



Formative Parenting

Cultivating Character in Children

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

Parent Guide for Fostering School Success – Part 6 INDUSTRY PRACTICES

Dear Parent,

Self-esteem, like happiness, is a by product of our choices and behaviors. Self-esteem is my evaluation of my perception of myself. It is not created in a vacuum. To the contrary, it is dependent upon my interactions, my efforts, and my accomplishments. As I reflect on my actions and inactions, I place a judgment or evaluation on those events. To the extent that I respect, admire, or approve of the results my self-esteem grows in a positive direction. Consequently, the development of a sense of industry is crucial to positive self-esteem.

Forming habits of **INDUSTRY** is the primary identity formation work of the elementary school years. To develop a sense of industry a child needs to create a pattern of following through on expectations, sticking to a project until it is finished, giving steady care over time to responsibilities, being diligent and applying a systematic approach to tasks and responsibilities. An industrious child creates a history of accomplishment and closure which leads him to have confidence in his ability to be successfully productive with future challenges. Success begets success! When a child reflects on the results of her steady effort, she is pleased and that evaluation contributes to positive self-esteem. **METHOD** becomes a basic life strength in her and **COMPETENCE** a life virtue. In contrast, a child with an under-developed sense of industry feels inferior and inadequate. She often feels defeated before beginning a task and doomed to mediocrity. Inferiority leads a child to settle for less, to be painfully timid, fearful or shy, or to show exaggerated aggressiveness towards others. School achievement and social interaction parallel a child's progress toward industry.

You can empower your child to grow in industry at school and at home in a variety of ways. It has been said that failure to plan is planning to fail! Instill the maxim: "Plan your work and work your plan." Teach your child to give steady care to tasks and long-range projects, to meet deadlines, to finish whatever she starts, and to use calendars, check-lists or chore charts to learn time management skills. Work side-by-side with your child on a project of many steps and model industry to him.

This newsletter offers parent-suggested practices that develop a child's sense of **INDUSTRY at School**. Consider which practices describe your home environment as a *pattern*, under *usual*, *repeated circumstances*. May the results speak words of wisdom for you, affirm your parenting style, and serve as a guide to determine how to best provide for the ongoing identity formation and self-esteem development of your child.

Parent Practices that Develop a Child's Sense of INDUSTRY AT SCHOOL

The most common parent suggestions, offered by 93 parents of "successful" children include but are not limited to the following parenting practices, listed alphabetically:

AVOID PROCRASTINATION: Provide your child with an organizer-type book to keep track of upcoming events, projects, homework, etc. Teach him how to maintain a log, a "to do" list, or a calendar book. Help him to develop a systematic approach to task completion. If your school sends home a regular communication, i.e., weekly envelope, monthly newsletter, grade read-outs, etc., read the material together and make calendar notations of events. Teach your child to avoid procrastination; to look

ahead; and to get into the habit of getting jump-starts on long range assignments. Explain that waiting to the last minute creates unnecessary stress since he cannot predict sickness, family needs, a big test, or another project that coincides with the original project.

ESTABLISH GOALS: Routinely, help your child to set and follow through with short and long term goals, make a schedule and present it to you in written form. Support

her efforts with suggestions and constructive criticism but let the planning and accomplishment belong to her. By Junior High age, have your child set and communicate to you realistic academic goals at the beginning of the year and at each quarter or more often if necessary. You may have to assist with goal setting. In addition to goals, have your child list the specific behaviors that will be needed to reach the goals. Let her post these in a meaningful place for frequent reference and motivation.

EXPECT PERSONAL BEST: Be realistic about your child's ability. Keep samples of your child's work that demonstrates her quality-ability. Let those samples be the standard for future work. Ensure that your child understands that school work is her job; that you expect it to be completed according to her best ability, and that the responsibility and consequences for it belong to her. Revoke privileges if performance falls below the acceptable standard -- a standard based on her ability and teacher expectations. To accept less than her personal best conveys a message that becomes destructive and self-defeating.

HONOR COMMITMENTS: Require your child to keep commitments, whether convenient or not, to activities that he joined or promises he made to another person. Establish the value-policy that when your child volunteers for something, then no matter what else comes up he must honor the commitment made. Model this value to your child.

LOG / RECORD ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Maintain a log of past accomplishments that took industry (steady work over time) to accomplish. Use it to encourage your child when he thinks that he is not capable of finishing a task. When a project seems overwhelming teach him to break large projects into smaller, more manageable pieces; to take a break between tasks and to return to the task refreshed. Do not let your child give up on a task without giving the task a second try. Assist, encourage, offer suggestion, support, and resources but do not dominate or replace your child's effort. Be cautious not to do your child's work; it undermines positive self-esteem.

MAINTAIN HOMEWORK ROUTINE: Establish routines related to school work. Stress the importance of completing homework in a timely manner, preferable before playing, TV, or video games but allow brief interludes to snack or stretch so as to return to work refreshed.

MONITOR PROGRESS: Follow your child's progress. Check over homework every night for completeness and neatness. Help him to diagnose his own errors. Give positive input before making constructive criticism and

help him to make corrections. Show interest and review assignments when they are completed, as well as returned classwork and tests. Compliment effort and give specific praise, i.e., level of difficulty, neat completion, spelling, handwriting or use of computer. Review performance errors for future improvement. Then let your child accept responsibility for completed or incomplete assignments.

PRACTICE ACTIVE LISTENING: Ask your child to share an overview of his day. Review any uncomfortable situations, share details and exchange ideas for how to handle the future. Show confidence in your child's teacher to handle industry at school. Listen to complaints of your child, ask clarifying questions, give positive direction, but do not criticize the teacher to your child.

RECOGNIZE COMPLETED PROJECTS: Celebrate when a project is turned in and pressure is lifted by using a special dinner plate for the child who achieved this feat. Praise the effort behind completed projects regardless of the grade assigned. Be specific in naming the positive parts of the project, particularly the time management involved.

REQUIRE OWNERSHIP: Involve your child in preparations for any school projects that he supports. For instance, expect your child to assist in baking and/or wrapping goodies for school bake sales or purchasing canned goods for school food drives, etc. Support your child's efforts to participate in special projects like student council or the school Christmas Store. Encourage involvement in extra activities to help your child realize productivity in a variety of avenues.

REVIEW REPORT CARDS: Praise your child whenever she receives good grades, but do not belittle her when her grades are lower than her ability. Praise for hard effort, consistent effort, improved effort, maintained effort, of a pattern of progress as well as for a representative report card or an "A" grade. Reward report cards that indicate good grades in effort, conduct and home study regardless of the academic results. Expect and "A" grade in conduct and effort. Celebrate report cards with family time, a special dinner, or a favorite dessert.

SUPPLY SUPPORT SERVICES: Recognize the subject areas in which your child struggles and provide him with assistance and enrichment during the school year and summer, perhaps using a tutor or workbooks.

VALUE ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY: Strive to accomplish perfect attendance during the school year. Teach your child that she is responsible to seek assignments made up school work missed during absence.

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