



District I Parenting News

Extension Nutrition Program

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The Silver Spoon Syndrome

Do your kids really understand the value of money and how hard it is to earn it? Are you concerned about your children's initiative? Do you feel as if they're ungrateful and materialistic?



Whether or not you're financially comfortable, you may worry that kids growing up in our prosperous society may not be learning the financial management skills and the values they need to succeed on their own.

Gary W. Buffone, who wrote "Choking on the Silver Spoon: Keeping Your Kids Healthy, Wealthy and Wise in a Land of Plenty" (Simplon Press, 2003), believes that too many kids are given things instead of firm loving parenting. This makes them vulnerable to what he calls the "Silver Spoon Syndrome." Symptoms include:

- * Persistent underachievement
- * Low frustration tolerance (can't stand to be told "No" or to delay gratification)
- * Expecting rewards without effort
- * Fiscal illiteracy
- * Distorted values (over- or undervaluing material wealth)

Can't tell whether your kids are demonstrating any of these? Here's a self-test from Buffone's book:

1. Do your kids throw tantrums when they don't get their way?
2. Do they give up when faced with adversity?
3. Does your child have difficulty delaying gratification?
4. Do you worry that your children's lack of self-control will hinder the development of their social skills?
5. Do you cringe when you have to say "no" to your child?
6. Do your children whine and pout until



you give in to their demands?

7. Do you give in quickly simply to avoid the bickering?
8. Have you ever given your children presents because you feel guilty for not spending enough time with them?
9. Do you try to be your children's friend instead of the parent they need?
10. Do you worry that your children won't like you?

If you say "yes" to at least four of these, it's time to take action? All of these are learned behaviors and they can be unlearned.

How do you start? By becoming what Buffone calls "Professor No." In most cases, you'll have to tell your children that you now realize you've been overindulging them. "We realize that you'll be on your own soon and you need to understand what it takes to work for what you need. We want to help you be more independent."

Will this create fireworks? Almost certainly! The older your kids are, the more likely they are to argue with you about what they "need," or "deserve" or what you "owe" them. They may also resist your attempts to "re-train" them. So here what Buffone recommends.

Start with a plan, an outline of what you are going to continue paying for and some suggestions for how kids can earn money for everything else. You'll also need a commitment to be consistent, to stick to that plan. Perhaps most important, make sure you're a good model, that your use of money demonstrates appropriate values and good fiscal management. If not, you'll also need to get your own behavior under control.

The payoff? You'll increase the chances that your kids grow up developing a sense of values. They'll know how to work. They'll learn to set and pursue goals. They won't expect you to bail them out of every little problem. And if you re-examine your values, if you spend more carefully, if you learn to differentiate between "need" and "want," you'll feel better and be better prepared for emergencies and retirement.

Source: Parenting Press March 2005



Parent-Child Activity Ideas

A Cup of Cheer



Surprise friends and neighbors with a mini- basket of blooms. In medieval Europe, May Day celebrations began with a dawn search for flowers to be used as decorations for the day's events. A modern-day May

1st custom still makes use of fresh blooms but calls for secretly leaving a flower-filled basket on a friend's or neighbor's doorstep.

Help your child create a May Day treat:

- Make an odd number of vertical cuts about 3/4 " apart down the sides of a paper cup. Number of slits will depend on size of cup.
- Knot the end of at least 2 yards of grosgrain ribbon and wedge the knot in a slit close to the cup's seam.
- Weave ribbon over and under the cup's slats, spiraling up toward the rim.
- At the of the cup, trim the ribbon if necessary and glue end to the cup to hold it in place.
- Handle: Glue together 2 10 inch lengths of matching ribbon. Glue the ends inside the cup.
- Cut rim from a second paper cup and slip it inside first cup for a liner.

Your child can fill the basket with fresh blooms as a springtime surprise for a friend or neighbor.

Toe Wiggling & Other Natural Highs



There are simple joys in the world. Make sure you get your share.

Toe Wiggling: Best done in warm sand or soft grass, but effective almost anywhere.

Variations:

- a. Someone else do the wiggling (foot massage).
- B. Use a foot roller or tennis ball to stimulate the bottom of your foots.

Water Watching: Ocean surf is best, but any stream, river, or lake will do. Watching falling rain, waterfalls, or fountains has



special joy-producing qualities.

Mountain Gazing: Get thee to a high place. Looking at the power and mass of mountains adds to the depth of life, though success need not mean getting to the top.



Sun Setting: Since the beginning of human life, watching the sun go down has been one of the most universal joys of living. Every sunset can be cause for celebration.

Sun Rising: Equally joyful but much less often experienced, a sunrise can add meaning to your day. Recognizing the warmth and opportunities brought by each sunrise can help you succeed in life.



Leaf Kicking: Every person has a basic need to walk down a path kicking leaves. Perhaps your leaf kicking deficiency is keeping you from reaching your potential.



Listening to Silence: The sounds of silence are also common joys. Don't let them fall on deaf ears. Smile when you don't hear them.

Daydreaming: Len back, relax and go

Candy Crayons



A tasty composition of salty & sweet, these candy coated pretzels take classic art supply to a new level of creativity. To make a pack, melt multiple colors of melting candy (Wilton's Candy melts) according to the package directions. Break pretzel rods in half Dip ends of each half into melted candy. Set pretzels on waxed paper to harden. For easier cleanup, wash bowls / utensils before candy hardens. When candy has set, wrap each pretzel with a colorful construction paper label bearing a simple crayon design. Hold it in place with a piece of double-sided tape.