



# Part 4:

# School Success

# Takes Teamwork

*The Basics*

## Facilitator's Guide

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*Hi!*

*As a teacher and school counselor for 20 years, I worked with children, their teachers, and their parents or guardians. I am convinced that children want to succeed and that parents and guardians do try to do a good job of raising their children. I believe that parenting is the **toughest job** there is, and yet, it is the one for which we get very little training. I want to change that.*

*Successful Parenting has been produced to accomplish that goal. "School Success Takes Teamwork: The Basics" and "School Success Takes Teamwork: Taming the Homework Monster" are part of the Successful Parenting series. Each of them comes with a facilitator's guide. Also in the series is the Heart of Parenting Package, consisting of "Self-Esteem is the Key", "Communication is Crucial", and "Discipline Makes the Difference", each of which comes with a facilitator's guide and a user's guide. There is also a workbook for parents on all three subjects of self-esteem, communication, and discipline which parallels the videos and is written on a third to fourth grade reading level. This Heart of Parenting Package is also available in Spanish, with the tapes and the user's guides in Spanish and the facilitator's guide in English.*

*We are delighted that you have selected our materials to use in your workshop or class. It is our fervent hope that you and those attending your workshop will view this video, enjoy it, discuss it, learn from it, apply what you have learned, and then tell others about it. We hope that all of the children affected by this class or workshop can be happier and have fewer problems both now and in the future.*

*We hope the materials in this series will help you and your workshop participants become even more skillful at the art of parenting.*

*Barbara Lynn Taylor*

## Notes to facilitators:

*Please use your own words, tailor the discussion to the particular group you're working with, and put lots of YOU into it. That's what will make your workshop special!*

- "Stage" directions and suggestions for your benefit will be shown in this type style.
- **Things for you to say or paraphrase will be in this type style.**
- Information will appear in this type style.

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## *What you need to conduct a workshop:*

1. The videotape-"School Success Takes Teamwork, The Basics".  
(This is copyrighted and may not be duplicated.)
2. A copy of each handout found on pages 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, and 39 in this Facilitator's Guide for each participant.  
(Please do duplicate these.)
3. A pencil for each participant.
4. This Facilitator's Guide.
5. A board and chalk or flip chart and markers may be helpful to you.
6. Energy, enthusiasm, and patience.

### *Suggested time frame for a one-hour workshop:*

- *Do Part I, "Before Viewing the Video".* 10 minutes
- *Distribute the three handouts and urge participants to record their thoughts as the workshop progresses.* 3 minutes
- *Show the video, "School Success Takes Teamwork: The Basics".* 17 minutes
- *Discuss the first two and a half minutes.* 5 minutes
- *Discuss the last 14 and a half minutes (8 sections).* 20 minutes  
*You may choose to do:*  
*all 8 sections for 2 1/2 minutes each.*  
*4 of them for 5 minutes each.*  
*2 of them for 10 minutes each.*  
*...or whatever works for you and your group!*
- *Summarize, go over "My Personal Plan", set personal goals, and make commitments.* 5 minutes

### *Suggested time frame for a two-hour workshop:*

- *Do Part I, "Before Viewing the Video".* 20 minutes
- *Distribute the three handouts and urge participants to record their thoughts as the workshop progresses.* 3 minutes
- *Show the video, "School Success Takes Teamwork: The Basics".* 17 minutes
- *Discuss the first two and a half minutes.* 10 minutes
- *Discuss the last 14 and a half minutes (8 sections).* 60 minutes  
*You may choose to do:*  
*all 8 sections for 7 1/2 minutes each.*  
*4 of them for 15 minutes each.*  
*2 of them for 30 minutes each.*  
*...or whatever works for you and your group!*
- *Summarize, go over "My Personal Plan", set personal goals, and make commitments.* 10 minutes

## *SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FACILITATOR:*

*Welcome each of your workshop participants individually, if possible. Try to find out their names and something about why they came to the workshop. You may want to survey the group either one-at-a-time, or after they gather, as to the ages, sexes, and names of their children. If they are teachers, find out what grade level they teach. That will help you personalize your comments later as you lead the discussions.*

*It is important that you know your audience and that you try to be sensitive to their levels of comprehension with respect to concepts and vocabulary. Teach to those levels.*

*You may want to set a tone of respect by saying something like, "**Before we begin, let's all agree on confidentiality in this group. For each of us to feel safe in expressing our thoughts and feelings today (tonight), we need to be assured that nothing will be repeated outside this group. Ok?"***

*As you lead the discussions, keep in mind that you want to challenge your participants to think and to relate the ideas to their own situations. You don't want to put them on the spot or ask them to reveal personal information unless they want to. Look for those outgoing, talkative members of your group. (There will always be some.) Involve them, and others will probably follow. Use the skill of linking to show the connection between a comment one participant made and one another shared. That strengthens the lesson and builds the self-esteem and confidence of the members of the group.*

