



Formative Parenting

Cultivating Character in Children

A Ministry of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Immaculata, Pennsylvania

Home Ways for School Days, Part 5 SPRING FEVER

Earl Hall said that "Science has never drummed up quite as effective a tranquilizing agent as a sunny spring day." Teachers face an uphill battle against the "laid back" effect of spring. Teachers need all the support that a parent can muster to keep students on track. For the benefit of the child, parents must resist the "go with the flow" temptation and, instead, resolve to remain consistent in the HOME WAYS that support student development. Until vacation (and even during vacation) school children benefit from time management, balanced activity, and regulated schedules. Until the end of time, in order to eliminate feelings of inferiority and to foster positive self-esteem, children require practices that increase a sense of industry and competence.

PRACTICE TIME MANAGEMENT.

- Organizing time is essential to success. Set realistic goals and use a timer as a periodic "on task" reminder. With young children play "beat the clock."
- Preview daily homework and establish time frames. If a child becomes blocked by frustration, switch subjects or reverse mealtime or bath time with study time.
- Make a list or a task chart. As early as possible have the child create the list and submit it for input.
- For a long-range project use a calendar to break the assignment into manageable sections. Build in time for library use and shopping for supplies.

BALANCE ACTIVITY.

Prevent overload. Balance a day with sufficient rest, school, play or unwind time, homework, family time, chores, extra-curricular interests, prayer time, bath time, etc. At present, being a student is the primary vocation obligation of a child. Sports, dance, martial arts,

and other interests are secondary. Sufficient sleep is essential to successful performance.

RETAIN SCHOOL SCHEDULES.

- **Homework** - Maintain time, place, and expectations for daily homework that were established at the opening of the school year even when your child reports that there is no homework. In the absence of an assignment, use the time for review or enrichment.
- **Bedtime** - Be consistent with curfew and bedtime rituals (bath, school clothes and materials, prayer). Establish a quieting down time 20-30 minutes before sleeptime. Eliminate TV, stereo, computer and electronic media from the bedroom or, at least, turn off all equipment. Establish a ritual for saying goodnight.
- **Chores** – Chores give a sense of belonging and ownership for the family. Assign or choose-by-lot age-appropriate tasks that help family life. Review chores periodically.
- **Mealtime** – As frequently as possible sit down at the family table for dinner. Provide

nutritious meals that provide protein, calcium and a balance of fruits, vegetables, and carbohydrates. Restrict sugar intake and fastfood. If possible, prepare lunches before bedtime so as to free time in the morning.

- TV, Surfing the Internet, IM Communication and Electronic Games – On school days limit recreational access to electronic media to an hour.

SAFEGUARD SUFFICIENT SLEEPTIME

Each child is unique. Parents are the best judge of how much sleep a particular child requires in order to be alert, pleasant, and

cooperative the next day. Generally, however, experts suggest that children of ages 6-9 require ten hours of sleep; ages 10-12 need nine hours; and teens function best with 8 to 9.5 hours nightly.

Sleep deprivation adds up over time, and it can lead to decreased attentiveness, decreased short-term memory, inconsistent performance, and delayed response time. These can cause generally bad tempers and problems in school. In young adolescents sleep deprivation might lead to stimulant use, and driving accidents. Reports suggest that more than half of "asleep-at-the-wheel" car accidents are caused by teens.

HONE INDUSTRY

Industry, or accomplishment, is the capacity to be persistent and diligent, to follow through on a task, and to create a systematic approach for problem solving and responsibilities.

Industry requires that children learn to:

- Give steady care over time to projects.
- Become goalsetters.
- Meet deadlines.
- Finish tasks.
- Plan methodic completion of long-range projects.
- Develop organizational skills.
- Set realistic time expectations.
- Plan the work and work the plan.

Parents foster industry when they:

- Affirm productivity and accomplishment.
- Encourage SELF-competition.
- Model time management & planning.
- Work side-by-side on difficult tasks.

Dr. Patricia McCormack, IHM, a former Catholic schoolteacher and catechist, is a formation education consultant, an author of several books as well as the PARENT PARTNERSHIP HANDBOOK feature of *Today's Catholic Teacher*, and director of **IHM Formative Support for Parents and Teachers**, Arlington, VA. She speaks and writes frequently on topics of child formation. *Reach her at DrPatMcCormack@aol.com.*

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