



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 3 SECURITY PRACTICES

Dear Parent,

By the vocation of parent, you are entrusted with the task of providing for the identity formation needs of your child in such a way that your child is characterized by positive self-esteem and the development of moral attitudes, conscience, prosocial behavior, spirituality, and healthy personal relationships. You can compare your work in identity formation to that of an engineer who is responsible to construct a building in such a way that it supports life and contributes to our world. Like all buildings, the foundational structure is essential to the construction. In the work of identity formation, the foundational structure consists of four elements: security, autonomy, initiative, and industry. These elements develop in stages, beginning at birth with a need for security. And although each element has an initial focus time for developing, all elements need continual re-inforcement and growth. This communication highlights parent-suggested practices that develop or re-inforce your child's sense of security at school.

SECURITY, or the sense of trust, safety, predictability, and confidence that my needs will receive consistent, predictable response by the significant people in my life, is essential to identity formation. When, through consistency on the part of the significant adult, a child knows that the basics are covered, knows his limits and boundaries, and has routine established for the usual events that fill his day, he can devote his energy to less confident tasks. **TRUST** develops in him as does a sense of **DRIVE**. **HOPE** blooms as a basic life virtue in him. When a child experiences with consistency that what you say is what you do, she makes decisions around that reality and it builds a sense of security. In the reverse, however, if she more often experiences that what you say is not what you mean, a sense of insecurity and mistrust grows within her. Parents and teachers contribute to the development of positive self-esteem when they provide practices that incorporate routine, procedure, system, safety precautions, consistency, continuity, predictability and follow-through.

On the reverse side of this letter are parent-suggested practices that develop a child's sense of **SECURITY 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-Suggested Practices that Develop a Child's Sense of SECURITY 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:

ENCOURAGEMENT: Offer positive feedback in academic and social situations involving classmates. Express pride in your child's efforts and accomplishments, talking about the purpose and lesson learned. Make it clear that you do not expect perfection; that mistakes are a valuable part of life; that you expect sincere effort. When you need to express disapproval, assure your child that you value and love her but that you disapprove of the activity, behavior, or lack of effort. Let her know that with responsibility comes consequence.

HOMEWORK: Provide regular homework time in a non-distracting environment. Make sure all necessary supplies are available. Show interest in all work and communicate clearly that you expect your child to complete all assignments in an appropriate manner and time frames. Review your child's schoolwork regularly. Discuss and assist in any problem areas.

HYGIENE: Help your child learn good personal hygiene and to be well-groomed with a clean uniform, brushed teeth, and combed hair before leaving for school. Make sure that clean clothes are ready for school before going to bed at night.

MORNING ROUTINE: On a daily basis have clothes ready for morning. Establish a place for your child's things (perhaps a heavy-duty box wherein she places her school bag, projects, or supplies). Teach your child a daily routine in which she is responsible to pack her lunch and books early so that any missing items can be found without making her late for school.

NIGHTTIME ROUTINE: Assure your child's success by enforcing a regular and reasonable bedtime. Establish a routine for bedtime that concludes with assurances of unconditional love.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT: Demonstrate your interest in your child's education by keeping in touch with her teachers concerning her behavior and work. Be involved

in school functions: helping in the classroom; attending parent meetings, school plays, fund-raisers; going to teacher conferences, etc. Also volunteer to drive for field trips, be an in-school or at-home classroom aide, assist in class parties, serve as a coach or playground assistant, etc.

PARENT PAPERWORK: Promptly complete and return all "parent" paperwork for your child's school and keep the school updated regarding personal record information.

SCHOOL PREPARATIONS: Teach your child to be prepared for school by completing homework and projects on time and checking ahead for upcoming deadlines.

SUPPORT SCHOOL: Be available when your child is disappointed at school and allow him to grieve. Provide an environment where he feels safe to vent frustrations and feelings. Listen to the whole story; ask clarifying questions; and suggest life-giving ways to handle the situation. Do not voice judgments or negative comments about the teacher. Express trust in the teacher, support decisions and directives of the teacher, and keep the lines of communication open. Take any concerns you have directly to the teacher, adult-to-adult.

TALK SCHOOL: Talk daily with your child about his day. Ask questions that require more than a yes or no answer. Show genuine interest in his answers. Check over papers, tests, and projects; check the accuracy of homework. Help him to make necessary corrections and assist with struggles. Help him to study for a test.

TRANSPORTATION: Be where you have said you will be to drop off or pick up your child from school and after-school activities, and make every effort to be punctual, changing the routine only when necessary and explaining to your child ahead of time if possible, or afterwards if advance explanation was impossible. Discuss the day as you travel.

TV TIME: Eliminate or limit television for your child on school nights, including video-type games.

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