*Some people are auditory learners and will "get it" from the words they hear from you, the video, and the others present. Some are visual learners, so you may want to use a blackboard or a flip chart. Some learn well from either, so they'll appreciate both techniques.*

*Remember, you don't have to answer every question that you're asked. Often it is effective to toss it back to the group. After group members have expressed ideas, be careful not to shoot them down. If you really think they're way off base, you may want to try saying something like, "Ok, could we look at it like this....?"*

*There is skill to being an effective presenter. You already have the most important qualities. Read about it and then practice. You 'll get better each time.*

*The intention of the next section, called, "Before Viewing the Video", is to stimulate interest and to encourage the viewers to watch with a purpose.*

**NOTES:**

## I. BEFORE VIEWING THE VIDEO

*Okay, you're ready. Take a deep breath. Begin the discussion.*

**You have children. Your children go to school. Sometimes they do well at school. Sometimes they have problems. You don't know what to do to help. Why should you know what to do? Just because you went to school 10 or 20 or even 30 years ago, that doesn't mean you know how to help your child be successful at school today. It's tough! You have taken a positive step by being here today (tonight). Good for you!**

**1. Just to get you thinking, can you list five things a parent should do to help a child be successful at school?**

*Possible answers:* Keep up with the work by going over papers and tests. Go to parent conferences. Sell wrapping paper and candy. (*Ha! You may have some who are cynical about that!*) Help them with homework. Be a grade parent. Be sure they have the right clothes to wear. Help them find their "stuff<sup>1</sup>". Read to them. Take them to the library.

**2. Do you know where you got those ideas?** *Possible answers:* Your own parents or relatives, books, magazines, television, teachers, or neighbors. *You should have a variety of answers here. All are ok.*

**3. Did your own parents or guardians do a good job when it came to your education? How or how not? Do you know why or why not? Who's willing to share?**

*This is a tricky one. Chances are, the ones whose parents did a good job will be willing to share. The ones whose parents didn't may or may not. It could be a good chance for them to vent or they might be too embarrassed. Don't push. If they aren't comfortable sharing, just suggest that they think about it. That will serve the purpose of helping them relate their own children to the childhood they experienced years ago.*

**4. Ok, well, what is successful? Is passing each grade being successful? Is graduating being successful? How would you define "school success"?**

*Possible answers:* School success is: passing each grade, graduating, making all A's, making all A's and B's, making all C's or above, pleasing your mom or dad, having the other kids like you, being a good athlete, getting a scholarship to a college, getting a good job before your senior year, knowing the teachers like you, knowing you're popular with those of the opposite sex, learning information that you really think is interesting, developing skills, knowing in your heart that you understood and benefited from the work in a course even if your grade doesn't show it.

**5. Can you say that you are in a partnership with your children and their teachers or are you pretty much "on the outside looking in"? Have you found any ways to participate? Why is participation important?**

*Answers will vary.*

**6. Can we name five things that make it hard to establish a partnership with teachers?**

*Possible answers:* No time to do it. Their hours don't fit my hours. Teachers seem so unapproachable (mean, distant). I don't know whose side to take. If I complain, they just defend each other. I don't think they like me. I don't think they like my child. I feel stupid around them. It feels like they're blaming me if my child isn't doing well.

**7. What experiences have you had so far with parent-teacher conferences?**

*Answers will vary.*

**8. Has there been a time when you had a major conflict with the teacher or the school? What happened?**

*Answers will vary.*

**9. Can you think of three things you could do to make the learning better for:  
your children in preschool? *Answers from the video:***

Read to your children, make sure your children get enough sleep, food, playtime, and exercise, monitor TV shows and the amount of time spent watching TV, model good language, play word games, and display good work.

**your children in elementary school? *Answers from the video:***

Read to your children or have your children read to you, monitor TV and discuss it, practice math skills in the kitchen and with money, model writing for fun, tell stories to your children and let your children tell you stories, display their good work, take field trips, and go to the library to check out books and to use the other services.

**your children in middle school? *Answers from the video:***

Understand the importance of their friends, find discreet ways to show your love and acceptance, monitor TV and video viewing, have your children do chores, make sure they eat and sleep, listen to them, stay involved at school, ask about their day, help them get what they need for research projects, and help them organize their time.

**your children in high school? *Answers from the video:***

(See suggestions for middle school plus...) Pace their freedom, plan for after graduation, show love and approval, and help them set priorities.

