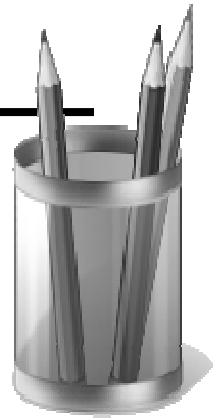


The Parent Place Newsletter

September-October 2008



IT'S BACK TO SCHOOL TIME!

If you have children, late July, August and early September represents more than summer ending, cooler weather and fall foliage. School begins once again for millions of kids across the country. Getting your child prepared, regardless of whether they are in Kindergarten or a senior in high school, is a must. Here are some tips to make the transition from several weeks of summer fun to school days and homework easier.

CHILDREN IN KINDERGARTEN—5TH GRADE

1. About a week before school starts, have your children go to bed at the time they will when school begins. Set their alarm or wake them up early. It's difficult for some kids to adjust to going to bed and getting up earlier after having an entire summer of sleeping in or staying up late. Many young children need to be on a schedule and preparing a week or so earlier will pay off, especially if you have a night owl or late sleeper.
2. If you have a school supply list (many school districts post them on their website or hand them out the last day of school), buy the supplies early. For the child who is not organized, this is a good way to begin the school year off on the right foot. Label everything and get the backpacks ready the night before school starts. Buy some extra supplies to keep at home if your child is one to lose or forget their pencils or markers at school. They will probably need some basic supplies for homework time. Nothing is more frustrating than sitting down to do homework and discovering the basics are missing.
3. If you have a Kindergartener, walk to school two or three days before school begins (or drive if they take a bus or you will be driving them). This helps acquaint them with what they will actually be doing that first day and can work wonders for alleviating the first-day jitters. If your child is especially anxious, ask if you can let them visit their new classroom for five or ten minutes the day before school starts. Many principals will let the Kindergarteners come to the campus prior to school starting.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

1. Many sixth graders will be attending a new school for their middle school years. Oftentimes, the campus is much bigger and can be intimidating. Of course pre-teens may not admit they are nervous, but most parents are. Suggest a bike ride over to the school sometime during August just to look around. Many middle schools conduct orientation anyway a couple of days before school actually begins, but an extra trip without all of their peers might be worthwhile.
2. Just as in elementary school, it is important, if not more so in middle school, to have all the school supplies ready, especially an organizer. Some schools make it mandatory for the students to purchase an organizer directly from the school. Get in the habit from day one of checking it and being sure homework assignments are recorded. Visit the school website and see if homework and grades will be posted on the site. This is an excellent way to stay involved with your child's progress throughout the year.
3. If your student struggles with the basics; math or language arts, consider hiring a tutor for some review sessions before and during the first semester. Also, it is quite common in middle school for students who are excelling to be moved to Honors classes sometime during the year. Being in an accelerated class is a good way to prepare a student for Advanced Placement (AP) classes in high school, which count as college credit.

HIGH SCHOOL

1. Find out when the PSAT and SAT exams will take place. If your student is not a good test taker, consider enrolling them in a test prep class. As colleges become more and more competitive, test scores make a difference. One can take the exam more than once if they are not happy with the score, so plan ahead and register early.
2. Stay tuned in to your student's school and social schedule. There is a tremendous amount of freedom in high school and even the most academically gifted students can be distracted by all of the things that are associated with the teenage years. Establish a curfew for school nights and limit the amount of time that is spent at a part-time job or involved in sports, especially if time management and study skills are not your child's forte.
3. If your son or daughter is college-bound, start doing your research and be sure to attend the college nights that many high schools sponsor. Know what is expected on college applications. It is no longer a simple process like it was for the baby boomer generation. Test scores, a formal essay, volunteer hours, and class selection in high school are all important factors in getting into college. Take advantage of the many companies that exist today solely for the purpose of assisting you and your student select the right college for them.

Regardless of the age and grade of your children, stay involved. Volunteering on any level, whether it be reading stories to your elementary aged child's second grade class, helping in the computer lab in middle school, or being on a committee for peer counseling in high school, it is important to know what is happening at the place your children spend a large part of their week. With so many parents working, many Parent Teacher Associations have their meetings in the evening, so more parents can attend. There are activities that need volunteers that do not involve daytime hours such as calling parents in the evening for a fundraiser or helping with a weekend car wash at high school.

