

Summertime & Self-Esteem

Positive self-esteem develops when the *pattern of life* includes practices of security, autonomy, initiative and industry. (Refer to www.ParentTeacherSupport.org for development of these topics.)

Summer vacation is a time to replace school tasks with relaxation and renewal. But do not confuse *leisure* with *lack of productivity*. Sociologists know that *lack of purpose*, leads to aimlessness, unrest, alienation, and anxiety. It contributes to depression and negative self-esteem.

Be proactive! Use the following advice to void “couch potato” days and “I’m bored” whining.

1. Maintain a daily schedule.

Determine a time for wakeup, chores, play or free-time, outreach (projects of charity), learning (personal reading or tutoring), family time, care of body hygiene, and bedtime.

2. Develop a hobby.

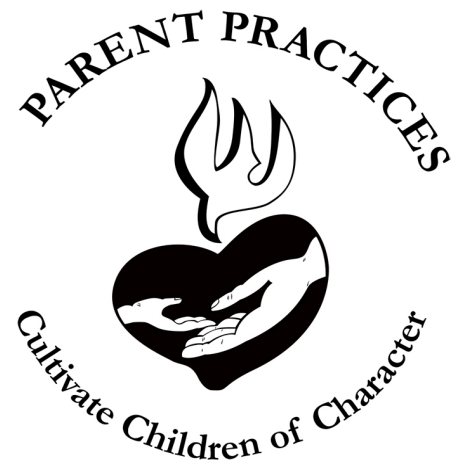
Pursue cooking, arts and crafts, a sports camp, a book club, baby-sitting, theater performance, sewing, etc. Learn a musical instrument, enroll in a class or online course, read a book series. . .

3. Provide sufficient sleep-time.

Insufficient sleep can cause irritability, angry outbursts, hyperactivity, listlessness, poor performance in school, sports and games, and problems both physical and social. Sleep feeds the brain; insufficient sleep drains brainpower.

Sleep-needs may vary among individual children but generally, in order to function effectively, preschoolers need 10 to 12 hours of sleep each night. Elementary school children benefit from 9 to 10 hours and most adolescents need at least 8 to 9 hours.

If bedtime becomes problematic try the following ideas: avoid caffeine and high sugar products after lunch time; provide transition time, an appropriate warning signal, wind-down activity, and routine. Eliminate distractions. Dim the lighting and



audio-play soothing music/sounds. Be consistent. Hold your ground kindly but firmly, and let nature take its course.

4. Encourage resourcefulness.

If your child complains of boredom respond, “Be resourceful!” Resist the urge to problem solve for him/her. Have on hand puzzles, art materials, books, items of interest. If necessary create a chart of things to do: write/telephone Grandmom, organize the book shelves, make greeting cards for a nursing home, read to a sibling, alter the environment of the family prayer table/corner, make placemats for the next holiday, collect toys for the poor, help an elderly neighbor . . .

5. Be faithful to spiritual growth.

Some ways of nurturing our God relationship include: wake up and nighttime prayer, grace at mealtimes, a prayer environment on the food table, prayer of intercession during meal prayer, participation in Sunday Mass and the feast of the Assumption (8/15) and receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Mass participation includes vocal prayer, singing, listening with the heart to the Scripture readings and homily, making a resolve for the week ahead, reverent attention during the Consecration, receiving Eucharist, and taking time to make a thanksgiving after Holy Communion.