*Now, distribute the copies of the two handouts, "Parent Conferences From Start To Finish", and "Suggestions to Help Your Children Do Better At School". I am giving you these handouts so you don't have to write so much down during the video. They are yours to keep.*

*Now give each participant a copy of "My Personal Plan".*

**I want you to write down ideas as you view the video and during the rest of the workshop. The left column is for those things you already do well (and make sure they do write those down!) and the right column is for the things you want to try with your family. This is not "I'm good at..." and "I'm bad at...."!!! You don't have to let anyone else see yours if you don't want to.**

**As you view this video, remember, nobody does it all right! Pat yourself on the back for those things you consistently do well. If you hear a suggestion that sounds interesting and you think it could help your children, write it down and make a personal commitment to try it. You'll be helping your children and you'll feel better about yourself as a parent**

*We have placed two seconds of black screen between the sections of this videotape, so that you may stop it at various points, thus giving you some choices in the way you structure your workshop.*

*Here are some possibilities:*

1. *Play all 17 minutes at one time, then lead the discussion.*
2. *Play the first 2 1/2 minutes, stop the tape, discuss that section, then play the remaining part of the tape and discuss it.*
3. *Play the first 2 1/2 minutes, stop the tape, discuss that section, then play the remaining sections, one at a time, having discussion between.*

*Do what feels right to you.*

**So now, (relax and enjoy) or (here is) "School Success Takes Teamwork: The Basics".**

*While the video is showing, try to unobtrusively observe each workshop participant. Notice any signs of discomfort, identification, agreement, disagreement, amusement, etc. This information will be useful to you in leading the ensuing discussions.*

## **II. AFTER VIEWING THE VIDEO**

*Remind your participants that, for them to get the most out of this workshop, they must be honest with themselves. Encourage them to be open in the discussion and to participate in the activities.*

*Be sure to listen attentively and be sensitive to their comments. Encourage your participants to communicate with each other.*

*Be aware that some of the statements made in the video will elicit disagreement. That's fine. That should lead to lively, informative, meaningful discussions!*

## FROM THE FIRST TWO AND A HALF MINUTES OF THE VIDEO

### **1. What are successful students like? What did we hear in the video?**

*Possible answers:* They are relaxed and confident; they pay attention; they know where to get help; and they accept responsibility for their own learning. **Can you add any other characteristics of successful students?**

*Answers will vary.*

### **2. Who makes up the heart of the team that helps students succeed?**

*Answer:* The students, the teachers, and the parents.

*(Note: Because I served as a school counselor for eleven years, I know how vitally important school counselors are. I'm inclined to include school counselors as part of the heart of the team, but, unfortunately, in some systems, students do not have access to school counselors.)*

### **3. What do you think it means to "monitor school progress"?**

*Possible answers:* Keep up with what your child is working on for homework. Look at the daily papers. Watch for informal notes from the teachers. Look at the tests that come home. Watch for formal progress reports. Study report cards. Go to parent/teacher conferences. Call the teachers or write them a note if you feel you don't know how your child is doing. Don't wait until the end of the quarter and then get a big bad surprise!

### **4. What exactly does this mean: "Parents need to value school achievement and pass it on to their children."? How can parents do that?**

*Possible answers:* Parents need to believe that a good education is the key to a successful future. They need to pass these ideas on to their children in their words and in their actions. They need to say things like, "A good education is extremely important." or "Studying is more important than anything else you could be doing right now." or "Good grades now will make a big difference in how happy and successful you are when you grow up." Parents need to back these statements up by insisting that children attend school every day possible, by being sure children have study time every day, by not keeping kids out for social events or going shopping on weeknights, and by being there themselves to supervise and support the homework process. It's a major commitment.

## FROM THE LAST 14 1/2 MINUTES OF THE VIDEO

*If you decided to start and stop the tape, your discussion will be segmented. The following directions assume you showed it straight through. Please make the appropriate adjustments.*

*Discuss any or all of these suggestions in any order you wish. You may want to take them in chronological order. You may want to let the participants choose which ones they want to discuss. You may want to recall the participants' reactions and choose accordingly.*

## *From "Ways Parents or Guardians Can Be Involved With the School"*

### **1. What good does it do your children if you get involved in the school?**

*Possible answers:* The message is sent to the children that school is a worthwhile place. It demonstrates that the parents value the school. That attitude is passed on to the children and that affects the effort they're willing to put forth. The school itself also becomes better such as more facilities, more equipment, better organized, more attractive, etc.

### **2. What are some ways parents can help at the school?**

*Possible answers:* Shelving books in the library, doing an inventory in the library, chaperoning on field trips, bringing treats for parties, helping put on a party, making items for the teacher to use with the children, putting up bulletin boards in the classrooms or halls, relieving the teachers so they can go out to lunch, assisting at field days, sharing your career at Career Day, being a listener or buddy to a child, tutoring a child in reading or math, listening to a child read, selling items during the fundraisers, helping to beautify the school grounds, helping in the health room, helping in the computer lab, serving as a grade parent, going to PTA meetings, serving as an officer in the PTA, going to school board meetings, running for school board, and there are many more.

