

Parenting Matters

PARTNERS IN PARENTING

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January 2000

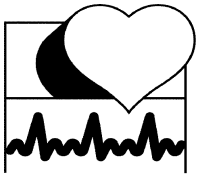
For Colorado Parents

Colorado State University

Time to check the vital signs of your family

It takes hard work to build a strong family, but many succeed. Such families can be found in cities, the suburbs and in the country, among all races and ethnic groups. They may be wealthy or struggling to pay the bills. They are all different but

even the best families must take time to see how they are doing – to check the “vital signs.”



There are studies that have looked at how families work and have identified signs that indicate that a family is working well. These signs may suggest things that you can do to make your family life even better.

First, adults in the family should feel close to each other and share authority. They should support each other and share responsibilities. Simple things like taking time to discuss daily activities, sharing feelings and making family plans can help adults in the family work well together. The single parent should be confident and in charge. As a single parent, it is important to take time for yourself. Find a hobby or do something you enjoy.

All family members should discuss their thoughts and feelings openly. Encourage each other to

speak honestly and make sure to listen. Conflicts are easier to overcome if they are discussed in an atmosphere of love. Above all, behave in a way that you want other family members to act toward you. Tell others when you appreciate something they have done or said because sincere compliments build trust and loyalty.

A family that is functioning well does not insist that all family members have the same beliefs or feelings. Everyone is unique and loved. Spending time alone with each family member doing what he or she likes is a way to make being different okay. Family members should recognize that people disagree and try to explain opinions calmly.

Problems occur if children are uncertain of their parents' expectations. As a parent, set high standards and clear guidelines for your children. Establish a few important rules that everyone understands. Children can discuss rather than disobey rules that are unfair. Find a compromise that everyone can live with.

To have a healthy family, it is always important to spend time together and plan activities just for fun. Reserve a regular family time and plan activities that all family members will enjoy.

—Compiled by Brooke Baldwin, Editor



Fast Facts for Families

Simple steps to protect loved ones against firearm injury

- If you have a gun, unload it and lock it up!
- Lock and put away bullets in a separate location
- Make sure children cannot get the keys or combination of the locked storage where your gun is kept
- Learn about your state laws for safe gun storage
- All gun owners should take a gun safety course

Even if you don't have a gun

- Speak to parents of your children's friends about gun safety and find out if they keep a gun at home and how it's stored
- Talk to your children and family members about the dangers of guns
- Tell your children to stay away from guns at their friends' homes

How do you get rid of a gun?

Contact your local police precinct and ask how to go about properly getting rid of a gun. They can provide you with information about the rules for transporting and disposing of a gun specific to your state, county and city laws.

The best way to reduce gun risks is to remove the gun from your home

DISCIPLINE

An integral part of child rearing

Discipline is teaching your child appropriate behavior. It is the key to how your child will behave. It can make life smoother for you and your child if you are consistent and fair. In the long run, discipline will help shape the kind of adult your child becomes.

Discipline is an ongoing process which should begin early in children's lives. Parents must begin by setting limits to help their children

stay safe and learn self control. As children mature, they respond to different discipline practices therefore, limits may be adjusted over time. When setting limits it is imperative that parents:

- Make sure your child understands the limits.
- Explain the reasons for the limits.
- Remind your children about the limits when needed.

Children may test you to see if

you're serious or they may simply forget what they're supposed to do.

- Enforce limits firmly and fairly.

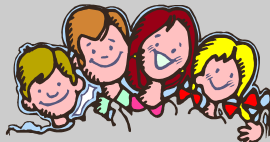
Understanding your child's needs, rewarding them for good behavior, discouraging misbehavior and adapting how you discipline your child as he or she grows older are necessities for disciplining your children.

—Compiled by Brooke Baldwin, Editor

How discipline helps children

Discipline helps to prevent problems as children grow older. When parents discipline their children in a loving and fair way, they instill a lifelong sense of self-discipline. As children grow, discipline encourages them to:

- Develop self-control and an ability to handle feelings of anger, jealousy, helplessness and fear. Then they are less likely to have temper tantrums, whine or fight.
- Express emotions appropriately through talking about feelings. Saying "I'm sorry" or "that hurt my feelings" can prevent misunderstandings and resentment.



- Respect others by learning to be polite and respect others' belongings, privacy, feelings and differences.

- Build self-esteem when they are praised for behaving well.
- Become self-reliant when they master skills for taking care of themselves,

such as dressing and washing, and learning to do simple chores.

- Develop orderliness and good work habits. Finishing tasks and putting things away help children succeed at home and school. They also ensure success as an adult.

—Compiled from *About Disciplining Your Child* by Channing L. Bete Co.

Reasons children misbehave

Understanding the causes of misbehavior can help you choose effective ways to handle it. All of the following are reasons children may lose control:

Being tired, hungry or sick; anger, fear, jealousy, hurt or

Misunderstanding a behavior is wrong. It is important not to "give in" to misbehavior. When parents give in, children tend to repeat the misbehavior. Try to determine why your child is misbehaving and deal with the situation with effective discipline.

