

Helping Boys & Girls Learn

Vol 9 - Issue 3HS

Parenting for Success in High School

National Women's History Month

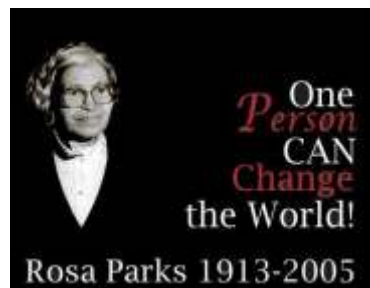
As your daughter thinks about what her future holds in store, she has more opportunities available to her than ever before in history. She can truly be anything she dreams of being. A good education and support from the people who love her will be her ticket to places girls in generations before her never had the chance to go! Begin early to help her see the world of possibilities that is waiting for her.

Tell her stories about the women in her family - grandma and great-grandma, other relatives and friends - tell her about the interesting things they did, places they traveled.

During March, spend time with women, friends and family, who live near by. Invite them for lunch or dinner. Talk about what it was like to be a girl when they were your daughter's age and share pictures of themselves when they were her age. Share thoughts about what girls were expected to be and do when they were growing up.

Visit the Women's Hall of Fame website (www.greatwomen.org) and learn about a few of the women who have been inducted, such as:

Susan B. Anthony
Clara Barton
Maya Angelou
Pearl Buck
Shirley Chisolm
Helen Keller
Rosa Parks



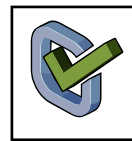
What made each woman special? Did these women start out in life planning to be women the world would honor? Maybe they started out like your daughter - special to her parents, family and friends, with a destiny no one could see in her future. It's never too early to help your daughter understand and dream about the possibilities!



BRAIN FACTS



There is a gender difference in color blindness. Most color blindness occurs in males – and most often means that they cannot tell the difference between many reds and greens. This would mean your son may not be able to tell when a stop light is red or green unless he knows that red is on the top and green is on the bottom!



Check This Out

Resources for Parents

365 Ways To Love Your Child by Alex Parker

This book includes tips, guidelines, reminders, and rules to live by which will help parents strengthen their relationship with their children, and create an open, loving environment in their home. Tried and true methods from hundreds of families, 365 Ways To Love Your Child offers a bit of wisdom for every day of the year. Some of the short, sweet, and often humorous suggestions included are:

- When your child is "going through a stage," whatever you do, don't tell him or her
- It is better to provide children with encouragement than evaluation
- When you say hurtful things to your child, you not only hurt him/her, you teach him/her to be hurtful
- Don't try to win arguments. Try to solve problems
- Choose your battles carefully
- Don't sweat the little stuff

Getting Kids Reading...

How can we get our reluctant readers – predominately boys – to read willingly? To see a boy immersed in a book, fingers gripping the pages, eyes widening as he is taken off guard, grimacing with surprise and horror at the text – wouldn't it be wonderful if all boys (and girls) could experience the thrill of reading?

What might you consider adding to your home library to be more inclusive of boys' interests and needs as readers? Use the following checklist to see if you've got a variety of reading materials available and remember to use your public library. Think “non-traditional!”

- Both fiction and non-fiction
- Graphic novels, comics
- Music lyrics
- Texts with pop-culture appeal like reconstructed stories from sports, TV or movies
- Books that reflect images of the kids themselves.
- Literature that exposes kids to strong male or female role models who embody positive character assets.
- Books in a series to get kids “hooked”
- “Edgy” books – slapstick humor, violence, unexpected
- Action-oriented, especially if they “start out with a bang.”
- Super hero themes
- Technical, “how-to” manuals
- Magazines of high-interest (ie. video game strategy magazines)
- Newspapers
- Sports cards

Becoming Independent...

When we make presentations to parents on how boys and girls grow and learn differently, we ask parents to raise their hand if they are willing to admit that they have ever found themselves running to the local WalMart or Target store at eight p.m. on Sunday night for supplies for a child's school project due Monday. We always get a lot of sheepish parents who will willingly admit they've done just that, some more than once.

The same parents will also admit that they want their children to learn how to be responsible for themselves and their school work, especially parents of kids who are getting ready to go off to college!



All parents want their kids to grow to be independent and successful. As a parent, step back and really think about what you value in the adults you respect. You will probably realize that the ability to solve problems is one of the key traits that you look for in mature adults.

