

THE BRIDGE GROUP

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SPRING/SUMMER 2009

The Bridge Group is a committee comprised of YSB staff members committed to providing information, resources and support to parents of adolescents—we want to help you successfully cross the BRIDGE between childhood and adulthood!

What is the Bridge Group?

Who We Are

The Bridge Group is a committee of service providers from the Centre County Youth Service Bureau dedicated to serving youth and their families in the Centre County region. We come from many different branches of the Youth Service Bureau, including Parenting Plus, Youth and Family Services, Big Brothers Big Sisters, AmeriCorps, and Prevention Services.

Why We Exist

The YSB is comprised of several programs that provide services for youth and parents throughout Centre County. One such program is Parenting Plus, which provides information related to child development, disciplinary skills, and age-appropriate expectations. Unfortunately, these services are only provided to parents of children from birth to 10 years of age. Many parents ask what they should do when their child turns 11? After all, children don't come with an instruction manual and parenting does not stop at age 10. It is evident there are few resources available to parents of older children and teens; therefore, this group was formed in order to "Bridge" the gap between childhood and adulthood by addressing issues parents face during those critical pre-teen and teenage years. It is the hope of The Bridge Group that information, resources, and support will reach the hands of parents with children in those challenging adolescent years.

What We Hope

In our newsletter, we hope to include information about the topics that surround the challenges in raising a teenage son or daughter. Our goal is to provide information on topics that parents can use in their everyday lives with their teens – from school and homework to home life and chores, from relationships with peers to interactions with teachers, from discipline and consequences to praise and encouragement. We want to provide parents with information on ways to communicate with their teens and keep parents up-to-date with fun events happening in the community. We hope parents will use the information to assist them and their child's transition from child to a healthy preteen and teen and eventually to an adult.

Safety Always!

Children have the right to be safe at all times. The safety of the children in our program is our #1 priority. We expect everyone associated with the Centre County Youth Service Bureau to support children's safety and well-being.

Contact us...



We are happy to answer your questions and provide more information about our programs and services. Call 237-5731 or visit us on the web at www.ccsyb.com



"Spring is when you feel like whistling even with a shoe full of slush"

-Doug Larson

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Family Days at the Ropes

The YSB Family Days on the Ropes program, run by the YSB, offers a low and high Ropes Course facility set in the mountains above Spring Mills. The Low Ropes Course focuses on collaboration. The challenge calls upon every member of the family to participate, and they present unending opportunities for self-discovery and family growth. The High Ropes Course emphasizes risk taking, trust and coaching. The challenges allow participants to expand their comfort zone and recognize fears that may block personal and family achievement. Groups will consist of families with youth ages 9-16. Families will meet at the Ropes 3 times during the month of June in groups of 15-20 people. The Family Days program is designed to include people of all physical abilities.



Highlights

- Foster communication among family members by encouraging teamwork to overcome obstacles to achieve success
- Facilitate conversations among family members regarding family rules about drugs and alcohol and to establish family guidelines
- Address the risk factor of Sensation Seeking in youth and give parents and children a platform for discussing risky behaviors.

Contact: Alison Turley at aturley@ccysb.com or 814.880.5069 for more information/directions.

Taking Healthy Risks

by Ali Turley, Prevention Coordinator

In a culture where the “extreme” seems to be the norm, our kids are faced with tough decisions everyday. We are all familiar with risky behaviors, actions such as drinking and driving, stealing, fighting, or engaging in risky sex. As parents, many of us are good at taking with our kids about such behaviors. We can set family guidelines about underage drinking, and talk with kids about illegal behaviors, but what we sometimes miss as adults is talking with our kids about their need to take risks and how to make them safe and positive.

Positive risks can help kids grow. Taking a risk means doing something when you don’t know how it will turn out. Positive risks include trying new things like rock climbing or snow boarding, meeting new friends, or applying for a job. Positive risks are actions that give us an inner sensation of uncertainty and a good feeling when successful. Kids in early adolescence seem to be hard wired to be sensation seekers. Youth in our area score very near the PA and National average in Sensation Seeking Behaviors, according to the Pennsylvania Youth Survey. When we look at our area kids, they are much like teens across the state.

We know that adolescents are risk takers. As parents, we need to teach our kids to think before they take a risk. Teach them to ask themselves, “What’s in it for me? What positive things might happen?” We also want our kids to look at what could go wrong too. Teach them to ask themselves, “Could I get hurt? Could someone else?” A risk is worth taking when it helps a kid grow emotionally or physically, when it doesn’t hurt anyone, and when it makes them feel good about themselves.

As adults, we need to talk with our kids about alcohol and drugs and let them know the possible consequences, such as illness, overdose, or addiction. Crime, risky sexual behavior and car crashes are all more likely to happen when alcohol and drugs are involved. Alcohol and other drugs also affect judgment, making it more likely that we will take an unsafe risk.

The risks that face our kids today are real. The availability of drugs and alcohol make it easier for our young people to take dangerous risks and to use substances that can be harmful. Kids need to have an outlet to fulfill their need for sensation in a positive way. Talk with your kids about what they like to do for fun and practice the steps of thinking the action through. Rock climbing, skiing, hiking, bike riding, white water rafting, and high ropes are all active activities that can provide kids with a sense of sensation and adrenaline and if done correctly can be safe too! If your child is not so focused on athletics, try engaging them in new clubs where they can meet new friends and community members. The feelings of the unknown and the sense adrenaline can be provided both physically and emotionally and kids can be safe too!

