

Dr. Sosne Presentation Notes

January 12, 2010

(DVD of speech is available via Lori Day, IT Manager at St. John Fisher School)

Key Ideas

- Build effort in children
 - Knowing you put out the effort it took to do your best
 - Pair effort with agenda
 - ex. I'll call for play date if you charge my cell phone
 - Patience is a tool adults have...children do not
 - If the task you request is not completed...do not do what they asked for. Come up with alternative tasks if necessary to make up for not accomplished task (ex. you did not set the table as asked, then wash the pan before coming to dinner)
 - We do for each other what we want
- Parents stop complaining about what you have to do
 - Demonstrate a positive attitude
 - We don't all enjoy doing the laundry, but it must be done and we like the results of wearing clean clothes
 - Think "Can Do"
- Academic success is measured by effort/practice
 - Instill the value of practice
 - Show them what you practice
 - Make it real...take up a new skill and show them how you need to practice to accomplish the goal
- Create habits for your children
 - Make them helpful/productive
 - We all brush teeth after we eat dinner
 - Build good work habits
 - Routine of homework
 - Do it at agreed upon times
 - Have children notice productive things you do
- Ask children if they want to work versus "making them" do tasks you want them to at your specific timeline
 - People are more motivated if they have choice
 - They will understand the value of work
 - If they say "no," then explain why they need to do it. If they continue to say no, see note above regarding "Patience is a tool adults have"
- "Fun Fallacy"
 - If kids believe it's not fun they don't want to do it
 - ex. I like to have fun. Work is not fun. Homework is not fun. (children think this is a justified statement)
 - ex. I like fruit. Hamburgers are not fruit. I don't like hamburgers. (children would not think this is a justified statement)
- Downtime is essential for kids
 - Don't over program them with after school activities
 - Review the homework policy with the teacher (how much is expected...which is 10 min per grade level at SJF)
- Fear of Failure
 - This can motivate students, but actually undermines the motivation
 - This can lead to them just not doing what was asked

- Give choices to avoid undermining motivation
 - Builds a better work ethic
 - Teachers provide opportunities for choice regarding assignments
- Don't debate clever children
 - Have them self evaluate
 - If the assignment was to write 5-7 sentences and the child writes 5, yes...they did the work...but did they demonstrate to the teacher all that they know?
 - Be specific about expectations
 - When the class requires 10 min per grade and the 5th grade child "finishes" their homework in 10 min, what are they going to do for the next 40 min? Homework or Housework?
 - Say when asking children to do something, show them how you expect them to do it the first few times (ex. setting the table, cleaning the room)
- Praising Children
 - Homework evaluation
 - Check your child's effort and accomplishments versus just the grade they received. Was the assignment really "A" worthy?
 - "The assignment is to show the teacher what you know...have you shown them everything you know?"
 - When children come home from school, ask them "What did you get done in school today?" versus "How was school?"
 - Praise attitude, effort, habits and strategies
 - Be authentic and don't praise them for expected behaviors
 - ex. Lou Gehrig when the team congratulated him on catching an expected ground ball...he knew it was time to retire.
- Transitions
 - Enter the kids world to help them with transitions
 - State their objection before they state it
 - Reassure them they can return to the activity later
 - If no, are you sure doing X is more important than helping me?
 - If still refuse, "Fine" or make your point later or "I thought we did things for each other?"
- Using Rewards
 - Reward habits, pleasure and information
 - Link the effort to the reward
 - "Thanks for helping bring in the groceries. Why don't you pick what we will make for dinner?"
 - Don't say the reward first
 - Chores
 - Ask "What have you gotten done today?"
 - Children must work to be able to play