



## NORTHWEST PARENTS' CORNER

**Fall 2006**

***A quarterly newsletter of parenting tips,  
reflections, and ideas***

### **Back to School Tips**



The lazy days of summer are over and many parents are wondering how to help their kids be successful in school. You can help your kids prepare by discussing the family's new morning routine, and let each person know what things they need to take responsibility for. Do they need to make their own breakfast? Pack a lunch? Feed the pets? Develop your child's time-management skills by helping them map out a morning timeline with "markers" to keep themselves on time... *Wake up at 7am, get dressed; finish breakfast by 7:30; brush teeth and feed the dogs by 8am; out the door at 8:15...*

To help eliminate last minute crisis and mad rushes to the bus stop, suggest that they organize backpacks, gear and clothing the night before. Don't be your child's alarm clock! Get one, and have your child be responsible for getting himself up in the morning without constant reminders from mom or dad. To cut down on un-necessary distractions, have a "No T.V. before school" rule.



Homework is another issue that requires some discussion and planning. Help your child select a regular time that is workable for them and the family's schedule. Consider your child's temperament. Perhaps your child needs to run around outside for a while when they first get home. Doing homework after supper may be okay for some kids, but others may be too tired by then to do a good job.

Getting organized will foster efficiency and reduce frustration. Establish a homework station. A desk in the child's room is ideal. It is away from the distractions of family living space, and the physical separation helps reduce excessive parent involvement. Make sure the homework station is stocked with the necessary tools... paper, pencils, pencil sharpener, stapler, glue, etc. Make it clear to everyone in the family that these supplies do not "walk"! They are a permanent part of the homework station. You don't want to check in on your child's progress after 30 minutes and find out they are still looking for a pencil!

By the way, whose homework is it, anyway? Remember, it's their job, not yours! If your child shows you a worksheet and says, "I don't get it" don't rush to figure it out for them. Ask them to read the instructions aloud to you. Often, just hearing themselves read the directions makes it clear to them. The parents' job is to offer guidance and support. Make sure

your child is clear about what needs to be done – and then disappear! If you edit, re-write, and change answers for your child you are robbing her of an important learning opportunity and you are expressing a lack of confidence in his ability to handle it himself. While we all want our children to be successful, they also need to become independent.\*



### **Parenting in Recovery**

This fall “Family Solutions” is offering a Wednesday evening support and discussion group for parents in recovery from addiction and those who co-parent with them. Explore unhealthy, discouraging patterns brought on by chemical abuse and discover how to restore relationships and rebuild families. Topics will include emotional honesty; self-acceptance; non-punitive parenting skills; setting limits; improving communications; and establishing routines and boundaries.

The group will meet on October 18, November 1, 8, 15 from 6:30 – 8:00 pm at Housatonic Valley Regional High School. The course is free and registration is available by calling Foothills Adult & Continuing Education at (800) 300-4781. Childcare can be provided with advance request to HYSB at 824-4720.

### **“Family Solutions” - a family support service**

HYSB recognizes that families today are under tremendous pressures with parents struggling to keep the family unit intact without the social support that existed a generation ago. Funded through a grant from the Berkshire Taconic Foundation we created “Family Solutions” to help parents in their effort to raise healthy, well-adjusted children who will grow into responsible, contributing members of society.

#### **“Family Solutions” can help:**

- Improve your parenting skills
- Enhance your confidence as a parent
- Eliminate power struggles
- Create an atmosphere of mutual respect
- Strengthen relationships with family members
- Build support networks

#### **Help your children learn:**

- Self-discipline
- Responsibility
- Cooperation
- Problem-solving skills
- Life skills to be successful



***Call Jill at 824-4720 for one-on-one support and advice \****



### **Making fitness a family affair**

Childhood obesity is on the rise putting more children at risk for diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease. The problem is usually caused when kids eat too much and exercise too little, but kids can't change these habits by themselves. Parents can create a home environment that supports healthy habits for the whole family by making exercise and physical activity part of the daily routine. Organize a family bike ride, basketball game, or hike. Involve kids in active chores like washing the car and walking the dog.

Parents can set rules limiting the time spent watching T.V. or playing video games. Remove televisions and computers from the bedrooms. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics children younger than 2 should never be in front of a television, and older children should spend no more than 2 hours per day. Since 1987 visits to U.S. national parks have declined and the most likely culprit is electronic media. Instead of a trip to the movies, plan a hike on a local trail.

Make sure healthy foods are available and remove high-calorie, high-fat foods from the home. Remove sugar-sweetened drinks and offer fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole-grain foods. Reduce the number of meals eaten in fast-food restaurants. Sit down together for

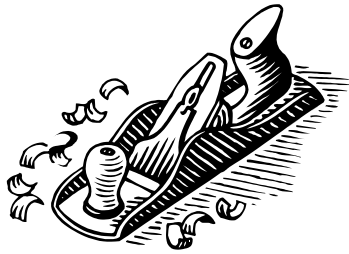
family meals, and let the meals last 30 minutes or longer. Family mealtime is a wonderful opportunity to build closeness and find out what's happening in your kids' lives.

In a November 2005 National Geographic article on the Secrets of Long Life, writer, Dan Buettner interviewed people who are over 100 years old, to find out what had kept them going. They all had something in their lives that gave them purpose, had stayed physically active, had eaten a lean diet laden with home-grown vegetables, and had maintained close, meaningful friendships.



The best way to encourage your children to adopt a new, active lifestyle is to be a positive role model - Eat nutritious foods, control portion sizes, limit treats, be physically active every day, limit sedentary pastimes. Your actions will speak louder than words and will teach your children to make health a priority. \*



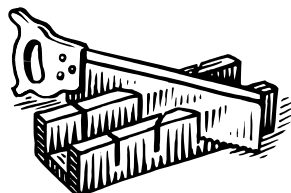
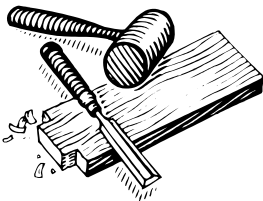


### **“For Your Information”**

To bring parents and kids together in fun, enriching activities, HYSB is offering a series of workshops we call “F.Y.I.” The programs are free and are intended for children age 10 and up, accompanied by a parent or other close relative. Local artist Joe Brien will be conducting three Saturday workshops this fall in what he calls the “lost arts”:

- **Rustic Furniture Workshop**, September 30<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm, at the Pavillion in North Canaan.
- **Spoon Carving Workshop**, October 21<sup>st</sup>, 1:00 – 4:00 pm, at the Grove in Lakeville.
- **Orienteering Field Trip** November 4<sup>th</sup>, 12:30 pm, at the power plant in Falls Village. (raindate: Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>)

***Call 824-4720 to reserve your spot!***



***Northwest Parents’ Corner***  
Is funded by a grant from  
**The Berkshire Taconic  
Foundation**

***We welcome your comments,  
suggestions, and ideas!***

***Please contact us at:***

**Housatonic Youth Service  
Bureau  
P. O. Box 356  
Falls Village, CT 06031**

**824-4720**

We offer:

- Crisis intervention & counseling
- Parent support
- Information & referrals
- Resource library
- Seminars & workshops
- Quarterly Newsletter
- Special events & guest speakers

***All services are free***

***Consultations are confidential***

***Appointments are flexible***