



Connections

October

La Crosse County
Human Services
Dept.

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2007

How to Make the Most of Your Parent/Teacher Conference

By Mary Campbell

Many parents look forward to parent/teacher conferences with great anticipation. Others, however, may have some qualms. No matter who you are, or how your child is doing, studies show that effective communication between parents and teachers is vital to student achievement and a successful school career.

According to Instructional Resource teachers, Mary Kay Johnson and Julie Melton, teachers look forward to seeing parents face-to-face at parent/teacher conferences and sharing the achievements and progress of your child. They know that your involvement in the conference can have a powerful and positive impact on your child's school success.

What can you expect at a parent/teacher conference?

When you arrive, the teacher will probably be meeting with other parents. Please feel free to knock on the door when it is time for your conference. This will help everyone to stay on schedule.

Your child's teacher may set a timer. This permits them to give each parent their full attention without watching the clock. At the table, the teacher will describe your child's schedule, learning, achievements and development in the classroom and share areas to develop.

The teachers will also ask if you have any questions or comments, and Johnson encourages parents to take them up on this. "Teachers welcome questions," says

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Mark Your Calendar!

Generalized Foster Parent Training

Tracy Puent and Kay Collister will present a generalized foster care training entitled, **"Preparedness: How to get the most out of your monthly home visit with your alternate care social worker."**

The training is scheduled for **Tuesday, November 13, 2007** from 6:00pm-8:00pm.

This training will cover the many areas your social worker focuses on with you during meetings. We will identify how to prepare for a productive home visit. We will discuss how your foster child's performance is evaluated in the home, school, and community. We will talk about how to provide critical information your social worker needs today! We will enumerate the basic elements of a productive home visit. We will spend additional time talking about numerous areas of interest and concern of foster children, biological families and foster families.

Tracy and Kay look forward to seeing you at this training!

Other Training Opportunities

Tuesday, Oct. 16, 4:00-6:00pm Psychopharmacology in Children and Adolescents

This training, presented by Dr. Jennifer Lahmann from Gundersen Lutheran, will include a general overview of medications (antidepressants, antipsychotics, mood stabilizers, etc.) and will also include updates on any medications that have come out recently. The training will be held in the Health and Human Services building basement auditorium. This is free and no registration is needed.

Upcoming Workshops at Family Resources, 1500 Green Bay St.

For more information or to register, call 784-8125. Child care may be provided.



Thursday, Oct. 25, 6:30-8:00pm Beat the Clock...Meals In Minutes!

Take the stress out of supertime! Quick nutritious meal ideas and time saving tips.

Thursday, Nov. 1, 6:30-8:00pm How Much is Enough

More isn't always better. Using the "Test of Four" find out whether or not you are overindulging your child.

Thursday, Dec. 6, 6:30-8:00pm Leaps and Bounds

A discussion about young children, developmental milestones, and signs of delay and what to do about them.

PACE Schedule - Fall 2007

12-week cycle on Wednesday evenings 5:30-8:30 pm starting on September 19th, 2007 and ending December 12th, 2007 (break on October 31st). Classes will be held in the basement auditorium of the Administrative Center (this is a different location than normal). Trainers are Sarah Koenen and Rita Wolcott.

6-week cycle on Saturdays 9:00am-3:30pm starting on October 6th, 2007 and ending November 17th, 2007 (break on October 27th). Classes will be held in the basement auditorium of the Human Services building except for the November 10th class which will be in the Administrative building basement auditorium. Two sessions will be covered each Saturday with a 30-minute lunch which is provided. Trainers are Nissa Knutson, Tracy Puent, and Kathy Lysaker.

Please call Rhonda Rude at 789-4834 to sign up for either of these PACE cycles or for make-up classes.

Mark Your Calendar!

Special Events

Saturday & Sunday, Oct. 13-14, 7:00am-5:00pm Hmong New Year Festival Veteran's Memorial Park, West Salem
Thursday, Oct. 25, 5:00-8:00pm Harvest of Thanks Roncalli Newman Center, 1732 State St.
Sunday, Oct. 28 Trick or Treat Trek UW-L Roger Harring Stadium

Fundraising event to raise money for the Physical Activity Mentoring Program for Children and Youth with Disabilities. Check-in and registration begins at 10:30am. Change into your Halloween costumes and enjoy Trick-or-Treating at 12 noon following the race! For more information see the enclosed registration form and brochure about the Physical Activity Mentoring Program.



Don't Forget...

Daylight Saving Time ends Sunday, November 4th at 2:00am. Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour before going to bed Saturday night!

Have you changed the batteries in your smoke detector lately? Start a new habit and change the batteries every time you change your clocks for Daylight Saving Time!