<http://ezinearticles.com/?Back-to-School-Preparation-for-All-Ages&id=239241>



The Parent Place - Family Resource Centers
A signature program of THRIVE
Bozeman-400 E. Babcock @ 587-4734
Belgrade-92 N. Broadway @ 388-1300

The Parent Place Partners

Montana Children's Trust Fund, Greater Gallatin United Way, Gilhousen Family Foundation, Beim Foundation, First Presbyterian Church

Ages and Stages of Empathy

BABIES

What your child needs you to understand:

She's establishing a concept of what the world is like and what she can expect from other people. She needs you to show her that you'll take care of her and love her no matter what.

How to show that you get it:

- Respond as soon as possible: If she cries, try to figure out what she needs—a feeling, a diaper change, or simply to be held—and give it to her. Instead of saying, "don't cry," say, "Your tears are telling me that something is making you cry." She'll sense your gentle tone even if she doesn't understand the words
- Use facial expressions that reflect what she's feeling. You probably already do this instinctively: when she cries, you probably wrinkle your face in distress as you reach for her. When she smiles, smile back.

TODDLERS

What your child needs you to understand:

Now that he's able to move around, explore his environment, and discover how things work, he's going to get angry when objects or people don't do what he wants them to do.

How to show that you get it:

- Identify his feelings. Although toddlers tend to see things as either good or bad, start using more specific words (such as sad or frustrated) to describe feelings. Putting labels on emotions helps a toddler learn to talk about them, and that will make him less likely to have meltdowns or be aggressive, says Susanne A. Denham, Ph.D., professor of psychology at George Mason University, in Fairfax, Virginia.
- Let him do things himself. One- and two-year-olds desperately want to be more independent, and they're thrilled when they can stir the pancake batter or zip their own zipper. So try not to step in unless your child asks for help or is clearly getting impatient.

PRESCHOOLERS

What your child needs you to understand:

She is going to have a lot of strong feelings as she learns how to navigate her wider social world. She may get mad when someone else won't let her use the toy she wants, scare when another child makes monster noises, or disappointed if her favorite classmate doesn't want to play with her.

How to show you get it:

- Use the magic phrase "I know." These two little words communicate more than paragraphs. For example, you could say, "I know you want to wear Samantha's Cinderella dress." Saying "I know" in a kind voice acknowledges your child's desires and is remarkably effective in preventing fights from escalating, says Jim Fay, co-author of *Parenting with Love and Logic*.
- Avoid saying "but." Although you often need to explain why your child can't do or have something, the word *but* negates what she's feeling, says Dr. Denham. Instead of saying "I know you're angry at Adam, but we don't hit people," make the same point in two separate statements: "I know you're really angry at Adam. I can't let you hit him because hitting hurts."

AGES 5 to 8

What your child needs you to understand:

He's developing a sense of who he is outside of the family, and he wants to fit in with his friends.

How to show that you get it

- Don't take it personally if he says that you're embarrassing him. He's just afraid that something you did—like kissing him goodbye—might make other kids think he's babyish.
- Find the right way to tell him certain actions are unacceptable. Saying "I know" comes in handy again, as in, "I know you don't like Nate. You still need to say hi when we see him." This acknowledges his feelings and also teaches correct behavior.

AGES 9 to 12

What your child needs you to understand:

Being a part of the group and looking cool are crucial. Many kids want more privacy and obsess about wearing the right clothes.

How to show that you get it:

- Let her make as many decisions as possible. But if a request is out of the question (she wants to go to the mall alone at night) say, "I hear what you're saying. You know you're not allowed to go out alone at night because it's not safe." Once you've validated her view, she'll be more willing to compromise.
- Respect "the cool rule". Never talk about your child's feelings to her friends, your friends, or relatives in front of her. Give her privacy at home. Social pressures at school can be exhausting, and she may need time alone to unwind and think about what happened during the day.

CALENDAR of EVENTS

SPECIAL THANKS to KIWANIS!!!

The Parent Place would like to thank Kiwanis for their financial support in producing our Parent Place Packets. We could not do it without them!!!

