



Family Matters

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A Family Newsletter prepared by Iowa State University Extension Family Specialists

Coaching Kids Towards 'Emotional Intelligence'

Emotional intelligence has been found to be a key component of individual happiness and workforce success. In Raising An Emotional Intelligent Child, author John Gottman identifies parenting styles which discourage children from recognizing and handling their feelings effectively. Gottman characterizes adults who nurture emotional intelligence as "emotion coaches".

Emotion coaches don't dismiss a child's feelings or disapprove of them. They use negative emotions as an opportunity to create more intimacy and teach their values and life lessons.



Adult emotion coaches do the following:

- Become aware of child's feelings
- Recognize strong emotions as opportunity to teach and bond
- Listen empathetically and validate the feeling ("Sounds like you're frustrated!")
- Help child label their own feeling
- Set limits while exploring with the child ways to handle the problem

Strategies for becoming an effective adult 'emotion coach.'

First, ignore the 'parent agenda' and pay attention to the concern at hand. It can help to create a mental map of the child's world and try to relate to what the child might be feeling in terms of your own similar adult experiences.

Do not "side with the enemy" or impose your own solutions - but try to identify with the child and respect their dreams or ideas.

Give choices and help them brainstorm solutions to help a child feel more control over his situation.

Be patient with yourself and believe in the positive nature of the child's development. Emotional coaching occurs over time with some bumps along the road.

Parents who help 'coach' children through emotional moments are encouraging children to trust their own feelings, begin to manage these feelings and find ways to effectively deal with their problems. This helps children trust themselves and builds confidence in their own abilities to handle life's challenges, a key to 'emotional intelligence'.



America Saves

If you want to save money, one valuable step is to set a goal, then write it down and tell someone. A new project - *America Saves* - gives you one way to do that. America Saves is sponsored by the Consumer Federation of America in cooperation with Extension and other organizations. Its only purpose is to help Americans build their savings.

America Saves is free, and it's easy. Sign up by simply setting a goal and submitting it on a very short form. For a year, you'll receive a quarterly newsletter giving encouragement and ideas for saving. After a year, they will ask how you are doing, and whether you want to sign up for another year. It's a simple project, designed to help you put your money where you want it to go.

For more information on "America Saves," contact your County Extension Office *or* go to www.americasaves.org

When Working Teens Save...

Teens with regular earnings can reach substantial savings goals, because most of their income is available for discretionary use. A teen who works 10 hours/week at minimum wage may bring home about \$200/month. Saving even half yields excellent results: \$100/month invested at 5% for two years will provide more than \$2500. Add an extra \$1,000 each summer (if they work more hours at their jobs), and the teen will have nearly \$5,000 after 2 years.

Starting early yields even greater results. Imagine a 12-year-old (earning money from babysitting or lawn mowing) who saves \$10/week for 3 years, and then at 15 gets a better-paying job and saves \$30/week. After six years of saving (with 3% interest), that young adult will have nearly \$6,700!

Teens who spend all their income take two risks:

- 1) They miss the opportunity to invest in their future, which means they'll probably incur more debt while in college; and
- 2) They develop expensive habits which may lead to problems in college and early career years, when their financial obligations will be greater.

Plan for Family Summer Fun

It is easy to shift into high-spending gear when summer arrives. With children out of school and special events like fairs, festivals and vacations on the schedule, expenses can spiral out of control.

The last thing you want is to arrive at fall with a big batch of bills to pay. Raiding savings accounts isn't a great answer either – you'll sacrifice other goals and reduce your overall financial security.

Planning is a key to paying for the special opportunities that summer brings. Decide in advance how much money is available (per week or per month) for recreation and special treats. Remember to include small costs like snow cones and



ice cream as well as more substantial costs. Let family members know what is available.

Consider keeping that "fun money" in cash, so it is easy to see the balance go up and down as you add more each week, and as you spend. Remember to set aside enough for special events (county fair, community festival). It is often easier for children and teens to accept limitations when they see that funds are then available for other, more important activities.

It is important that parents and children share in selecting priorities; each family member's needs and wants must be considered respectfully. Compromise will be necessary. Creative solutions often result!

Iowa Concern Website

Iowa Concern is known as a 24-hour confidential telephone hotline (800-447-1985) that helps people cope with stress or financial/legal difficulties. *Now, Iowa Concern is also on-line!*

www.extension.iastate.edu/iowaconcern

You'll find Frequently Asked Questions, an email the expert feature, links to other resources, and an opportunity for a one-on-one live confidential chat.

New Dietary Guidelines

March is National Nutrition Month. This annual event provides an ideal time to discuss the recently released 2005 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. These guidelines are updated every 5 years. They provide valuable and realistic recommendations to help people eat well and stay healthy. These guidelines are being used to develop the “Revised Food Pyramid” but the USDA has not released it yet.

The 2005 version of the guidelines places a greater emphasis on consumption of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains – foods that are naturally high in nutrients and low in calories. They continue to emphasize the total diet with the key ideas of eating a variety of foods in moderation, paying attention to portion sizes, and engaging in regular physical activity. Within this framework, all foods can fit into a healthful diet.

2005 Dietary Guideline Focus Areas

- Consume limited calories with maximum nutrition
- Maintain body weight in a healthy range
- Engage in regular physical activity
- Encourage eating more fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, and low-fat dairy foods
- Consume fewer fats and cholesterol-rich foods
- Choose and prepare foods and beverages with little added sugars or caloric sweeteners
- Consume less than 2,300 mg of sodium (approximately 1 teaspoon of salt) per day
- Drink alcoholic beverages sensibly and in moderation
- Handle food safely

For more information, see the new consumer booklet, **Finding Your Way to a Healthier You**,

www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document/pdf/brochure.pdf

Serve Eggs Safely at Easter!

Easter gifts and games often involve eggs. Here are some tips to help you prepare and serve safe Easter eggs.



- Wash hands thoroughly before handling eggs at every stage in the process (cooking, cooling, dyeing).
- If eggs cannot be colored right away, store them in their cartons in the refrigerator.
- Store the colored eggs in their cartons in the refrigerator until hiding time.
- Eat only eggs with uncracked shells.
- Avoid eating eggs that have been out of the refrigerator more than two hours.
- If you are planning to use colored eggs as decoration (such as for a centerpiece) and the eggs will be out of refrigeration for many hours or several days, discard the eggs after they have served their decorative purpose.

Eggs are perishable and must be properly stored, prepared, and served. Raw eggs contain a risk of Salmonella, a food bacteria.