Welcome New Foster Parents



Please welcome Lisa and Dave Foster to the foster care community. They live in rural Mindoro with their son, two dogs and a cat. The couple has chosen to be a concurrent planning foster home and they would like to care for a girl under the age of four years. The family likes to be active outdoors and they enjoy visiting their extended family that live close by. Dave is active in the Boy Scouts as den leader and he is also a member of the volunteer fire department in his area. The family hopes to provide some stability to a child whose family is in distress and they hope to bring some permanence in a child's life in the event he/she cannot be reunified with the birth family. If you should see them at one of the up and coming trainings or foster care events please welcome them to the world of foster care.

Please welcome Ruby Bilyeu to the foster care community. Ruby lives on the south side of La Crosse with her adult grandson and they have a dog that enjoys "greeting" visitors and enjoys "escorting" them out of the home. Ruby owns and operates an in home child day care and has done so for over 15 years. She is interested in receiving younger children ages birth to 5 years into her home on an ongoing basis. She also has some interest in being an emergency foster parent for our agency. Ruby and her grandson are taking the pre service (PACE) training this fall and she is looking forward to helping those children and their families in our community that are in need. When you see her at one of the foster care events or trainings please welcome this new "Everyday Hero".

Johnson. "Parents are respected partners in education and have every right to say what's on their minds." If you are direct about your expectations the teacher can help ground them in the reality of the school day.

If there is a problem, don't wait until parent/teacher conferences to discuss it. It is best for both parties to address concerns and questions right away, if possible, and work together to create a plan of how to proceed. Teachers know that collaboration with parents is important to a child's education and want to hear your thoughts. However, in the short span of the conference, there might not be time to fully explore a concern, so you may choose to schedule a time to revisit the issue at a later date.

What is the purpose of a parent/teacher conference?

Consider the conference a summit of experts on your child. The teacher comes to the table with expertise in child development, education and classroom functioning. The parent brings more personal in-depth knowledge of the child's strengths, needs and feelings.

Yet, information you exchange with the teacher may be less significant than the message you send to your child simply by attending. "Children really do respond well when they know the parent and the school have a unified view," says Melton, "they can say to themselves, "Okay, I have these two sets of people in my life that are both supporting me."

Perhaps most importantly, think of the conference as a time to honor your child's work at school. "Take the time to look at your child's stuff in the room," suggests Karen Kuhn, a parent with children at both Midvale and Lincoln elementary schools in Madison and vice President of the PTA, "like the writing and math journals, book boxes—things you may not otherwise see." Johnson agrees, "Conferences are a great opportunity for parents to see their child's daytime environment, their learning environment. Seeing the classroom helps to put the day-to-day stories from the child in context."

When you return home, be sure to share with your child some of the things you discovered about his or her classroom and learning. "It is really important when talking about the conference with your child," says Melton, "that you share what you've learned and their accomplishments."

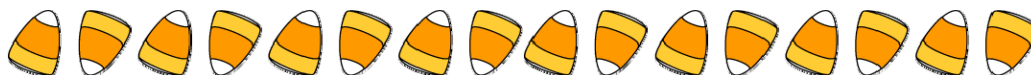
Read on for some tips on how you can make the most of this brief meeting with your child's teacher.

How to prepare for your parent teacher conference:

- **Ongoing involvement.** Take advantage of the information your child's teacher regularly sends home. Read the end-of-the-week letters. Look at your child's work. Discuss these things with your child and affirm the work he or she is doing.
- **Talk to your child.** Before the conference, ask your child if there is anything he or she would like you to see or talk about. Consider things that are going well, things that could be better, worries, sources of pride. You could even ask your child to guess what the teacher will say or show to the parents.
- **Make a list.** Write down a list of your questions, concerns, observations and other information that you think may be helpful to discuss the teacher. Remember to let the teacher know what seems to be working well for your child.
- **Schedule your conference at a time that works for you.** If you have not yet done this, call your teacher or your school for more information.

- **Transportation and translation.** Both of these services are available. Talk to your child's teacher for details about how to request them.
- **Be prompt.** The conference goes by so quickly that you'll be glad to be there for the entire time.
- **Ask for help if you want it.** Teachers have access to all kinds of resources and information about children. If you want advice or suggestions on how best to support your child, just ask.

From Family Notes August 2006



Reminders about...Hunting

Hunting season is upon us. Please remember if you have children in care you must follow all polices and have all releases signed by the birth parents or guardian.

Firearm Policy

Section HFS 56.08 (5) of the Wisconsin Administrative code regulating foster homes addresses storage and use of firearms. All guns present in the home must be locked in storage and rendered incapable of being fired when not in use. Trigger locks are recommended in addition to locked cabinets.

Ammunition must be stored under lock, separated from the firearms and not accessible to foster children. Foster parents should consider whether or not gun cabinets with glass fronts present an adequate barrier. If this type of cabinet is used, a trigger lock on each firearm is mandatory.

Also, do not forget to lock up bow hunting broad heads, and hunting knives.

These rules should be practiced daily, even while actively hunting.

