



PERSPECTIVES

April/May 2013

School Issue—September 2010

Spring Opens New Avenues for Communication

Spring is the season for new growth, not just in nature, but also within the family. Your family life can grow by establishing healthy, positive communication.

Set simple rules. Encourage open communication. Everyone in the family can and should talk amongst themselves. However, one person should talk at a time; positive feedback is critical; and no “put downs” should be allowed.

Teach the niceties of social interactions.

Encourage engaged conversation by answering questions thoroughly. For example, if someone asks how your day went, a simple “OK” discourages more interaction. On the other hand, an enthusiastic response opens up communication, such as: “It went well, I completed all the preliminary work on the project, and that means that I’ll have time for family fun this weekend.”

Seek opportunities to hold conversations. Stop. Watch. Listen. Enjoy!



Opportunities for conversation are everywhere. You might talk while preparing a meal or during an extended walk.

These little “nothing” times can open the door to very meaningful talks.

Learn and do things together. Develop a habit of discussing one or two local or national news items regularly. Plan a family project together, and decide who will be responsible for which parts of its completion.

Allow others to express feelings, then dig a little deeper. When someone expresses displeasure, avoid minimizing their feelings with comments like, “You don’t mean that.” Encourage the person to explain further, then listen and discuss the issue objectively.

Cultivate family relationships. When it comes to communicating, we most frequently think of talking. However, communication is multi-layered – listening, discussing, eye contact, body language and, sometimes, just silence. Pay attention and use the elements of good communication that will be best to “grab that moment!”

If you would like to discuss family communication or other issues with a counselor, please visit

www.arborfamilycounseling.com

Tips for Nurturing Family Life

Research shows families who focus on nurturing the mind, body and spirit, raise kids who are less likely to engage in high-risk behaviors and more likely to thrive. Children and teens can nurture their minds, bodies and souls in many different ways. Here are some tips:



Nurturing the Mind

Each child is unique and grows at his or her own pace; however, the more we know about what to expect as our children grow and develop, the more we can do to be better parents.

Support academic success at home. Try these ideas: sit with your kids while they're doing homework; encourage critical thinking by asking your child questions; encourage reading for pleasure; and urge your child to engage in interests they are passionate about. Talk to your child's teacher or counselor, and stay involved in your child's school in any way possible.

Nurture mindfulness at home through meditation and other activities that require concentration.

Nurturing the Body

Support and empower kids to find physical activities that interest them, and you'll help them lay the groundwork for a healthy lifestyle throughout their lives.

Support physical activity and proper nutrition. Make it a point to have one healthy meal together each day. Start taking walks every day when you get home from work or after dinner. Strive to get eight hours of sleep every night. Focus on the small, doable things, and you'll be on your way to having a healthier family.

Move! Do something! Don't worry about the length of time. Five minutes is good; 10 minutes is better. Any amount of time you move is worthwhile.

Nurturing the Spirit

Spirituality is important for healthy, positive development. Remember: Spirituality is expressed in many ways, regardless of your family's religious tradition.

Expose your children to different expressions of spirituality through books, art and music. Discuss different faith traditions. Encourage your kids – especially tweens and teens – to take part in positive groups and organizations that nurture spiritual commitments.

Model spiritual and religious beliefs that are important to you, and set a good example. Actions often speak louder than words, and your children learn a great deal by observing your actions.

Regularly engage older children and teens in discussion about spiritual topics, but don't force the issue. Be open to different interpretations of your faith tradition or your child's interest in a tradition other than your own. Ask questions to clarify, and don't judge what he or she says.

Excerpts from www.parentfurther.com/resources/enewsletter/10-tips-nurturing-mind-body-and-spirit

For more stories about parenting and family life, please visit www.arborfamilycounseling.com

WHAT DOES ARBOR EAP HAVE FOR YOU?

Professional, caring counselors who offer one-on-one confidential counseling for you and your family members for:

- Stress Solutions
- Conflict Resolution
- Time Management
- School/Work Issues
- Marriage and Family

Initial visits are free —
paid for by your employer or school system.

CALL TODAY!

11605 Arbor Street, Suite 106 | Omaha, NE 68144 | (402) 330-0960 | (800) 922-7379

www.arborfamilycounseling.com



ARBOR FAMILY COUNSELING

