



**PARENT TRUST**  
FOR WASHINGTON CHILDREN



**Strong Families Begin At Home**

# Child & Teen Services Newsletter Summer 2009

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## FAMILY HELP LINE

**1-800-932-HOPE**

Live parenting coaches answer Parent Trust's statewide, toll-free phone number and provide callers with a greater understanding and awareness of child development, guidance, and resources.

If you have any comments, or suggestions for future articles, please contact:

### Marni Port

Child & Teen Services Manager  
mport@parenttrust.org  
(206) 233-0156 x225

### LEARN



*"Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow."*  
-Albert Einstein

## The Family Help Line: 1-800-932-HOPE

Did you know that Parent Trust runs the only statewide phone line for parents, caregivers, professionals and anyone who has an interest in or questions about a child?

We provide callers with a greater understanding and awareness of child development, guidance, and resources. Speaking with a Family Help Line parenting coach, you will receive the information and referral you need, as well as encouragement, support, and a listening ear - essential ingredients for hope.

To reach a parenting coach, call our toll free number. You will hear a brief message in Spanish, and then recorded options in English. To reach a parenting coach, simply press "2".

A parenting coach is available Mon-Fri 9AM-10PM and Sat-Sun 10AM-6PM. If you are unable to directly access a Parenting Coach, you can leave a message. All voice mails are returned as soon as a Parenting Coach is available.

## How to Build a Child's Self Esteem & Confidence

### ENCOURAGE



*"To see things in the seed, that is genius."*  
-LAO-TZU

### Enjoy each child

It is important that a child feel lovable, likable and worthy. Many children go out of their way to display behaviors that could make them not seem lovable. This is how they've learned to get attention, albeit negative attention. Be the person that responds differently, and find something in that child that is special and lovable.

### Create opportunities for success

Are there specific ways that children can contribute their skills and talents in the group or in your family? Are you on the lookout for new roles that reflect strengths?

### Acknowledge positive character traits and behaviors

For example, you can thank Sally for offering to sit next to the new girl at Snack Time. Tie it to the specific character trait. "Sally, I can always count on you to welcome new members. You are a very welcoming person."

### Be a Role model

Be aware when you use derogatory statements about yourself.

- Can you acknowledge your own strengths or do you put yourself down?
- Do you brush off compliments or graciously say thanks?

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WESTERN WA OFFICE  
2200 RAINIER AVE SO, SEATTLE, WA 98144  
206-233-0156

EASTERN WA OFFICE  
917 PITCHER STREET, YAKIMA, WA 98901  
509-454-4000

1-800-932-HOPE (4673)  
INFORMATION@PARENTTRUST.ORG  
WWW.PARENTTRUST.ORG

**RELAX**



*"Every now and then go away, even briefly, have a little relaxation, for when you come back to your work your judgement will be surer, since to remain constantly at work will cause you to lose power."  
-Leonardo Da Vinci*

**Patience and Stress**

*No one can be patient all the time! But patience can improve health and family/ group dynamics by decreasing the stress that comes with impatience. As you read through this, remember that patience takes practice.*

**Being patient isn't the same as accepting something that is wrong.**

Patience is not being "passive". Being patient is taking action. Sometimes it is listening. Sometimes it is waiting. But never is it doing "nothing."

**Having realistic expectations of your kids can help.**

If we have unrealistic expectations we get frustrated because we have set the bar at an unachievable level. Accepting our children for who they are and what they are developmentally capable of doing can decrease the impatience we feel when our children can't do what we ask them too. Want to find out about realistic expectations from a parenting coach? Call the Family Help Line at 1-800-932-4673.

**If you find yourself feeling impatient with a child: Be aware of the feeling.**

Pause. Take a breath. Re-assess the situation. Ask yourself: what would happen if I just let this one go? Often, you may find that being calm and loving with your child feels better than moving faster, or being proven right about something.

**What's the opposite of patience?**

A temper tantrum! Adults and kids have them when frustrated. When we lack patience, we have trouble dealing with the tension that happens in between desiring something and getting it. The better we can tolerate this tension, the more patient we become and the less stress we experience. Relaxation techniques can help with this, and increase not just patience but impulse control.

**Word Games/Rebus**

Some childhood play is active (hide and seek, tag), some is more creativity oriented (art, music, dramatic play). Some children really enjoy playing cognitive, word games (word searches, crossword puzzles, mad-libs).

choose to engage in this type of play, it can be very beneficial.

The Rebus is a form of word game in which pictures represent words or parts of words and the goal is to decode the message. Creating rebuses is just as challenging (perhaps more challenging) than solving them.

Here are a few examples. Can you and your children solve these together? Can you make up your own for each other?