### **3. But, what if you work during school hours? How can you help?**

*Possible answers:* Many parents can't come to school during the day. That doesn't mean they can't get involved with the school too. They can do things at home in the evenings or on weekends such as: make items to go on bulletin boards, make food for parties, gather information or make exhibits to supplement a unit the children are studying, make a video to share with the class on something they're studying, serve on the landscape or beautification committee and work on the weekend, or assist with a "one-shot-deal" like the science fair, literature contest, Odyssey of the Mind competition, or field day. Or, just spot a need and find a creative way to fill it!

**4. How many of you have ever visited in your child's room during class?**

*Here you may want to bring up the following:*

*a.) The difficulty in being available at that time of the day.*

*Possible reasons:* Jobs, other children, or elderly relatives to care for.

*b.) How students of different ages feel about you doing that.*

*Possible answers:* The younger they are the more they love it.

Older ones may still appreciate it if you're discreet, but may not show it at the time.

*c.) What kinds of information you're likely to gain.*

*Possible answers:* What is expected of them behaviorally and academically, what their teachers are like, and how they compare academically, socially, and emotionally to their classmates. You may be able to better understand some of the things they've been telling you about the work, the teacher, or the other children. (Realize that your presence may change everyone's behavior.)

*d.) Are teachers really happy to have you there? Is it possible that they'll feel threatened and "snooped on"? Could that end up hurting your child? *Answers will vary.**

**5. If you have visited in your child's room, was it a good experience for you? For your child?**

*Listen carefully here. This may be a good time for linking the comments that are made.*

## *From "Communicate Well With Your Child's Teachers "*

- 1. The video suggested that you set a positive tone with your child's teachers early in the year. One reason given is that, "It's easier when problems come up." What do you think that means?**

*Possible answers:* When a teacher sees the good in a child and family from the beginning, his/her attitude is likely to be better if there's trouble. It will seem more like friends trying to solve a problem together than adversaries fighting it out. It's human nature to feel more kindly toward a child when the child and the parents have been pleasant.

- 2. The video said strongly that you are your child's advocate and that you shouldn't expect someone else to do it for you. Do you think teachers tell each other from year to year about special needs or medical conditions?**

*Encourage the group to discuss this. Then you may want to share the following:*  
Usually teachers do share or they see the information in the child's cumulative folder, but sometimes information falls through the cracks. As the parent, it is up to you to be absolutely positive that all school personnel who need to know do know about any special characteristics or needs that your child has. Do it in a friendly way that doesn't criticize or sound like it could be accusing them of not doing their job. That wouldn't help. You may want to preface your comments with, "You (may) (probably) already know this, but for Jennifer's sake, I just wanted to be sure." As the year progresses, if you see problems related to your child's exceptionality, you need to contact the teachers and talk about it. Remember, even though school personnel know a great deal, they are not as familiar with your situation as you are.

**3. Would you ever tell your child's teacher if you and your spouse decided to split up? What if your elderly mother came to live with you? What if your sister was killed in a car wreck? What if you or the child's other parent just got a new job? Lost a job? Decided to move to another state? What if you just found out your wife is pregnant? With twins????**

*Encourage the group to discuss this. You'll probably get some who say those kinds of things are nobody's business. Then point out that although some people might consider these quite personal, they are life situations that may have an effect on a child at school and on a child's ability to complete homework. Tell them they don't need to share every detail, but it is helpful to a teacher to be aware of what your child is going through so that the teacher can be compassionate and helpful to the child.*

**4. How do you feel when you get a call or note from the teacher that tells you your child has done something wrong?**

*Let the comments fly. Chances are, most people will say they feel that sick feeling in the pit of their stomach, kind of like when they see the police officer's light in back of their car. They feel worried, embarrassed, scared, guilty, and don't want to face it at all. Unfortunately, because of that, many people don't respond. Then the problem doesn't get fixed.*

**Come on, parents. We need to be brave. We need to be grown up. We need to "face the music" and help fix the problem. Often, it's not nearly as bad as we thought. Remember, if you have that team approach going, nobody should be under attack here. No matter how it got there, the problem exists. The problem is the enemy. So, work together to beat it.**

**5. Do you think it's okay for parents to contact teachers? At home? At school?**

*Discuss. Points to make: Some may think it's fine and others may feel reluctant to do so. Remember, the video said a problem doesn't have to be big to be important. But do find out when each teacher prefers to be contacted and how. Some like notes, and some like phone calls. Some will take calls at home and some prefer to take them at school. Try to respect their preferences.*

## *From "Parent/Teacher Conferences"*

**I know, for me, "getting ready" for a parent/teacher conference has always been changing clothes and going to the school. How's about you? Discuss.**

**The video spelled out several steps in having a successful parent/teacher conference.**

**Please take out your handout titled, "Parent/Teacher Conferences From Start to Finish".**

*Discuss this handout in as much detail as you think appropriate for your group and your time frame. You may want to replay specific parts of the video as you discuss it.*

## *From "Conflicts, Complaints, and Other Unpleasant Issues"*

1. Can you think of any complaints that you have had about your children's teachers? Please don't mention the teachers' names.

