



PARENT TRUST
FOR WASHINGTON CHILDREN

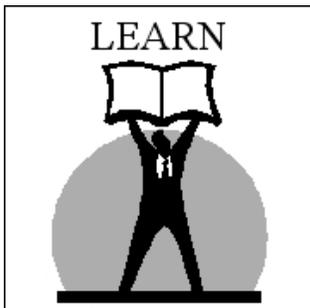
Children's Group Newsletter

Winter 2009



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

Do Children Learn From Mistakes Or Praise?

Learning from mistakes is an advanced concept, says a new study in the Journal of Neuroscience.

The researchers found significant differences in three age groups: 8-9 years old (younger children), 11-13 years old (transition age) and 18-25 years old (adults). This age break down was the first of its kind; in the past, all ages of children were lumped together in comparison with adults.

What they found was that the younger age group responded to positive feedback only. Negative feedback had no impact on their learning behavior. An example of positive feedback would be: "Great job!" Negative feedback would be pointing out the mistake and expecting them to then adjust their behavior.

Children in the 11-13 year old range showed brain changes from negative feedback, indicating that this was a transition stage between the younger ages and adulthood. Their "control centers" in the brain allow them to more efficiently process negative feedback (i.e. learn from mistakes). This does not mean they learn **better** from negative feedback; it means that they are more efficient at processing negative feedback. They still respond to positive feedback too.

Adults are most able to efficiently process negative feedback. Again, this doesn't mean that they learn better from the negative feedback, only that they are more capable than young children of learning from their mistakes.

What does this mean for your child:

Learning from mistakes is complicated! Young children learn better from reward rather than punishment or pointing out errors.

Children around 11-13 years old are more capable of learning from mistakes, but still need positive feedback.

PLAY

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

Rainy Day Music Activity

For this game, you are making your own music "video".

First, choose a song that everyone likes, is appropriate for all ages playing the game, and that everyone can listen to at the same time.

Step two: Play the song over and over. Get to the point where you are all singing along. Or, chose one that everyone already knows.

Step three: have everyone take different "parts" to act out. Play the song again, and everyone acts out his or her part to the music. Practice over and over-- your goal isn't perfection, it's to dissolve into giggles!

Step four: If you want, you can even video record it or invite a live audience to watch!

RELAX

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

Children, Childcare, And Stress

Everyone, even children, experiences stress. We know that children in noisy, chaotic environments experience an increase in stress. A recent study published in the journal *Child Development* shows that the stress level of children in all day childcare is affected not just by the quality of care but also by the relationship that the child has with the caregiver.

The study showed that children in daycare with close to 10 children in the class were likely to show a decrease in the stress hormone cortisol as the day progressed.

Children in larger classrooms, with closer to 20 children, tended to show increases in cortisol as the day progressed.

In addition, children with conflicted relationships with their daycare provider showed an increase of cortisol after 1:1 interactions with the teacher.

This increase in cortisol (a typical measure of stress) is concerning because chronic or frequent increases in cortisol are tied to negative health consequences.

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Exercise and Anger Expression

A recent study showed that regular exercise can help healthy but overweight children reduce their expressions of anger (like slamming doors).

The study examined previously sedentary children, ages 7-11 years old. The children participated in a 10-15 week after school aerobic program.

The study's results are strong because there was a control group of children in the study who did not exercise. This means that the results for the children who **did** participate are more valid and reliable.

The results showed that exercise had a significant positive impact on anger expression and aggression. So keep those kids moving! Whether at home or playing outside at group, exercise can be a significant help for children struggling with appropriate ways to vent their anger.



"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

Note: exercise helps adult anger too!

You can find the study in: *Pediatric Exercise Science*, Nov. 2008

Parent Trust Reads: The Tenth Good Thing About Barney

By Judith Viorst

Illustrated by Erik Blegvad

Fiction/Animals/Grief

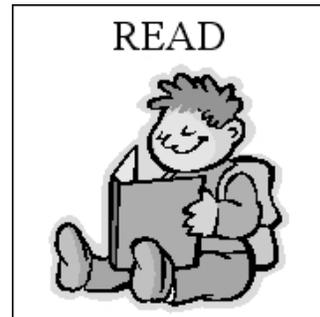
Early Readers: ages 5-7 years old.

Published in 1971, The Tenth Good Thing About Barney is about a boy whose cat (Barney) dies. The boy is very sad, and in preparation for the cat funeral, tries to come up with 10 good things to say about Barney. But he can only think of nine.

Told in simple and loving language, this is a beautiful story that helps a child to process feelings of grief after a pet dies. With the help of his loving parents, the boy is able to experience his sadness without shame or judgment.

There are no religious rituals, just an exploration of memories, feelings, thoughts and questions stemming from the death of a beloved pet.

Although early readers could tackle this book on their own, we recommend you read it with your child due to the subject matter.



*The more that you read,
the more things you will know.
The more that you learn,
the more places you'll go.*
Dr. Seuss

Children And Stress...continued

What does this mean for your child:

1. Children with secure relationships with their parents may be protected from negative rises in cortisol.
2. Children's positive relationships with caregivers in the Parent Trust Children's Group can also help reduce the stress response from an earlier situation.
3. A parent's positive relationship with a caregiver (childcare AND Parent Trust) can improve the relationship between a child and the caregiver.
4. Group size matters. Respect your group's maximum capacity policy!



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- Leonardo Da Vinci

*Child Development
79 (6): 1818-1832*

Building Character

Parent Trust has joined with a coalition of Yakima citizens who want to improve the quality of life in their community. The goal of the coalition is to encourage the community to reflect on and demonstrate positive values of good moral character. To this end, there is a focus on one character trait each month. Parents and educators are encouraged to discuss this trait with their child(ren) and to role model these positive character traits.

January's trait is "Compassion". Please join us in inspiring and encouraging compassion in our community. Start small: you could talk to each other in your group, and talk to your children about what compassion means to you.

For more information,
<http://www.buildcharacter.org/>



"We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee."
--Marian Wright Edelman



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FOR WASHINGTON CHILDREN

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.parenttrust.org



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WWW.PARENTTRUST.ORG

Kids don't come with instructions.
Call the Family Help Line for parenting information,
referrals to community services &
support during the difficult times.
Family Help Line (toll-free)
1-800-932-HOPE (4673)

We hope you enjoyed this edition of the
Children's Group Newsletter.

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

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