, something magical happens, the student begins to care about learning and their behavior which leads to better self-esteem and better choices. The student becomes more socially aware and proactive.





# THE ONLY PARENTING ADVICE YOU REALLY NEED

## ⇒ **Let your kids fail.**

To learn self-sufficiency, kids need to occasionally dust themselves off (literally and figuratively) without your help. Most parents know what their children are capable of but step in to make things easier for them. A teenager who knows how to do her own laundry, for example, trumps momentary discomfort. Before you rush in to help with any physical task, ask yourself: "Is my child in real danger?" Then, and this applies to other challenges, like the social studies poster due tomorrow, think about whether your child has the necessary skills (dexterity and balance) or simply adequate sleep and a snack. Yes? Time to back off and see what happens.

## ⇒ **Memorize the acronym H.A.L.T.**

Tantrums often happen because the thrower is **Hungry, Agitated, Lonely, or Tired.**

## ⇒ **Plan not-so-random acts of kindness.**

Kids need to know that helping others is an everyday practice, not a visit-a-soup-kitchen-at-the-holidays grand gesture. Challenge yours to complete small tasks every week, like throwing away another kid's trash at lunch or raking a neighbor's lawn. Training your children to focus on others helps curb entitlement.

## ⇒ **Don't pay your kids to clean their rooms.**

If you give them a buck to make their beds, then when you ask them to help you carry in the groceries, they'll say, 'How much? Why would I do that for free when you pay me to make my bed?' You can give your child an allowance as an introduction to money management and possibly for overall good behavior. But don't tie it dollar-for-dollar to everyday chores.

## ⇒ **Model brave behavior.**

Want confident kids? They will be less likely to be easily flustered if they see you taking healthy risks. A lot of adults won't go to a movie solo because they would be embarrassed to be seen sitting alone. So do it, then talk to your kids about it. If your kids see you laugh when you realize that your shirt has been on backwards all morning, maybe they'll giggle, instead of feeling embarrassed, when it happens to them.

## ⇒ **To get little kids to be quiet, lower your voice instead of raising it.**

This forces kids to focus. Got a whole pack to corral? Whisper, "If you want to hear what we're doing next, hop on one foot." Goofy jumping is bound to be contagious.

Excerpts taken from: <https://www.realsimple.com/work-life/family/kids-parenting/only-parenting-advice-you-really-need>



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## The Parent and Family Engagement Connection

Home & School

*"Together We Can Make a Difference"*

The Parent and Family Engagement Connection is posted on our website four times a year for parents and educators of Texas. This newsletter is available in Spanish, Vietnamese, German and Korean.



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