Hunting

Foster children may only be permitted to use bows or firearms for hunting or target practice only if all the following conditions are met:

1. The child is at least 12 years old.
2. The child's parent or guardian has given written consent and the child's foster parent and the supervising agency approve.
3. The child has successfully completed an approved hunter education and firearm safety program under s. 29.304, Stats.
4. The child is under supervision of a responsible adult at all times.

A copy of the agreement for use of firearms or bows should be completed and in the child's file prior to any outing involving hunting or target practicing. Remember this needs to be approved by the agency.

fostering perspectives

Sponsored by the NC Division of Social Services and the NC Family and Children's Resource Program

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How to Know When to Call Your Child's Teacher

by Karen DeBord



Sometimes children give us clues to let us know that something is bothering them. Do your children:

- Complain about school or say that they are sick and they don't want to go to school?
- Whine, cry, or act unusually cranky before school?
- Say they have no friends at school or that others tease them?

Then it might be time to touch base with the teacher. It is also good to tell the teacher when there are changes happening at home. This helps the teacher know that there is something going on that may distract the child. Send a short note if:

- You are going out of town for a few days.
- Something at home changes, whether it's a birth or a death in the family, a separation, or any other stressful event.
- Your child was up late or seems to be getting sick.

You are your child's best spokesperson

Sometimes children and teens don't really know themselves what is wrong or what to do about their feelings. And when you ask, "How was your day?" they end the conversation quickly with "Fine." How can you find out how their day went or get them to talk to you?

- Ask questions that do not have simple "yes" and "no" answers.
- Ask about something specific: Who did you eat lunch with? Who did you play with outside? Did you have music class? Did anything funny happen today?
- Take a few quiet minutes just before bedtime to tell your child how proud you are of him or her.

Karen DeBord is a child development specialist with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension.

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Three Fun Ways to Get Slimed !!!

1. Flubber Slime

Materials:

1/2 cup of Elmer's white glue

1/2 cup of liquid starch (get this in the laundry aisle)

Instructions:

In a large bowl, stir together the glue and the liquid starch until the mixture comes together in a wet clump. Turn the mixture out onto the counter and kneed until smooth, 10 to 15 minutes (you'll need to pat your hands and the counter dry a few times as you do this).

Why it works:

Borax, an ingredient in liquid starch, combines with glue for a chemical reaction that polymerizes--links together--the sticky chains of glue molecules. (Picture adding a handful of magnets to a bucket of paper-clip chains.) A classic putty.

2. Oobleck Slime

Materials:

1 cup of cornstarch, plus about a teaspoon more

1/2 cup of water

Instructions:

In a large bowl stir together 1 cup of cornstarch with the water. The Oobleck should fall in a thick ribbon when you lift the spoon. If the mixture seems too dry, add water, a few drops at a time; if the mixture seems too wet, add cornstarch, 1/4 teaspoon at a time.

Why it works:

Stir cornstarch into water and the solid particles will stay suspended in the liquid without actually dissolving. The result is called a non-Newtonian fluid--that is, one that sometimes behaves like a liquid and sometimes like a solid, depending on how much pressure it's under (think quicksand).

3. Psyllly Slime

Materials:

2 teaspoons of Original Metamucil Fiber Supplement ("Course Milled")

1 cup of water

Instructions:

In a plastic jar with a tight lid, have your child shake together the Metamucil and water for 1 minute. Pour the mixture into a small saucepan, bring to a boil over medium heat, and cook, stirring constantly, for 3 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and stir occasionally as it cools.

Why it works:

Metamucil is made from psyllium husks, which when immersed in a liquid, are capable of absorbing more than 10 times their volume. What you end up with is a mucilanginous gel (think Jell-O).

Halloween Word Search

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

candy
fun
ghosts
goblins

haunted
jack-o-lantern
pumpkin

safety
treat
trick
witches



From www.wondertime.go.com

Connections



LA CROSSE COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES
300 4TH SREET NORTH
LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN 54601

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Pass the word on!

Do you know anyone who's interested in being a foster parent? Orientation sessions for those who'd like to learn more about the program are held the first Monday of every month from 6:00 - 7:00PM. Those interested in attending should call Rhonda Rude at 789-4834 to sign up.

Is there anything you'd like to contribute to our newsletter?

Please send it to:
Attn: Sharon McHugh
La Crosse County Human Services
300 N. 4th St.
La Crosse, WI 54601
mchugh.sharon@co.la-crosse.wi.us
(608) 785-6056

We welcome any feedback or suggestions you may have!



Foster Care & Adoption
Resource Center

Looking for information on foster care or adoption? The Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center provides the following services:

- Resource lending library
- Links to training opportunities and resources
- *Fostering Across Wisconsin* quarterly newsletter

Visit their webpage at www.wifostercareandadoption.org or contact them at their toll free number 1-800-947-8074 .