

Fall 2017 Third Grade Level Parent Meeting
September 25, 2018
Dr. Allan Gold, Psychologist

INTRODUCTION AND AGENDA:

Purposes of Grade Level Parent Meetings:

- Parenting in 21st century is the most difficult job. We at school and parents have to be partners. This is a new experience for a lot of you.
- Kids change quickly and it is important to net work with other parents, to get comfortable with your children's friends' families, and to share information as they get older and more independent. In Tiburon, we are a close knit community.

Agenda:

- 1) Introduction of parents
- 2) Handouts: Categorized: a) vision of REED District Graduate (goals by the end of middle school). Profile of 3rd graders aspects. Developmental assets and life skills. Suggestions for handling various situations, such as behavior, self-esteem. Homework and timeouts. Positive parental suggestions and things not to do. Respect. Courageous parenting. How not to be an enabler. How not to talk to your kids. Technology issues including addictions.
- 3) Changes in Our 3rd Graders since last year: Observations by parents:
 - Want more independence
 - More capable (more schoolwork)
 - More defiant
 - More private
 - More easily embarrassed
 - More aware (e.g. World events)
 - More anxious
 - More competitive
 - More questioning
 - Peers have increased influence
 - Fairness is very important
 - More physically able

➔ Dr. Gold: "most of these are typical of 8-9 year old kids but some were more common in older students, such as defiance and awareness of world events."

In order to make sense of these observations and organize them, we consider five areas of child development

5 areas of development: Physical, Cognitive, Social, Emotional, Moral Development

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT:

- More physically able and want to prove themselves
- Parents should capitalize on that by making sure that children have chores or “home responsibilities.”
 - They owe it to you. If your kids don't have home responsibilities, DO IT. 8yr olds still like to please their parents.
 - Examples: Set table, take out garbage, take dishes from table, prep dinner, laundry, unloading dishwasher, vacuum.
 - Children are old enough to have allowances and to learn about money, but an allowance shouldn't be tied to their home responsibilities. An allowance can be used to teach children to save, to donate to charity, and to use money for their own wishes (e.g. candy, toys, games). So if they get \$6 a week, 1/3 should be saved for a long term purchase, 1/3 go to charity, and they can spend 1/3 or save it to buy something for themselves that is more expensive. It is ok to pay children for extra work, such as washing the car or mowing the lawn, but not for expected home responsibilities.
- They are more able to participate in organized sports, as they are more physically capable and can understand rules, but watch out of their becoming overly competitive and judging themselves entirely on their physical prowess or winning or losing.

COGNITIVE:

- There is a big change in how kids think from age 5 to 7. They go from being very egocentric and not aware to being much more aware of themselves and others. They are now able to understand rules. Vocabulary is growing as are their interests and knowledge. Dinnertime conversations get more interesting.
 - ➔ Because there is much more awareness of each other, there is much more comparing and ranking and competitiveness)
 - ➔ They are more easily embarrassed
- Fashion consciousness
- Being aware of world events. Do you hide what is going on or manage that? In particular, when kids are exposed to scary things, parents need to be the mediator or buffer. Kids don't have that sense of perspective or probability. They don't understand these events don't happen very often or are very far away. These days kids hear what is going on politically, so parents may need to be ready to explain what they are hearing. This leads to a significant understanding:

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- **VALUES ARE VERY IMPORTANT NOW**

- Kids this age want to understand reasoning. You have to be prepared and think about your own values about these issues. If you are caught unprepared, you don't know what to say. Kids have special knack of bringing out unresolved issues themselves. (e.g. if you catch kids watching pornography or violence). Dr. Gold wants to prepare parents, because it will happen pretty quickly. Take the time to think about what you really don't like about certain activities and be able to explain your values to your children. This can range from how they spend their time, to respect, lying, independence, trust, etc.
- If other kids come over and are disrespectful to you, you have every right to express your values and then send them home if they don't/can't comply with your values..

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT:

Social development becomes increasingly complex at this age. Some social issues to consider:

- The friendship triangle (when two kids are friends and another enters the equation and disrupts relationship). They have to figure out whom they want to be friends with. → That is where parents can help kids with values.
- **Parental roles: Manager and/or Consultant:** Managers tell people what to do. Up to this time parents manage most of what their kids do. Consultants help solve problems and are good listeners. They try to help their clients develop ideas to solve problems on their own. This role for parents is particularly applicable to the social realm. Their friend problems not your problems. By being good listeners and asking really good questions helping brainstorm possible interventions, you can help them become more independent and able to solve their own problems.
- The more you can establish your kids' sharing information with you, the better. You want them to be able to come to you to share difficult information with you without feeling criticized or judged.
- You can always say there are people at school that can help solve these problems (Teacher and Dr. Gold – kids can reach out / parents).
- **TRUST** is an increasingly important value and issue in children's social life – trust of friends and your trust in them. You have to give kids this age you need to give some freedom but when they make a mistake and lose your trust, you can reestablish some limitations.
- You want them to start thinking of what makes a good friend. **CONSISTENCY.** If a friend is great as a playdate at home and ignore them at school, or nice one day and mean another, then they are not being consistent friends.