*Expect some "dumping" here. Suggest you listen patiently and link similar comments. If you don't get any comments here, offer an example of your own.*

**Conflicts, complaints, and other issues are going to come up so we need to know how to handle them.**

2. What did you think about the father going on and on, about how bad the child's teacher is, in front of the child?

*Answers will vary.*

**What effect will that have?**

It will probably confuse the child. The child won't know who to be loyal to. He will probably lose respect for the teacher. That may mean he won't try as hard and therefore won't achieve as much.

**What should the father do?**

He should listen to the child's concerns, show he understands, brainstorm what choices the child has, and then support the child when he tries those choices. If the father really believes there is a big problem with the teacher, he should go see the teacher. He should keep his negative ideas about the teacher to himself.

3. The video said, "Don't assume your children are right...or wrong." That sounds like double talk. What do you think it meant?

*Possible answer:* Parents need to check things out. There are two sides to every story. Sometimes our children do report things accurately and sometimes they don't. Sometimes we jump to their defense assuming that "our little sweethearts" will always "tell it like it is". But sometimes we are down on our kids and we jump to the assumption that they were the ones who were wrong.

**4. Have you ever had a situation where somebody went to your boss about your work and got you in trouble? Did you wish they had just come to you first?**

*Discuss. Stories -will vary. Be ready with one of your own in case nobody offers an example.*

**The next section in the video acknowledges that there will be problems with regard to school. Parents will not always be happy with what they see or hear about the teachers and the school. What is the point the author is trying to make about the superintendent, principal, and teacher?**

*Answer:* When a conflict or concern does arise, parents should go to the person who is most likely to be able to fix something. There are certain things about which you should go to the superintendent or other central office personnel; certain things about which you should go to the principal or assistant principal; and certain things about which you should go directly to the teacher.

The areas of responsibility mentioned in the video are:

Superintendent or other central office personnel:

System-wide policies, district lines, or building design or construction.

Principal or assistant principal: Class schedules, room assignment, condition of the school or grounds, bus issues, or teacher assignment.

Teacher: Homework, class seating, friendships, the child's relationship with the teacher, or the teacher's methods.

**Can you think of any other problems that could come up? Who should handle them?**

**5. Does your school have a professional school counselor or guidance counselor?**

*Answers will vary.*

**Has the counselor ever helped your child?**

*Answers will vary.*

**Are you aware of the things a counselor in a school does?**

*Possible answers:*

Counselors:

1. Work with students individually and in small groups to help them overcome problems which may be causing unhappiness and an inability to accomplish all they're capable of at school.
2. Teach classes about issues that will help them be happier and more successful as students and as adults.
3. Consult with parents, teachers, and other professionals involved in the student's life.
4. Conduct workshops for school professionals and for parents to help them be more knowledgeable about subjects relating to the students.
5. Conduct or contribute to the process required to enable a student to receive special services in the school system.
6. Advocate for the student when necessary.
7. Assist the student in plans for after high school, whether that be a career, training, or college.
8. Help with a student's course load and schedule.

**Counselors do a lot. We should take advantage of the services they provide.**

## *From "Suggestions for Your Children In Preschool"*

### **1. Why is it good to read to your preschool children?**

*Possible answers:* It makes them comfortable with books; it helps them get the sense of how language works; it shows them the richness of our language; it shows that there is a beginning, a middle, and an end to each story; it helps them see the sound-letter associations that lead to reading; it shows them that you value reading which will most likely make them value reading; it's a fun and interesting activity for parents and kids to do together; it can open up lots of discussions; and it gets them in the habit of reading.

### **2. Why is it a good idea to read books that your children have picked?**

*Possible answers:* Your child's interest may be greater and it will give the child feelings of power and control.

**Of course, it's okay to select some books yourself.**

### **3. It's been said that a balanced life is best. What activities does a parent need to balance for a preschool child?**

*Possible answers: (There may be more that are good.)* Getting exercise, sleeping, playing, being with friends, being alone, having creative time, and—watching TV???

