

THE BRIDGE GROUP



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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!

Make it a successful school year *by Patti Koelle, Parenting Plus*

We all want our children to do well in school. It is the primary challenge they face in their youth. School can be a positive and rewarding experience or it can be a frustrating and unhappy experience. Fortunately, we as parents can help to make our child's school year positive. Here are ten ways to do that:

1. **Be involved.** Volunteer at your child's school in the classroom, as a field trip chaperone, or in other activities where parents are welcome. By donating your time, you are letting your child know how important school is to you and that you value learning.
2. **Attend all school meetings with teachers and/or administration.** Don't miss Back to School Nights or any meetings scheduled at school. Show your child you care. You will also get some insight into what your child's day is like.
3. **Maintain a positive and respectful relationship with your child's teachers and the school administration.** Always be respectful when speaking to school staff. They really do care about your child. If you have a concern, discuss it calmly and work cooperatively with the teacher to find a solution.
4. **If you see your child is under stress, talk to your child about it.** If the stress has to do with school, problem-solve with your child. Work out a plan to ease the stress. Often a child is worried about something because he got a wrong message. A call to the teacher can often clarify and ease your child's concern.
5. **Encourage homework completion.** At the beginning of the school year, you and your child should determine the homework routine – when and where. Right after school? After dinner? At the kitchen table? At a desk? Find a quiet, well-lit place where your child can regularly do her schoolwork. Be encouraging, not demanding.
6. **Don't allow your child to get too frustrated with a homework assignment.** If you see that your child is starting to get upset, ask if he would like some help. If he says yes, sit down with him to guide, encourage, and teach your child. Do not do the assignment for him; show him how. Be patient. What's easy for you to understand may be very difficult for your child.
7. **Have appropriate expectations of what your child can do.** Not too high and not too low. You know your child better than anyone else. If you expect too much of your child, the child will get discouraged. If you expect too little, the child won't be challenged.
8. **Praise your child's efforts, even if the outcome is not good.** If she studied hard for the spelling test and still did not do very well, at least she tried. Let her know you're proud of that effort. Work with her to find a way that makes remembering the spelling easier.
9. **Be positive about school and teachers in general.** Maybe you didn't have a good experience with school. But don't let that cause your child to assume he won't like it either. Be open-minded.
10. **Help your child develop positive self-esteem.** High self-esteem is the best predictor of how well a child will do in school, even more important than IQ! (Please see the article on this topic on page 4.)



410 S. Fraser St.
State College, PA 16801
814-237-5731
bridgegroup@ccysb.com

Safety Always!

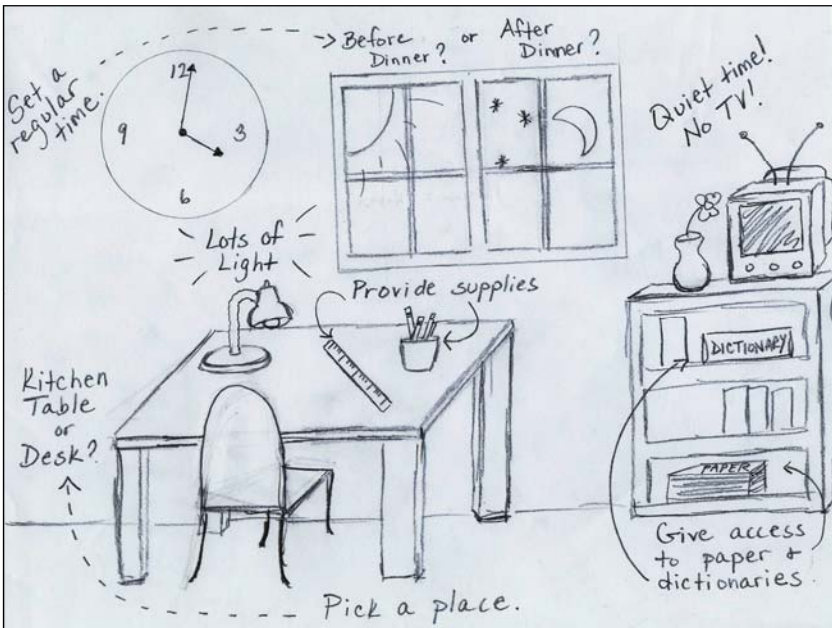
Children have the right to be safe at all times. The safety of the children in our program is our #1 priority.

We expect everyone associated with the Centre County Youth Service Bureau to support children's safety and well-being.

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Creating your own... Homework Haven



Top Seven Reasons Teens Misbehave

Unclear rules * Not keeping up with your teen's thinking *
Button pushing * Teenagers feel they have all the power *
The pleasure principle *
Peer power *
Misuse of outside helpers

*Looking for a Natural and Logical consequence to one of these misbehaviors?
See page 3 for tips on how to use consequences!

