

Connect With Other Parents to Share...Support....Network

Parenting is not an easy job! Most parents draw their skills from their own experience being parented along with “on the job” training. Unlike teachers, lawyers, or even lifeguards, there are no required courses parents need to take in order to earn certification. So where can you find answers to those difficult questions parents face as they raise their children?

Often parents feel like they are “the only ones” dealing with a specific problem or issue. Most often that is not the case. While your parenting experience is unique to you and your child, there are many others who have faced the same issues that you are facing...and often they live right in your neighborhood. Research shows that parents support their children more effectively when they are not isolated. When they share with other parents, more often than not they find many more commonalities in their parenting techniques. The goal is to help find practical ways to support and be a positive influence for one another.

It takes a village to raise a child, but where do you find that village? Here are some practical ways to develop your own parent network of support:

Parenting Power Tips:

- Start in your own home! Make sure all adults in the home are in agreement about expectations and consequences regarding underage alcohol, tobacco and other drug use and each adult takes responsibility for communicating these important messages to the child. When a child receives consistent messages from all adults, they more likely to make healthy choices about substance use.
- Agree together as parents to let your child experience the natural family, school and community consequences of their actions. Experiencing consequences teaches responsibility and causes a child to think before acting in the future.
- Share your parenting successes, challenges and struggles with trusted friends and extended family. Support one another by working together toward solutions.
- Join the PTSA, Home and School, Booster Club or some other parent organization at your child’s school. It is a great way to learn what is happening at school and become an active part of the community.
- Contact other parents. Use your school directory to call (yes, call) parents of your child’s friends. When your child will be involved in an activity that you will not be attending, make contact with an adult who will be there. Don’t be afraid to ask questions. This is *your* child and you have the right and responsibility to make sure they are in a safe situation. If you don’t feel comfortable with a situation or activity, don’t allow them to attend. It is okay to say “no”.
- Visit school when you can. Concerts, open house, information nights. We all are tired at the end of the day, but these activities are the perfect place to meet other parents in your community. (and it lets your child know that his/her school activities are important to you)
- Stay connected to your community and with your child’s activities. Meet parents of other children involved in your child’s activities. You share more experiences than you realize. These parents are a great resource in your parenting toolbox.
- Social Media. It’s important to monitor your child’s activity on social media sites and phone activity (texts and apps). This allows you to stay connected to your child’s world and keep him/her safe. Parents can use also social media as a way to network with other parents. An email or a private message is a great way to get information—and you can send them when it’s convenient for you.
- Everyone has struggles—no family is perfect. Don’t let the fear of “stigma” regarding your situation stop you from reaching out for help or support. Our most important goal is to make sure our children are safe and healthy. What other’s think about us is not important. Use [local resources](#) to find support.

Watch for the
December newsletter

www.ThePowerofChoice.info/newsletters



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A project of 360 Youth Services, Naperville School District 203, Indian Prairie School District 204, Naperville Police Department, Linden Oaks of Edward, DuPage County Health Department, KidsMatter, Gateway Foundation Alcohol & Drug Treatment, Aurora Police Department and 203 & 204 parents. Funded in part by IL Department of Human Services and City of Naperville.