Natural and Logical Consequences

The reason parents use discipline is to help their children learn from their mistakes. Two effective disciplinary methods are the use of natural and logical consequences. It is important for parents to know the difference between the two.

Natural consequences are consequences the environment provides without the need for parental intervention. For example, when a toy is left out in the rain, it could get ruined. In this example, the consequence is automatic and is not controlled or manipulated by anyone. The parent who utilizes natural consequences allows the child to discover the advantages to following the rules without outside intervention. The child learns positive behaviors through his or her own experiences.

Logical consequences are used when a natural consequence is unacceptable. For example, if a child runs into the street without looking both ways, a parent will not wait until the child is hit by a car. A logical consequence is created by a person in authority, and it is "logically" connected to the misbehavior. Frequently, logical consequences are more appropriate for pre-teens and teenagers. For example, when your child repeatedly violates a limit that you have established, a good rule of thumb is to use a logical consequence to do the teaching. For instance, instead of grounding your child from the phone for throwing trash out of a moving vehicle, you may give him or her the task of picking up litter along the roadside. Logical consequences are more effective when teaching your child how to be responsible for his or her own safety, whereas natural consequences are more effective when a child learns to date and choose friendships.

One consideration is the similarity between logical consequences and punishments. While using logical consequences, a parent must understand the child or teen has the right to decide actions and knows that breaking the rule carries a negative consequence. The result is good behavior when the child sees that things will go better when he or she decides to follow the rules. Punishment, on the other hand, often leads to proper behavior only when the child is afraid of getting caught.

The struggle to provide effective consequences is not uncommon; however, knowing the difference between these two types of consequences and how to use them may help to teach your child the importance of making good decisions.

Fun & Games

RELAX AND HAVE SOME FUN AT HOME WITH YOUR KIDS AS YOU TRY TO FIND THE 27 WORDS HIDDEN IN THIS PUZZLE!!

Q Y W O A C C E P T A N C E T N V Z J P
 B J L W T E C N E D I F N O C N L U B C
 D H V U T U M N O I N I P O E S O M Z J
 F S T N E R A P R O Z T N Q P C V Q N J
 I F V D N R J J R Z S S O C S R C L G P
 D E D C T O J X J U I S S U E S A Y I Q
 M P F P I G I T R D U X X P R O J I M N
 D I G I O X R T E Y L I M A F C L O S W
 F S N D N O I R A C K N O W L E D G E E
 S P I I F M A M T C H A L L E N G I N G
 U F N F E T X Q U D I S C U S S I O N S
 T N E M E G A R U O C N E H X G P V Q C
 X G T D X U R J A U S F U M I E R U R G
 J T S R P I W G J T A U D M O L S Y T C
 U N I I L O V S E I R O M E M T D I Z A
 Z Y L Q A L A N O I T C N U F O I R H S
 Q P T N I N O I T A S R E V N O C O E V
 A Y A P N J V L J D L K P T R I E M N N
 X K F A C T I V I T I E S L N K Q W J S
 W J W Z W A V A I L A B L E N K L V Y B

WORD LIST

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| ACCEPTANCE | FUNCTIONAL |
| ACKNOWLEDGE | ISSUES |
| ACTIVITIES | LISTENING |
| ATTENTION | MEMORIES |
| AVAILABLE | OPINION |
| CHALLENGING | PARENTS |
| CHILDREN | PRAISE |
| COMMUNICATION | SELF RESPECT |
| CONFIDENCE | TIME |
| CONSIDERATE | TRUST |
| CONVERSATION | |
| DISCUSSIONS | |
| EFFORT | |
| EMOTIONS | |
| ENCOURAGEMENT | |
| EXPLAIN | |
| FAMILY | |



Keeping Kids Active

By Stephanie Whitesell, BBBS Case Manager and Parenting Plus- Parent Educator



According to an article at life.family.education.com, Barbara Cook states that, “America’s kids are in worse shape than they were 20 years ago. It’s no wonder that this fact is true, with the world turning more and more to electronic media for everyday tasks such as entertainment, completing homework assignments, and even fitness programs (Wii Fit).

Did you know that experts recommend more than an hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity for tweens/teens every day? The question you are probably asking yourself is, “How do I get my kid up off of the couch, away from the video games, the on demand, the Facebook page, and get them out to participate in over an hour of physical activity every day?” There is not one right answer for every child, but the suggestion is that aerobic activity that helps a tween/teen get their heart rate up for at least twenty minutes is the most beneficial to their long-term health. Some examples are; swimming, running, walking, basketball, tennis, soccer, jump rope, and trampoline.

Also talking about the many positive outcomes of physical activity with your child can give them a better understanding of why keeping active is so important. Mention the physical benefits, which can be that exercise helps them feel better and stronger. Let them know that exercise can be social; taking a walk with their friend can be fun because they can talk about whatever they want, while getting some physical activity for the day. There is also the mental benefit of physical activity; exercise can help you feel more alert, even when you are tired. Goodness knows how many tweens/teens complain about waking up for school everyday because they are so tired!

Many local gyms are now offering more interactive, tween/teen targeted fitness programs and equipment. Check out your local YMCA for details.

The best thing you can do, as a parent, to encourage your tween/teen to become more active is to be a good role model. Let them see you taking a daily walk or exercise class. They will see how important health is to you and the feeling will catch on!

The Bridge Group/YSB
410 South Fraser St.
State College, PA 16801