### **4. Is television something we should be sure is included? Is it something we have to fight to limit? There will surely be different answers here! Try not to preach and do show respect for their answers.**

### **5. Yes, this is a touchy question. What about TV? Do you let your children watch it? If so, what do they watch? How do you decide what they may watch? You should get lots of different comments here.**

*Remember, there are no absolutely right or wrong answers. However, studies do show that after a minimal amount, the more TV a child watches, the less successful that child is at school.*

**6. Think back to the last day you spent with your preschool child. Did you talk to the child as you did things around the house or as you drove around town?**

*Ask for examples here.*

**When you do that, you help your child's language develop.**

**7. There are many word games parents and grandparents can play with their preschool children that will help the children's knowledge of language grow. Some games are:**

**a.) What Is It?**

Just point to something and have the child name it.

**b.) What Do We Do With It?**

Have the child tell the function of an object such as:

1. a fork-----we eat with it
2. a car ---- we ride in it
3. a refrigerator -----we keep things cold in it.

**c.) Beginning Sounds**

"Let's think of all the words we can that begin with the letter b"— bear, bunny, bat, ball, bite, bicycle, bubble gum, etc.

**d.) Rhyming Words**

"What are some words that rhyme with at?"

bat, cat, fat, hat, mat, pat, rat, sat, vat, splat, that, etc.

**e.) Opposites**

"What is the opposite of \_\_\_\_\_ ?"

Light/dark, big/small, morning/night, hard/soft,  
weak/strong, fast/slow, happy/sad, etc.

## *From "Suggestions for Your Children in Elementary School"*

- 1. Reading experts say that it is important to read to your children or have them read to you every day. Many of the reasons are the same ones listed on page 22 in the preschool section. Can you think of some reasons unique to elementary age children? *Possible answers:***  
It gives them the chance to practice and to show you what they've learned. It broadens their knowledge base.
- 2. What does the author mean when she says that this daily reading should "not be a test"? *Possible answers:*** Some parents read with their elementary age children only to find out how that child is progressing, and they really put the pressure on. The child may feel as if he/she is on stage and will be criticized or the parent will think less of him/her if a mistake is made. That doesn't lead to relaxed reading for enjoyment.
- 3. Television is certainly an issue during the elementary school years. What do you do at your house? Do you monitor what your children watch? What are the problems you've found with that? *Discuss this. Be prepared for some disagreements and some defensiveness.***
- 4. Is it realistic to say that you'll watch and/or discuss television shows with your children? Some people accuse today's parents of using the TV as a baby-sitter. What do you say to that? *Discuss this.***
- 5. We saw a little girl and her dad in the kitchen measuring flour as a way to learn math skills. Have you found other ways to help your children practice math skills and to see that math really is used in everyday life? *Possible answers:*** Setting the table, dividing food such as cookies, measuring liquids, figuring distances on the highway, helping to figure out your checkbook, and paying money and getting change. Math is also used in sports like baseball (statistics, batting averages, etc.) or football (statistics, how much is left for the first down, etc.), and there are many, many more.

**6. What do you do with your child's good work?** *There may be many good contributions here or displaying items on the refrigerator may be all they can come up with. Encourage sharing of ideas as long as the idea is to compliment the child for a job well-done.*

**7. What did you think of the suggestion that we take our children on field trips? Do you have any problems with that? (Time, energy, money, etc.) Have you done it before? Where did you go? Do you have any ideas for places in or near your community that you could take your children?**  
*Hopefully, this discussion -will generate some common concerns, some ways to overcome them, and sharing of some good ideas of where to go.*

**8. Is it realistic to think that parents will take time after a field trip to have their children do some activity like drawing a picture of it, acting it out, writing about it, or discussing it? Do you see value in doing those things? Would you ask your family to do them? Discuss.**

**9. Can you find the time to take your children to the public library to check out books? Discuss.**

## *From "Suggestions for Your Children in Middle School"*

**1. Has your middle school child ever demonstrated to you that peers are more important than you are? What happened? How did you feel? Be prepared to "prime the pump" here with a story of your own just in case they're not ready to share. Chances are, they will, after a while.**  
*Empathize.*

**It's normal, but it hurts. And it's frustrating. And it can make us angry. And all that's normal, too.**

**2. I've heard some people say that once a child reaches middle school, they don't want to be praised or hugged or gushed over. What do you think about that?**

*Accept all comments. Try to lead them to this idea:* Even middle school kids need to know that they are loved and appreciated. It's the time and method you choose that matters. They probably won't appreciate a big display in front of their friends.

**3. Middle school kids can look very grown up. At times they can even act very grown up. Should they be allowed to watch grown up TV shows and videos?**

*Discuss.* The experts say "No." What do you say?