Parents need to keep that in mind. Any parent hates to see their kids have a hard time and suffer, but if they can help them learn to solve problems — rather than taking care of everything for them — they are giving them a great gift and preparing them for college and life.



Issues in Adolescent Development

During adolescence, the brain is growing and development at a rapid pace. Here's one area of development that can affect your high school age boys and girls..

Cerebellum – The cerebellum, larger in the male brain, was once believed to be mainly involved in the coordination of our muscles, making us graceful dancers and good athletes. But research has shown is that it's also involved in coordination of our thinking, our “mental muscles.” Adolescents might be described as going through a period of mental clumsiness (along with their obvious periods of physical clumsiness). The cerebellum seems to have the ability to smooth out the complicated social life of adolescents and help them navigate their world smoothly and gracefully instead of constantly tripping over themselves. Physical activity is believed to influence development of the cerebellum.

And this means—for healthy development of the teen brain, including the cerebellum, activity is important. Today's students are less active overall—they are sedentary while watching TV, playing video games, talking on their cell phones—and not doing as much “playing.” There is less recess, fewer hours of structured physical education classes, and fewer students walk to and from school. Bringing more movement into your child's life will help both boys and girls whose brains, including the cerebellum, are changing a lot during this period of life.



An example from a teacher: While working with a boys school, grades 7 through 12, we spent a day observing classes, including watching the students do a marching demonstration for Grandparents Day. The teacher in charge of the ROTC program shared his frustration that the middle school and freshman boys especially had a really hard time learning to march in formation. “They just can't seem to get their feet going the right ways!”

He was blaming himself for not providing the right instruction to help them “get it.” After better understanding adolescent brain development, he realized that many of the boys in the middle school and lower high school grades were simply suffering from adolescent clumsiness—he could see that it was a developmental stage.

He was doing his best, and the boys were doing their best, but their bodies and brains were just not quite in synch with each other yet. His increased patience helped the students be less stressed about their mistakes, which minimized as they moved through each grade and developmental stage.

The same kind of issue can be observed with students in the marching band. Not only do they have to coordinate their feet and body, but they have to play music at the same time! Development of the cerebellum during the teen years makes this a challenge for younger adolescents.

Music In Our Schools Month

This event happens the whole month of March every year. There is a yearly theme and for this year the theme is “**Music! Just Imagine...**”.

This is a good opportunity for you and your family to share some fun with music. **Check the calendars for local schools** and see who is having a concert or putting on a musical play and plan to attend - often they are free or very low cost.

Check with your local community symphony and see if they have any special programs scheduled during March. Again, they are usually inexpensive and young people can be exposed to types of music they may learn to love but with which they aren't familiar.

Watch the local newspaper for listings of **free concerts offered in your community**. Many local churches and other organizations have free or inexpensive musical events throughout the year.

If members of your family play an instrument or like to sing, **have a family concert**. Let your kids design a program, set up some healthy snacks, and have a family music afternoon or evening.

Invite some of your child's friends and include them in the fun!



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***The Burn Journals* by Brent Runyon**

In this fast-moving and excruciatingly true story of a fourteen-year-old burn victim, Brent struggles to recover from his self-inflicted burns and psychological depression.

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***Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger**

Holden Caulfield narrates the story of a couple of days in his sixteen-year-old life, just after he's been expelled from prep school. His constant wry observations about what he encounters, from teachers to phonies (the two of course are not mutually exclusive) capture the essence of the eternal teenage experience of alienation.

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***The Book of Lost Things: a Novel* by John Connolly**

After the death of his mother, David retreats to his attic bedroom, where the books on his shelf begin whispering to him, dragging him into another world.

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***The Glass Castle* by Jeanette Walls**

The successful gossip columnist, who “made it” against all odds, shares her astonishing memoir of a childhood lived in a seriously dysfunctional, but uniquely vibrant family. Alex Awards 2006

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***Triangle: A Novel* by Katherine Weber**

The death of the last survivor of the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist fire raises questions about the event for her granddaughter and ultimately reveals long-hidden secrets in this historical fiction account.

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***The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison**

A young Black girl yearns for beautiful blue eyes like the little white girls she sees in this Nobel Prize-winning author's novel.

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