Peer Influence by Stephanie Whitesell, Parenting Plus/BBBS

"Don't laugh at a youth for his affections; he is only trying on one face after another to find a face of his own."

-Logan Pearsall Smith

One of the hardest transitions in a tween's/teen's life, as well as a parent's, is the transition from Elementary School to Middle or Secondary School. The struggle for children is that peer influence becomes a huge part of the decisions they make. The struggle for parents is balancing the ability to "let go" just enough so that their child (who is still a child, developmentally) still feels as though they have a secure base to go back to when the choices they make to impress their peers fail them.

One of the most important things a parent can remember during this time of personal struggle for their child is to parent with love and compassion. Many parents come to this stage in their child's life and make the mistake of parenting with "power." This means that parents use their position as the authority in the home to control the tween's/teen's behavior, thus creating an atmosphere of inequality. Children will respond to this imbalance of power with rebellion; they figure they can handle the consequences because they will only be brief.

Rather than ruling your home with "power," try these parenting techniques instead:

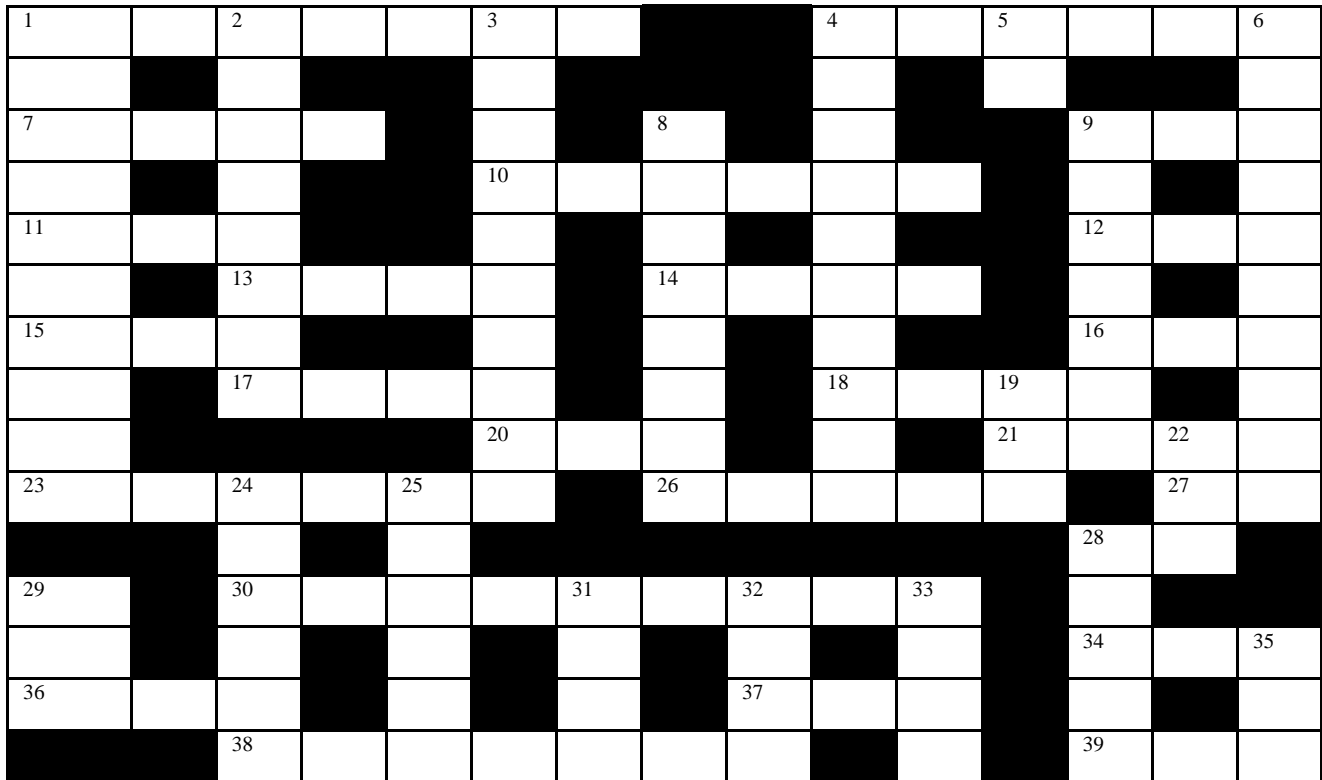
- Give your child choices on a regular basis in order to give them practice with the very important skill of problem solving.
- Give your child increased responsibility every year that they develop. This will help foster independence and increase self-esteem.
- Keep lines of communication open. Even if your child is angry because they cannot go out with their friends and they won't speak to you in that moment, they still need to know you are there when they **are** ready to talk to you.
- Don't change the way you show affection. This makes many children feel rejected and confused about their role in the family at a time when their role in the world can also be very unclear. Continue to allow your child to sit on your lap or cuddle even though he or she might be bigger than you are!
- Show respect. If you want your child to respect you, you must show respect to them. A small "please" or "thank you" can go a long way.