**Have you ever tried to enforce that? How? What happened?**

**4. What experiences have you had in having your middle school child do chores? Share successes and frustrations. Emphasize that doing chores helps with being responsible and that carries over to school.**

*Discuss the phrase "insist on a quality job".*

**5. The video said, "We should be sure that our children get enough sleep and nourishing meals." Is that one of those "easier said than done" things? Discuss the difficulties of making sure children sleep and that they don't fill up on junk food.**

**6. One of the hardest things for us parents to do is to listen to our children. We want to preach, argue, complain, moralize or whatever. A very important way for us to help our children succeed in school is to learn to listen to their concerns objectively.**

*You may want to do some role plays here showing the right and wrong ways to listen to our children. You'll find help for that in part two of Successful Parenting, "Communication Is Crucial".*

**7. You don't have to share this, but think to yourself, if you have middle school children, do you know the names of each of your child's teachers, the courses they are taking, and when each course is taught? If you don't know at least that much, you're probably not keeping up with your child's schooling.**

**Find out. It will show you care. It will also allow you to ask specific questions of your child. It will help you know what your child's day is like. Then you can be more understanding.**

**8. Some parents ignore it when a teacher or school administrator calls them or writes them a note. Why do you think they do that?**

*Possible answers:* They never get the phone message or the note. The child says the problem never happened and the parent believes the child. The child admits the problem and says it won't happen again, so the parent drops it. The parent tries, but can't get the teacher. The parent's job prevents him/her from answering. The parent is too busy with other children. The parent just does not want to hear anything bad about the child. The parent is overwhelmed with problems and can't handle one more.

**9. Teachers often assign projects that require getting to the library. What are some of the ways you could get your middle school children to the library?**

*Possible answers:* Drive them yourself. Ask a classmate's parent or other relative to drive them. Have them take a city bus. *Can your group come up with any others?*

## *From "Suggestions for Your Children In High School"*

1. Do you think that when our children enter high school we can assume that they have all the characteristics and skills of a mature, responsible, and organized student?

*Discuss. Ask for examples.*

**It would be nice, but maybe they don't. So, be sure you know your child, and if the suggestions given for middle school still apply, do them.**

2. How old was your child when you first let him/her:

- a.) go outside without you?
- b.) walk to a friend's house?
- c.) spend the night somewhere away from you?
- d.) ride a bike out of your sight?
- e.) go into a store alone?
- f.) cross a busy street?
- g.) ride in a car with a teenage driver?
- h.) stay out past midnight?
- i.) drive the family car?
- j.) make his/her own decisions? About what?

3. Any other milestones you can remember?

4. On what did you base your decisions? How did you know it was time?

*Discuss.*

5. Those are all steps toward independence. Will your child be ready for independence at 18? Sooner? Will you be ready for your child to be independent?

*Discuss.*

**6. Remember when your child proudly told you of plans to be a teacher, firefighter, pilot, nurse, or whatever? Parents typically have been thinking about what their child would "be" since the day he/she was born. But, often parents don't do anything about plans soon enough. Often, parents aren't realistic about what would be right for each child. There are many honorable and interesting jobs that can provide a comfortable living. The important thing is to match the child to the right job. High school graduation is vital for almost every job. Past that, there are many choices. For some, the high school diploma is sufficient. Then the child needs to find a job. For some, an apprenticeship is required. Many find the military a good choice right after high school. For some, technical college is the way. For others, a junior college will suffice. Some will go on to four years of college. Some will go on to graduate school for master's degrees and even beyond for Ph.D.'s, medical degrees, law degrees, and so forth.**

**How do you know what's right for your child?**

*Possible answers:* Talk with your child, look at your child's grades for strengths and weakness, and talk with the teachers and professional school counselors.

**7. When do you think parents should start talking with their child about careers?**

*Discuss.*

**8. What are appropriate ways to show your high school students your love?**

*Possible answers:* Tell them in words, pat them on the back, leave them a note, hug them (if they're comfortable with that), wink at them, brag about them to others so they hear it, and so forth.

### III. CONCLUSION

- 1. Now we have reviewed (some of, many of, or all of) the suggestions and you have written down some notes about you and your children on "My Personal Plan".**
- 2. First look on the left side of your paper entitled, "Things I Already Do Well". For every item you listed, congratulate yourself.**
- 3. Now look on the right side at the list of ideas you are going to try. None of us can make lots of changes all at once, so take a moment to prioritize your list.**
- 4. Put a number 1 next to the one you think is most important. Then rank the rest by numbering them 2, 3, 4, etc. Jot down the name of your child that you think especially needs each idea.**
- 5. Plan to work on one new goal each week. Are you willing to make a commitment to yourself tonight? (Pause) Would you also be willing to make a commitment to someone else in this room? (Pause) If you would, then do it now. Yes, really. It will help you to keep your promise.  
*(Give the participants a chance to promise to someone else that they're going to work on a specific suggestion.)***
- 6. When you get home, put your list on your refrigerator or on your bathroom mirror. Look at it every morning, decide on your goal for the day, and promise yourself to keep on trying.**