**PLAY**



*"You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation."  
-Plato*

**FIGURE 1**



Another way of thinking about play is that some play is unstructured and some is structured (with varying degrees of rules). Word games are a more structured form of play, but as long as your child or children freely

**FIGURE 2**



**ANSWERS**

I can see you  
FIGURE 2  
Head over heels  
FIGURE 1

## Physical Activity Benefits

### MOVE



*"Physical fitness is not only one of the most important keys to a healthy body, it is the basis of dynamic and creative intellectual activity."*

*-John Fitzgerald Kennedy*

*We know that lack of physical activity is bad for us. But why is it good for us? Why bother? Keeping in mind the benefits of new, healthy habits is often a better motivator than scaring ourselves about what might happen if we don't do something positive!*

If we are physically active, then we experience benefits in a variety of ways. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the benefits of cardio fitness include:

### 1. HEALTHY BODY

Getting the amount of cardio fitness you need can reduce your risk of developing type 2 diabetes, help reduce blood glucose level if you already have type 2 diabetes, lower your risk for heart disease and stroke, lower your blood pressure and improve cholesterol, and reduce the risk of colon and breast cancer. Preliminary research also suggests that cardio fitness will lower your risk of lung and endometrial cancer.

Think this is just for adults only? Not so. Many of these health problems--once thought of as adult health problems--are showing up in children now due to obesity and lack of exercise. Children benefit from exercise as much as adults.

### 2. A HEALTHY HEART

(one that gets enough aerobic exercise) will help you to keep up with your friends and daily activities. It's not fun to be short of breath when you're playing tag or carrying groceries.

## WANT TO START EXERCISING?

1. Set healthy, achievable goals.

2. Visit [KidsHealth.org](http://kidshealth.org)

[http://kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_body/take\\_care/exercise\\_wise.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_body/take_care/exercise_wise.html)

3. See this [CDC article](http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/index.html) to see how much physical activity you need to be healthy.

<http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/index.html>

## Parent Trust Reads

### Do you know about "Children's Books Online"?

It is an online library of antique, illustrated books. The collection contains FULL text and illustrations of thousands of books. I just re-discovered *Dolly And Molly At The Seashore*. Written in 1914 by Elizabeth Gordon and illustrated by Frances Beem, this is a story of twin girls who have adventures at the seashore. The story is told in rhyme, the illustrations are vibrant, classic and gorgeous, the story sweet and appropriate for very early readers.

Go to: <http://www.childrensbooksonline.org/index.htm>

### 3. IMPROVED MENTAL HEALTH

Regular physical activity helps us think, learn, and remember better.

### 4. STRONG BONES & MUSCLES

Not only do bones and muscles support your body to help you move, but the stronger you are, the better you'll be able to accomplish your daily activities and continue to be active.

### 5. BETTER MOOD

Exercise lowers the risk of depression.

### 6. BETTER SLEEP

Sleep is a necessary, recuperative process that everyone needs. Exercise may help you sleep better!

For more information about *Parent Trust for Washington Children* and its life changing parent education and family support programs call 1-800-932-HOPE(4673).

## Create a Helping Chart

A Helping Chart sets positive behavior expectations and supports the trait of kindness.

### Materials:

- Poster-board
- Marker
- Stickers--small, uniform

### Instructions:

Create a grid on the poster-board.  
Hang it on the wall within the reach of children.

**Explain:** "When you see someone else help someone, you can put a sticker by that person's name. You cannot put a sticker next to your own name. Before putting on a sticker, announce to an adult what you saw. Then you can put a sticker next to that person's name. Let's see how many total stickers this whole group or family can earn together!"

**CONNECT**



*"We need 4 hugs a day for survival. We need 8 hugs a day for maintenance. We need 12 hugs a day for growth."  
-Virginia Satir*

**Incentive:** If you provide an incentive to accumulate a total number of stickers (good deeds) try to reward the group (or family) as a whole for the achievement.

**How Long Does It Last?** This activity can be done in one night, or can last forever! However, because new children are always joining group, I recommend that you set either a one-week or one month limit on the activity, and then start it again if the children want. This way you don't have to constantly add new names.

Child's Name	
Child's Name	
Child's Name	
Child's Name	
Child's Name	

## Build a Child's Self Esteem & Confidence continued from page 1

### Show appreciation

Thanking a child for their positive behavior can help them not only feel good about themselves but also help them make a connection between their behavior and its effect on others.

### Express belief in a child's integrity

Let a child know that you think they are capable and worthy of positive behavior. For example, children sometimes brag after winning a game. To prevent this, as a game nears the end, you can simply say: "I know that you are a truly caring person and that you know how to be a good winner." If necessary, you can prompt: "A good winner might say, "thanks for the game, that was fun!"

### Respond to negative self-statements

Sometimes children are their own harshest critics. How do you respond to a child who says things like "I can't do anything right?" Or, "I'm bad at art"? Can you avoid false sentiment (No, you're great at art!) and try to:

- Validate feelings (you really don't like what you are drawing, huh?)
- Mention that no one is an expert at everything.
- Suggest that there are other things this child excels at--be specific!
- Suggest that there are other reasons besides "being great at it" for engaging in a behavior (enjoyment, relaxation, etc.)
- Remind your child that a person "gets good" at something through practice.

