



Family and School Association Newsletter

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A blessed Easter season and a prayer for warmer weather!

Parenting Education

The *Chicago Tribune* has been running parenting education articles in the Sunday paper that have been insightful, thoughtful and right on target for various issues facing families in today's rather chaotic and regularly changing atmosphere. Two issues of interest will be highlighted here:

- The first issue is that of balancing expectations for your child while at the same time easing their performance anxiety. Overdoing the expectation aspect of parenting can add to the anxiety that the majority of children experience when they are facing a test, a new experience, a debate or a contest of any kind. John Duffy, a clinical psychologist and author of "The Available Parent: Expert Advice for Raising Successful, Resilient and Connected Teens and Tweens" (Viva Editions) says, "As parents, we're all trying to find this lane that is somewhere in between taking the pressure off and keeping expectations high. You want (your child) to hear 'I know you're smart and capable and talented. I expect you to try your best and you should expect that of yourself. You don't have to be perfect. No one is. But you're not free from trying.'"

The above approach coupled with a parent or guardian's ongoing show of love and appreciation will hopefully take some pressure away without giving the impression that the adult doesn't expect them to do well.

- The second issue is that of balancing "friendship" with a child and maintaining the ability to set limits and discipline if necessary. One needs to have a child's faith and confidence enough to make them feel free to come to us with serious questions and concerns. One cannot be such a "buddy" that he/she loses credibility when the need comes to correct some improper action, attitude or language. This is a very difficult balance that each parent or guardian must carefully work out with each child – remembering that an approach for one child may not necessarily be the same for another child. Be more affirming than correcting but don't fall into the buddy pit. Prayer for guidance is of major assistance in this touchy issue.

Organizational Issues

It is the time of year when the end of the school year looms and organizations look to new leadership and/or review the past year's successes and not-so-great successes to determine the direction and activities for the coming year. Remember that the principal needs to be part of this discussion, both for his/her sake and the sake of the organization.

- If there is to be an election this year, check the organization's By-Laws and be sure that they are correctly followed. If it is determined that you have no By-Laws visit the Office of Catholic Schools' website, [ocs.archchicago.org/Marketing/Family and School/Manual](http://ocs.archchicago.org/Marketing/Family%20and%20School/Manual). Go to page 24 of the manual and use the sample By-Laws to help a committee develop and present By-Laws to your membership for approval.
- An election must be free of manipulation, gossiping or any form of backbiting to be Christian in its process.
- If there is to be no election this year, honestly discuss your activities in the past year and determine what should be kept, what perhaps eliminated in the coming year and what new approaches might be successful. A survey is a way to get all your membership's input. Note: this should also be done with the new Board if this is an election year.
- Be sure you have a balance of activities that reach out to those in need, are just plain fun, support the school and, almost always, are something that can include the whole family. Research indicates there is more involvement in a project or activity if families don't have to look for a babysitter.

Family Prayer

Particularly as school is ending and children will not be involved in prayer activities at school, it is time to gear up prayer activities at home. Family prayer does not have to be elaborate and can be easily and quietly inserted in regular and planned family activities:

- As you drive to and from sport commitments or start out on a vacation say a short prayer for a safe trip,
- As you sit down to dinner thank the Lord for the gift of food and for those who raised it and prepared it. You can add a prayer for a sick friend or lost cat that would be of interest to the whole family,
- As the children go to bed, say nighttime prayers of your or their choice with them,
- As children leave the house bless them with the sign of the cross.

Make you house a home of prayer.