By following these tips, while keeping your parenting loving and compassionate, you set your tween/teen up to experience success with other relationships and give your child the ability to navigate these sometimes awkward and difficult years of adjustment with confidence.

"The rules for parents are but three...love, limit, and let them be."

- Elaine M. Ward

Fun & Games



Across

- 1 School subject
- 4 Educational building
- 7 Adore
- 9 Alphabet word for "c"
- 10 Language taught at school
- 11 Slimy water creature
- 12 ___cent
- 13 Null and ____
- 14 Exam
- 15 Foot digit
- 16 School sport accessory
- 17 Bigwig at college
- 18 Not empty
- 20 Part of a wheel
- 21 12 months
- 23 Illusion in the desert
- 26 Figure out
- 27 To ___ or not to ___
- 28 Abbrev. for carbon copy
- 30 Educational area
- 34 Opposite of subtract
- 36 Conveyance to school
- 37 What to do at the cafeteria
- 38 Meeting
- 39 collection; container

Down

- 1 How we feel about ourselves
- 2 Volunteer and be ____
- 3 A person with high self-esteem has _____
- 4 Ensure your child has a ____ school experience
- 5 Opposite of she
- 6 Reading material
- 8 Sessions; gatherings
- 9 Able and ready
- 19 Harsh soap
- 22 First letters of alphabet
- 24 Fun time at school
- 25 Quarterly class reports
- 28 Need this to write on blackboard
- 29 Room for scientific experiments
- 31 Big rig
- 32 Opposite of shut
- 33 Arithmetic
- 35 Polka ____



Building your child's self-esteem *by Patti Koelle, Parenting Plus*

Self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves. A person with high self-esteem is confident, is willing to take risks, can bounce back after a difficult time, tends to be more truthful, and will be happier in general. Did you know that high self-esteem is the best predictor of how well a child does in school – even more important than IQ? Children need to learn to value themselves. Here are nine ways you can make sure your child develops high self-esteem:

Work on your own self-esteem. Be a good role model by being confident and in control. But also be human - let your child see you can cope with and bounce back from mistakes.

Praise efforts towards a goal. Children need to understand that even if the goal is not reached, the steps accomplished are important.

Understand and appreciate each child as an individual. Learn about where your child is in development and have realistic expectations. Provide your child with opportunities to excel – help your child find a special interest or talent that he can do well. NEVER compare your child to other children.

Provide your child with many opportunities to feel success. Give your child regular chores that he can do. Be patient – allow your child to take 5 minutes to do a task you can complete in 10 seconds. The child is learning and will feel good about his success. If necessary, break the chores down into smaller steps.

Support your child's school experience. Read to your child and show her that you enjoy reading. Listen to her when she talks about her day at school. Be interested in the papers your child brings home and display ones you are especially proud.

Allow your child to make decisions. Choose decisions that you know are safe for your child to make. Allowing him to make choices promotes responsibility. It also tells your child that you (his parents) believe in him.

When correction is needed, do it in a positive way. All children (and adults) make mistakes. Use discipline in a constructive way, not negative ways. Correct the child, but don't attack him personally. Remember that words do hurt! Let the child know that despite the correction, you still love him.

Praise, but don't judge. Age determines what feedback children need. Young children need to feel cherished. Older children need to feel they are unique and special – focus on how the child feels about his accomplishment. Be careful, sometimes a child hears, "If you're perfect, I'm happy." Instead, praise the effort.

Help your child feel lovable. Offer unconditional love to your child, smile at your child, touch your child in loving ways, and read and spend time with your child. Try saying, "I'm so lucky to have you and I'm so glad you're mine."

Help your child feel capable. Let your child know you have faith in her. "I like the way you handled that." "Knowing you, I'm sure you'll do fine."

Establish effective communication with your child. Show your child respect – talk to your child the way you would talk to a friend. Give your child your undivided attention when he talks to you. If that's not possible, set a time when you can do talk later.

Catch her being good. Watch for things your child does well and compliment her. Tell your child what you saw and give her a pat on the back. Children try harder to please if their good acts are noticed.

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

