



Gazette

Volume Number 3 Issue Number 1

Date Summer 2007

Atlanta Public Schools Parent Discipline Conference

In a vital and valiant effort to support the families in the city of Atlanta, Atlanta Public Schools (APS) and the Parent Teacher Association of Atlanta hosted the first Parents' in Control of Discipline Conference. The conference was held on May 11, 2007 in the beautiful surroundings of the Hilton Atlanta Downtown. The conference planners invited eight speakers to offer a variety of subjects to help parents develop the skills to set up positive discipline and to help their children learn to make good decisions. 55 parents took advantage of our Child Development and Behavioral Strategies workshop. This conference has helped PT&A by helping us to develop some quality relationships. The agency has been asked to present workshops to Parent Teacher Associations in Atlanta Schools this fall. We wish to thank Atlanta Public Schools for involving us in the program and are looking forward to working with APS for many years to come.

Salvation Army Classes to Start

Our Executive Director has had a long history with the Salvation Army. She worked with them while in St. Louis. She is thrilled that PT&A will be working with the Salvation Army this fall. Our agency will be working with SA clients to help them to develop stronger parenting skills. The classes will run for eight weeks. We are looking forward to assisting the Salvation Army in meeting the needs of parents in the Atlanta area.

Pro Bono Partnership Atlanta

There are few agencies to support non-profit organizations in our area one of the most successful and helpful is the Pro Bono Partnership of Atlanta. This agency helps other agencies to develop a stable legal footing. The small staff and a large group of attorney volunteers do pro bono work for non-profits. Barb Harvey our executive director would like to thank Rachel Spears of Pro Bono Partnerships for recognizing PT&A's contribution to the Atlanta area and accepting our application. In addition, we would like to thank Shaney Lokken and Aaron Kowan two volunteer attorneys working to help Parents Teachers and Advocates. We now have an official Parent Education Agreement and our application for non profit status with the federal government is currently being developed. We expect to sign the application and send it out by July 31, 2007.

DISCIPLINE COSTS

Discipline is easily the most controversial aspect of parenting today. Many parents have linked spanking with their religious views, which is understandable. Parenting is personal each parent forms their own thoughts, beliefs and opinions to guide their decisions in raising healthy, happy children. When discussing discipline many parents refer to Proverbs 13:24 which states:

He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly. New King James Version

This implies that children should be physically disciplined. However, when we look at the verse in other translations it reads very differently. For instance, in the Message version the verse reads this way:

A refusal to correct is a refusal to love; love your children by disciplining them.

This version shows that correction is the rod. Parents are the first people who teach children about authority. Children base their relationship with God on their relationship with their parents. So, it is important that parents use the same principles that God does. Consider this as an adult; if you are a Christian it is because you have seen that God in his great grace sent His son to die in our place. He did this because He knew there was no way for us to be good enough to get into heaven on our own. It is this understanding of grace that brought us to correction and made us want to know and develop a relationship with Him.

The same is true of our children. It is our goodness and the grace we give our children that will bring them into correction. Discipline means to teach one to become a follower through teaching. The true goal of discipline is to help our children to internalize what is right and wrong and follow those guidelines from the heart. We develop these teachings by helping them to understand what the rules are, why they are important and how painful the consequences of not following the rules can be. The pains for most mistakes in everyday life are not severe. They instead are the pain of paying a fine or the loss of a privilege or even the loss of a friend. These disciplines are often more painful than any form of physical punishment. In most cases spanking is the easy way out for both the parent and the child.

THE FINE THAT COSTS

Fines for misbehavior should first fit the crime. For instance, if a child neglects to do his chores taking away video games for a week is not nearly as costly a fine as doing two or three more chores for that same week. In addition, children are more likely to remember that the cost of not doing a chore well or on time is more chores. However, this becomes somewhat more costly for parents who have to remember.

Remembering is easier for parents though if you add this information to your calendar or somewhere else you look constantly even your bedroom mirror. The lazier we adults become in our discipline of our children the easier it is to simply spank. So, make the punishment fit the crime in a way that reinforces the rule. This will help children internalize the message better and learn to follow the rule from the heart.

Now you may be thinking that some fines should be more costly than others. This is true and something every parent should think about before hand. Every person has passions and things that they love. Each child is different and has differing passions. These are the things that provide the fines that cost. This is where your true power lies. If you have a child who is a cell phone junkie the loss of that phone for a week may be infinitely more painful than any other one thing that the child could lose. The key is to see the misbehavior for what it is and tie the loss of it in a way that makes it meaningful for the child. Say for instance, that Julie cuts school with her friends. You think she should really feel the pain for skipping school and therefore she loses all of her phone privileges for a period of time. Take time to sit down and discuss the implications of skipping school.

Discussion is important. Remember that communication is a two way street, be careful not to accuse or try to make your child feel badly about themselves the key here is to refine behavior. Keep from giving the message that “you are bad” and stick to the message “your choice here really stunk”. As you discuss, link the fact that Julie spends at least two hours a night on her cell with her friends, and that since she allowed her friends to influence her in making a really bad choice then she can take two weeks leave from talking to her friends and learn to make a better choice next time.

In addition, Julie should be given something else to do during those two hours, like writing a report on the effects of dropping out of school on children in your town. This will give her information on which to make better decisions next time.

Fines should definitely cost and failure to follow the rules should be a painful learning experience. However, remember that parental discipline becomes the inner measure of control in our children. So, discipline with love, respect and caring. Making your child feel badly about themselves can be more detrimental than any form of spanking. Welts on the body heal quickly but welts on the soul take a lifetime to heal. He who fails to correct his children fails to love them. So correct them wisely and develop children who are not afraid to make mistakes and who can learn from them.

SUMMER CLASS STARTED

We are so excited to work with one of our partners to offer summer classes. Parents, Teachers and Advocates along with the East Point Community Action Team is providing a class on Positive Discipline the class started Saturday July 7, 2007 and will continue through August 25, 2007. These classes are \$10.00 each and \$5.00 per child for childcare. The classes are \$7.50 if students want to purchase more than two classes. (Childcare costs remain the same.) Classes are held from 10:30am-12:30pm at 1623 Ware Avenue East Point, GA 30344. Drop-ins are welcome.

FALL CLASSES ARE COMING

Beginning in September we will be introducing our fall line up of classes. PT&A is taking requests for topics. Anyone interested in requesting a specific topic please contact us at educatepta@bellsouth.net.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

PT& A is dedicated to helping parents find the true meaning of personal parenting. We strive with each class to recognize that parenting is as different from house to house as the people in them. However, there are principles that make each individual parent better in the process. Good parenting begins ends and has as every step in between **consistency**.

Children need to be able to predict 100% of the time what to expect from their parents. The things they have a right to expect is love, care, respect and a place to run to and be safe when the world gets to be a hard place to live. Fear and degradation have no place in good quality parenting. Consistency provides boundaries and borders that assist children in developing and internalizing a strong sense of who they are and what they can do.

Parents who encourage children to strengthen their positives and minimize the negatives give them the ability to see themselves as valuable. Being consistent in helping children see the strengths and weakness of themselves and others provides a healthy view of all. In this, they learn to appreciate each person for their abilities. Parents have an enormous power to help children develop a strong inner concept. It begins with being loving and respectful and continues in helping children learn to accept themselves and others. So, whatever you do be consistent!!

Barb



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