“Becoming a Love and Logic Parent”

Presented by Jodi Murray, LCPC

Love and Logic was designed to help you find specific answers and actions for some of those difficult moments in child rearing. These simple techniques are effective with all children, from toddlers to teens.

Payment is required a week before the class in order to ensure your spot! A minimum of six registrants required for the class.

Six Week Class

Tuesdays, September 23- October 28 6-8 pm at
Bozeman Parent Place

The cost is \$100 per individual & \$175 per couple;
**Payment is expected a week prior to the class
in order to ensure your spot!**

Childcare is available the series, however space is limited. \$5 per night for two kids and \$10 per night for 3 or more kids.

Playgroups

Bozeman Parent Place

Mondays 10-11

Belgrade Parent Place

Tuesdays 10-11

Both are Free & no registration is required.

GYM DAYS

They are **BACK** beginning
the first week of
October!!!

Free and no registration is
required. Just show up
ready to have fun!!

Belgrade: Wednesdays 11:15-12:15

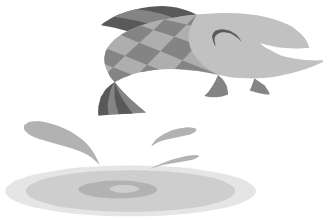
Starting October 1st

Bozeman: Thursdays 10:35-11:35.

Starting October 2nd



Dynamite Dads



SEPTEMBER: September 24, 2008, 6-7:30pm. Join us at the Fish Technology Center for a guided tour with Montana Outdoor Science School (M.O.S.S.). The event is free and includes dinner, however registration is required. Please call the Parent Place to register at 587-3840.

OCTOBER: October 15, 2008, 6-7:30pm. Come and join us at Rocky Creek Farm for Hay rides and a visit to the pumpkin patch. The event is free and includes dinner but bring extra money if you are interested in purchasing pumpkins. Please call the Parent Place to register at 587-3840.



The Bozeman Parent Place

400 East Babcock
M-Th from 8-5, Fri. from 8-4.

The Belgrade Parent Place

92 N. Broadway
M 1-5, T 9-3, W 9-12, Th. 1-5.

Parent Place
400 E. Babcock
Bozeman, MT 59715

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Dad's Corner

Communication Evolution

As a relatively new father, I continue to be surprised by how nothing stays consistent for long. Every aspect of life involving my kids continues to evolve at an astounding rate. I'm particularly amazed at the evolution of communication. The initial grunts and faces are hard to decipher, but once the smiling, cooing, and baby talking starts, hold on tight because the horse is out of the barn and not ever going back in.

Our first dramatic increase came with the use of baby signs - simple gestures for simple words. Deciphering a sign for hungry or thirsty was hands down easier than telling the difference between a hungry cry and a thirsty cry. Once she learned to communicate her needs without having to cry or scream, life became calmer and smoother for everyone. Soon we were having whole "conversations" via a game of charades; it was good entertainment for all involved (and on-lookers too).

Then the words started. I've read, and it was true for me, that most kids can say Da-Da before Ma-Ma. Enjoy this time when it sounds like you're their unconditional favorite, for this too will evolve.

As my daughter's vocabulary grew, so did the teamwork with my wife to correctly decipher any new words. The pressure from our daughter for us to understand her words was great, and we were much more successful as a team in avoiding any "misunderstanding" meltdowns.

Then, as if someone turns on a spigot, new words just come flooding out. Complicated words used in the right context, words you're sure they've never heard (oops!), and words saved for weeks before coming out at just the right occasion.

I have become acutely aware that they like to use exact phrases they hear around home. During one negotiation with my 2 year old, I told her that I would make her a deal. I don't remember the deal we struck, but since then, "Let's make a deal" has become her primary bargaining phrase. "So, Daddy, how was your day?" is another common question around our house and a point of great amusement when it is often the first question of the day!

Inevitably "NO", "MINE", and "I can do it ALL BY MYSELF" have taken their turns as favorites, but every night when I tuck my daughter into bed and she says "So, let's have a con-ver-sa-tion", I cherish this time to talk to her about the day and exciting upcoming events, or just to have the opportunity to tell her "I love you", and hear her say the words I treasure most, "I love you too, Daddy."

Steve Higgs, Dad of two girls, Shaden 2 1/2 , and Joryn 3 months