- IN GENERAL, WHEN HELPING YOUR CHILD, ERR ON THE SIDE OF BEING A GOOD LISTENER, WITHOUT IMMEDIATELY TRYING TO TELL THEM WHAT TO DO..
- Hard vs. Soft feelings. Hard feeling is anger (Often we respond to first – person either fights back or close ears). We get much further if we identify what is the softer feeling (e.g. hurt, confusion, anxiety, worry, disappointment). We can teach them to identify those feelings and express them to other kids, or you. Parents can learn to do the same thing and they'll be more successful at getting their kids to listen and understand.
- Anytime they are exposed to something you think might be inappropriate, scary, for older kids, you can ask them what they heard and what they think about it. They are not naïve very long. You can correct any misinformation, give them a **little** more information and if they want to know more, they'll ask.
- You don't want to lecture them. Instead ask kids about topics and if they show interest in topic, then you can engage them.

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

- Kids at this age are much better able to manage their emotions (anger, attention). That doesn't mean they might not have a melt down, but they can control themselves, particularly at school, most of the time.
- Dr. Gold sees more stress and anxiety in kids and it is appearing in younger and younger children. This stems from competitiveness, comparison, worry). It gets really bad in middle school.
- How do we keep them less anxious? Talk about being resilient and how to bounce back.
- If kids experience anxiety, what is really difficult is when it turns to something kids can't control
- Stress and Anxiety → Most difficult of what kids experience
- WORK ON A GROWTH MINDSET (versus comparison mindset)
 - COMPARE YOURSELF WITH YOURSELF
 - Build perspective and have them realize life isn't so bad
- Most anxiety comes from parents' expectations and worry and overprotectiveness.
- Ask kids how they can calm themselves from anxiety
- It is important to ask questions. Challenge their thinking. School is about learning to make mistakes.
- Techniques:
 - Know that there is someone there to support you
 - Put things in perspective – have them understand that life will throw you challenges and disappointments and frustrations, but they have to ability to overcome these and move on.
 - Give them real specific reassurances that they are loved, valued, and that you're there to help them manage their worries.

MORAL DEVELOPMENT:

- At this age, they don't do things so they don't get in trouble
- Kids this age absolutely care about fairness
- Two main issues are building trust and responsibility
- All kids lie! When kids are younger, they exaggerate stories to get attention. At this age, they lie to stay out of trouble, get out of responsibility, or blame someone else.
- It is not too early to use the word TRUST. You will have to be somewhat assured that you can trust them – and be very specific about what they need to do to earn your trust, before you grant them a privilege or request.
- What is particularly salient now is about ELECTRONICS. IT is extremely toxic.
- YOUR KIDS DO NOT NEED SMARTPHONES NOW
- Dr. Gold observes what kids post. CYBERBULLYING. It happens and starts even at Bel Aire.
- You can't trust kids to use electronics well. It's very difficult to regulate, even for adults. Whether it's a smartphone, ipad or computer → YOU NEED TO WATCH FOR AN ADDICTION PATTERN: Limit technology to no more than ½ hour on a school night. If they do not get off, with a 5 minute warning, and the ½ hour gets longer and longer, then that's a good sign that your child is heading toward addiction.
- The more they're on electronics, the less they use their imagination and creativity.
- Parents need to stay off phone. It's hard to do, but you are their role models for how much electronics is ok to use..
- Up to ½ hour of onscreen time is appropriate per day. There is less concern about TV, which can be monitored more easily.
- Kids don't have the self management skills that we do, so they need us to set limits..
- This is all part of the TRUST building aspect. Kids need to prove maturity, responsibility and trust.
- Sometimes contracts can be helpful to manage behavior.
- Kids this age do have empathy. Emphasize values of caring, empathy and compassion. What's important is the impact of their behavior on others.
- Kid needs to understand the difference between rules and moral imperatives. Rule are there to make systems work smoothly and consistently (e.g games, sports, attire, use of electronic in class). Moral imperative are basic standards for how to treat each other with kindness, compassion, and empathy.
- **RESTORATIVE PRACTICES** is a method of discipline that emphasizes the impac of behavior on others, and give kids a change to make their mistake right.

OTHER ITEMS: IT IS IMPORTANT FOR KIDS TO HAVE DOWNTIME. Schedule 1 -2 days a week of activities. It takes downtime to have time for creativity. Kids say "I'm bored". Tell kids to think about what do. Dinner time is important as it is a time for sharing.