



December 31, 2008

Parental Wisdom – Emails

Parenting Resolutions for 2009 Do better than resolutions - change habits!

1. **Respect** your children. When they display a quality you are proud of, tell them in very specific terms.
2. **Listen** to your children. Demonstrate eye contact and active listening which builds social skills.
3. **How well do you know your child?** Ask them their favorite color, story, or what they dream about. Encourage them to share their feelings.
4. **Play and laugh more.** We love to check off things on our to-do list forgetting the most important things aren't things at all.
5. **Lower your standards.** In an achievement oriented world, this statement doesn't fit. But who's setting the standards and what's their agenda? Set your own long range goal to raise happy, healthy, well-adjusted children. That doesn't mean a perfect child but rather one that is perfectly normal.
6. **Let go.** We all struggle with protection paranoia. What you really want is to teach your kids resilience and the ability to bounce back from a mistake. You don't drown by falling in water, but by staying there.
7. **Grow with them** and encourage your family to do the same. The best thing we can learn from our children is their ability to learn new things. That means they are not the same kids they were last year. Appreciate that, recognize that, learn from that and point it out to extended family.
8. **Point out life lessons.** With the constant news reports of the economy in a tailspin, point out to your children that perhaps we were all a little too greedy. The challenges we're facing were in many ways self inflicted and need time to balance out. Talk about what it was like when you were growing up and managed to survive with so much less.
9. **Plan more adult time.** The airlines got it right - put on your oxygen mask before you put on your child's. Take time as a couple and take time as a person to take care of yourself. You'll do a better job as a parent if the world doesn't revolve around your children.
10. **Make family dinners a priority.** When speaking at a Principal's conference on getting better parent attendance at school events, I suggested that the school administrators understand the best place parents can be at night is home with their families. The schools should think out of the box on different ways to communicate and get their message out. Family dinners are one of the best ways to let the most important people in your life know that you mean it.