Appropriate Action

A firm reminder - say only what is necessary to stop the behavior. Use a firm "no" or "that's enough."

A behavior chart - agree on expected behavior, a reward for the behavior and a consequence for a misbehavior. Record successful behavior on a chart. Avoid material rewards.

Calling a time out - this may work if your child has lost control. Bring your child to a safe place that is free

Continued as *action* on page 4

Parenting Matters

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Questions or comments?
Call us at (800) 457-2736

Marijuana Effects

Long-term studies of high school students and their patterns of drug use show that very few young people use other illegal drugs without first trying marijuana. Using marijuana exposes them to people who are users and sellers of other drugs, so there is more of a chance for a marijuana user to be exposed to and urged to try more drugs. Most casual or experimental marijuana users, though, do not go on to use other illegal drugs.

Nearly 70 million Americans over the age of 12 have tried marijuana at least once. More than 5 million Americans smoke marijuana at least once a week. Among kids aged 12 to 17, the average age of first trying marijuana is 13.5 years old. Some researchers have found that use of marijuana and other drugs usually peaks in the late teens, early twenties.

Marijuana can be harmful in a number of ways, through both immediate effects and damage to health over time. Marijuana hinders the

user's short-term memory, and he or she may have trouble handling complex tasks. With the use of more potent varieties of marijuana, even simple tasks can be difficult. Under the influence of marijuana, students

may find it hard to study and learn. Athletes could find their performance is off; both timing and coordination are affected. Heavy, chronic use of marijuana,

with or without other illicit drugs, is correlated with higher levels of truancy, fighting, delinquency, arrests and health problems in adolescents. While all of the long-term effects of marijuana use are not yet known, there are studies showing serious health concerns. Findings so far show that the regular use of marijuana may play a role in cancer and problems in the respiratory, immune and reproductive systems.

—Compiled from *Partnership for a Drug Free America* website

STREET TALK

Marijuana a.k.a -- Weed, pot, grass, reefer, dope, ganja, mary jane, hash, herb, chronic
Marijuana looks like dried parsley with stems and seeds. It is usually smoked or eaten.

Colorado Kids Ignore Drugs

Colorado students, age 12 to 17, may notice an increase in substance abuse prevention programs when they go back to school this fall.

The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention and Colorado's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division will provide school and community coalitions with \$2,500,000 for programs as part of Colorado Kids

Ignore Drugs (CKID), a three-year project aimed at reducing substance abuse in youth. The science-based efforts will empower youth with the skills they need to avoid the traps inherent in use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. In order to achieve the goals of CKID, existing statewide

Continued as *kids* on page 4

✓ Recognize and Learn the Four Stages of Drug Abuse

Stage One: Experimental

Ironically, many drug users' first experience with a drug is unpleasant. Still, some progress to the next stage.

Stage Two: Occasional

Also called "social" use. People in this category usually use their drug less than once a week. They don't seek out the drug but will take it if offered.

Stage Three: Regular

People in this category actively seek out the drug. They use it once or twice a week, and more if it can be justified.

Stage Four: Dependence

At this stage, many users will give up almost everything in their life to maintain the use of the drug.

—Compiled from *Parents Still Make the Difference*, March 1998

kids continued from page 3

prevention programs must be improved and a statewide evaluation system will be used to document and track the progress in the programs.

The twelve communities currently funded are: Ft Collins, Greeley, West Denver, Aurora, Adams County District #12, Commerce City, Pikes Peak BOCES, San Luis, Durango, Ignacio, Cortez and Summit County. By mid August the final thirteen will be chosen and will start their programs shortly after school begins.

The grant proposal process has several baseline requirements. The money is allocated to communities with a previously formed, strong

school/community coalition. Applications considered must be comprehensive, culturally relevant and responsive to the needs of youth. Also, an effort to eliminate gaps and reduce duplication of services must be made. Youth must comprise twenty five percent of the coalition involved in the planning process. Fifty percent of the money is to be used for programs that have previously proven to reduce drug usage in youth of this age range.

To find out whether your community is involved in CKIDS or for more information, please call Alana James 303-837-8466 ext.112.

—By *Alana James*, CKIDS Coordinator and *Brooke Baldwin*, Editor

action continued from page 2

of distractions. Have your child stay there for a set amount of time and make it clear that time will be increased if your child comes out too soon. When the time is up, praise them for calming down.

Removing a privilege - For example, take away TV time. Be sure they understand why you took away the privilege.

Repayment - If your child damages property, have them apologize and repair or pay for the damages.

Professional help - Ask for help if discipline becomes a problem. Check your phone book for family counseling or mental health services.

Be firm, fair and consistent. If you're feeling angry or upset take time to cool off before deciding what to do.

—Compiled from *About Disciplining Your Child* by Channing L. Bete Co.

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