

Parent Team LLC

Parenting Tips Newsletter

Encouraging Autonomy in Children of all Ages

April, 2010

In This Issue

New Support Group Offered

Autonomy in Preschoolers

Autonomy in School Age Children

Autonomy in Teenagers

The Parent's Club

An Educational,
Empowering Support
Group for Every Parent



New to the Green Bay Area

A support group for parents that will provide a regular stream of empowering parenting information. Facilitated by Ruth Fett, Parent Coach The Parent's Club will be a members only group.

The group will meet on the first and third Mondays of each month at Starting Point Day Care in Howard.

For more details regarding benefits of the club, cost and how to join please click on the link below.

[The Parent's Club](#)

See bottom of newsletter for an early bird coupon to save you

Greetings!

Hello and Happy Spring!

Any parenting book or expert will tell you of the importance of encouraging your child's autonomy. A sense of independence is crucial to social and educational success. A major part of our job description as parents is to help our children to gradually separate from us and be independent individuals who can function confidently on their own. The question is how much autonomy at each developmental level is appropriate and how do we as parents gently nudge them towards that independence?

Autonomy in Preschoolers

This tender age of 2-5 may be the most difficult for parents to envision letting go and encouraging independence. They are so little and it feels good to be needed. However, this is a critical stage in their development and you establish some important patterns regarding dependence and self-esteem at this age. Teaching a three year old how to dress themselves or a five year old how to tie his shoes seems like minor issues but they can make a huge difference in how confident the child feels in learning other tasks out in the real world of pre-school and kindergarten. Think of all the little things we do for our little ones that if taught could save us time, boost their self-esteem and gear them up to learn even more from the outside world. A two year old can begin to learn to dress themselves. A three year old can put on their own jacket and boots and start to learn the art of zipping. A four year old can start to work on tying shoes and packing their own backpack. All of this takes patient teaching and careful monitoring at first, but once mastered they are off to a good start for learning at school and the first steps of autonomy.

Autonomy in School Age Children

Parents often come to me concerned about the low-self esteem of their school age children. My two top recommendations are to assign them chores and give them choices whenever possible.

25% off membership fees.

Quick Links...

[Parent Team Website](#)

[Individual
Coaching](#)

[Coaching Rates](#)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Children need to be needed, just like the rest of us and though doing chores seems like a drag, it tells the child they are an intricate part of the family. Therefore it is prudent that parents assign age appropriate chores for the child. A first grader can set the table for supper, help put away groceries and learn how to sweep a floor properly. Older children can help with the laundry, wash dishes and operate a vacuum. These all help the child feel that you as their parent feel they are competent enough to handle the responsibility, this will increase their self-esteem and be a good next step in gaining autonomy.

Providing school age children with the opportunities to make choices now will help them hone this skill for use in the real world and will boost their independence. Choices you offer can be as simple as would you like a half glass of milk or a whole or would you like to wear this red jacket or the blue one. Be creative and give them as many opportunities to make decision while under your watchful eye. One parenting book even recommends you let the child choose when it is safe to cross a street, they are still holding your hand and you obviously have final say, but making that kind of choice now with your guidance will build their confidence for when they may have to do it alone later. Good decision making skills will serve them well in life and is the next step up in gaining healthy, age appropriate autonomy.

Autonomy in Teenagers

This is the home stretch, the final years of preparation for children before they become young adults and are out there in the world making decisions alone. As the parent of five teenagers I understand too clearly the struggles parents feel between wanting to hold on to their child and giving their child the correct amount of freedom at the correct time.

One major step towards encouraging your teens autonomy is to not take ownership over issues that truly belong to your teenager. Grades for example. Who's grades are they and how much energy should you as the parent invest in pushing your child to bring up their grades. It is fine to talk to your teen about the importance of grades in relation to their future and it is always wise to keep an eye on their grades. However beyond that how they do in school is up to them, you can not control how much effort they put into their school work. Let them know you notice their grades good or bad, offer to help if they want it, but truly they need to own their grades and be self-motivated to work for them.

Another example is running items to school that they forgot or running them back to school to get what they forgot to bring home. The best teacher here is natural consequences. They will learn to be more independent if they know they can not depend on mom or dad to fix every problem that comes their way. Respect their struggle whether it be with forgetting homework at school or difficulties with friends. It is

good for them to learn to solve their own problems while still having you as a safety net. When they are out in the world of college or the working world it can be a real school of hard knocks to learn responsibility and self-reliance then.

Thank you for your support of this parenting newsletter. Please e-mail any questions or comments to ruthfett@parentteamgb.com and I will respond as soon as possible.

Please remember that Parent Team LLC offers a number of services to suit your parenting needs:

*[Free presentations](#) to parenting groups

*[Individual coaching](#) in the convenience of your home

*[The Parent's Club](#)-a NEW support group starting in May

If you have questions about how to get children to listen, how to get them to cooperate or any other parenting issues, Parent Team LLC has the answers you are looking for, just pick which method works best for you.

Sincerely,

Ruth Fett

Parent Coach

Parent Team LLC

920-619-6539

ruthfett@parentteamgb.com

www.parentteamgb.com

Save 25% Early Bird Sign Up Savings for **The Parent's Club** Membership. Purchase a three month membership with The Parent Club before April 23, 2010 and save 25% off the single or couple's rate. See web site for [more information](#).

Offer Expires: April 23, 2010