**Best wishes!**

**We hope you enjoy successful parenting!**

*You may want to suggest to your workshop participants that they purchase their own copy of the "School Success Takes Teamwork: The Basics" video so they can review it periodically, and so they can share it with the other adults in their child's life. You may also want to make your participants aware of the other tapes in the SUCCESSFUL PARENTING series: "Self-Esteem is the Key", "Communication is Crucial", "Discipline Makes the Difference", and "School Success Takes Teamwork: Taming the Homework Monster". The tapes on self-esteem, communication, and discipline are also available in Spanish. In addition to these videotapes, we have developed a workbook for parents covering self-esteem, communication, and discipline which is written on a third to fourth grade reading level. The workbook has also been recorded on audiotape.*

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*Thank you again for using this videotape and Facilitator's Guide. We hope you'll consider using other tapes, guides, and other materials in the SUCCESSFUL PARENTING series.*

*We welcome any comments, concerns, or suggestions regarding this tape, this Facilitator's Guide, or our general concept and how it worked for you. We'd also love to find out about the specific ways you've used our materials. Success stories keep us going!*

*Please do let us hear from you. Thanks!*

*Barbara Lynn Taylor*

# *SCHOOL SUCCESS TAKES TEAMWORK*

## *The Basics*

### PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES FROM START TO FINISH

## **Getting Ready for Parent/Teacher Conferences**

1. Think about your child.
2. Talk with other key people like the child's other parent or grandparents.
3. Talk with your child:
  - a.) What is your best subject? Worst subject?
  - b.) Is there anything you're upset about?
  - c.) Is there anything I should ask your teacher?
  - d.) Do you think your teacher likes you?
4. Write down a list of any information you want to share, any concerns you have, and any questions you want to ask.
5. Collect some work samples to show what concerns you.

## **Let the conference begin!**

1. Try to relax and think positively.
2. Tell your name and your relationship to the child.
3. Set a positive, relaxed, confident tone as a partner in the child's education.
4. Compliment the teacher for something he/she did or, if you can't think of anything, thank the teacher for his/her time.
5. Let the teacher talk. Listen. Take notes. Get to know your child through the teacher's eyes.
6. If your questions have not already been answered, ask them.
7. If there's time, you may want to ask some, or all, of these:
  - a.) How is my child's attitude?
  - b.) Has my child missed any classes?
  - c.) How do you measure progress in this class? Is it class participation? Homework? Projects? Tests?

## **The conference is over.**

1. Tell your child about the conference, emphasizing the positive and being direct about any problems that came up.
2. Be clear about what you're going to do and do it!
3. Act quickly on suggestions such as having vision or hearing checked.
4. Write the teacher a short note thanking him/her for the time and confirming the decisions the two of you reached.
5. Keep records of meetings, notes from teachers, test results, and report cards.
6. Follow up a few weeks later by calling, writing, or requesting another conference.

# *SCHOOL SUCCESS TAKES TEAMWORK*

## *The Basics*

### **Suggestions For Your Children In Preschool**

1. Read books to your children. Let them pick the book sometimes.
2. Balance your children's activities, making sure they get enough exercise, sleep, playtime with friends, time alone, the amount of TV you think is right, and whatever else you think is important.
3. Check on what TV shows your children are watching and only permit those that you have approved.
4. Help your children's language develop by talking about your everyday activities.
5. Play word games that will make your children think.
6. Take your children to the library and check out books.

## **Suggestions For Your Children In Elementary School**

1. Read to or have your children read to you every day. Let it be fun, and not a test.
2. Monitor what shows your children watch on TV and discuss them.
3. Help build your children's math skills using concrete objects. Have your children practice measuring and telling time.
4. Model writing notes and letters and show you enjoy it.
5. Tell your children stories and encourage them to tell you stories.
6. Display your children's good work where everyone can see it.
7. Take field trips. Later, your children can discuss it, write about it, act it out or draw pictures.
8. Take your children to the library and check out books.

## **Suggestions For Your Children In Middle School**

1. Understand that your children's peers are more important than you are right now and that's normal.
2. Find discreet ways to praise, encourage, and express your love for your children.
3. Continue to limit the TV and videos your children are watching.
4. Continue having your children do chores and insist on a quality job.
5. See that your children get enough sleep and nourishing meals.
6. Listen objectively to your children's concerns.
7. Stay involved in the school.
  - a.) know your children's teachers
  - b.) know your children's courses
  - c.) know your children's schedule
  - d.) respond if a teacher contacts you

## **Suggestions For Your Children In High School**

1. Review the suggestions for middle school and continue to do them if needed.
2. Space out freedom and responsibility so your children will be ready to be on their own by the time graduation comes.
3. Early in high school, begin to help your children make plans for after high school, making sure the choice is right for each child.
4. Continue to find ways that your children will accept to show your approval and your love.

## *My Personal Plan*

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