



10 Things Parents Need to Know

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The Cost of Kids



The government recently calculated the cost of raising a child from birth to 18 and came up with \$160,140.00 for a middle income family. Talk about sticker shock! That doesn't even touch college tuition.

But \$160,140 isn't so bad if you break it down. It translates into \$8,896 a year, \$741.38 a month, or \$171.08 a week. That's a mere \$24.24 a day! Just over a dollar an hour.

Still, you might think the best financial advice says don't have children if you want to be "rich." It is just the opposite.

What do you get for your \$160,140?

Naming rights --- First, middle, and last!

Glimpses of God everyday.

Giggles under the covers every night.

More love than your heart can hold.

Butterfly kisses and Velcro hugs.

Endless wonder over rocks, ants, clouds, and warm cookies.

A hand to hold, usually covered with jam.

A partner for blowing bubbles, flying kites, building sand castles, and skipping down the sidewalk in the pouring rain.

Someone to laugh yourself silly with no matter what the boss said or how your stocks performed that day.

For \$160,140, you never have to grow up.

You get to finger-paint, carve pumpkins, play hide-and-seek, catch lightning bugs, and never stop believing in Santa Claus.

You have an excuse to keep reading the Adventures of Piglet and Pooh, watching Saturday morning cartoons, going to Disney Land, and wishing on stars.

You get to frame rainbows, hearts, and flowers under refrigerator magnets and

collect spray painted noodle wreaths for Christmas, hand prints set in clay for Mother's Day, and cards with backward letters for Father's Day.

For \$160,140, there is no greater bang for your buck.

You get to be a hero just for retrieving a Frisbee off the garage roof, taking the training wheels off the bike, removing a splinter, filling a wading pool, coaxing a wad of gum out of bangs, and coaching a baseball team that never wins but always get treated to ice cream regardless.

You get a front row seat to history to witness the first step, first word, first date, and first time behind the wheel. You get to be immortal.

You get another branch added to your family tree, and if you're lucky, a long list of limbs in your obituary called grandchildren. You get an education in psychology, nursing, criminal justice, communications, and human sexuality that no college can match.

In the eyes of a child, you rank right up there with God.

You have all the power to heal a booboo, scare away the monsters under the bed, patch a broken heart, police a slumber party, ground them forever, and love them without limits, so one day they will, like you, love without counting the cost.

ENJOY YOUR KIDS AND GRAND KIDS!!



1. Your involvement matters – A LOT!

The National PTA

In their *National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs* the National Parent Teacher Association (1997) cites research that clearly indicates:

1. When parents are involved, students achieve more, regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnic/racial background, or the parents' education level.
2. The more extensive the parent involvement, the higher the student achievement.
3. When parents are involved, students exhibit more positive attitudes and behavior.
4. Children from diverse cultural backgrounds tend to do better when parents and professionals collaborate to bridge the gap between the culture at home and the learning institution.
5. Secondary students whose parents remain involved make better transitions, maintain the quality of their work, and develop realistic plans for their future. Students whose parents are not involved are more likely to drop out.
6. The most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which that student's family is able to:
 - a) create a home environment that encourages learning.
 - b) communicate high, yet reasonable expectations for their children's achievement and future careers
 - c) become involved in their children's education at school and in the community.

2. You can be involved in many ways.

20 Ways Parents Can Help at School

- 1. Help build resources and equipment (bird houses, collecting nets, shelves, learning centers).**
- 2. Act as monitor for cafeteria, hall, or playground.**
- 3. Prepare and bring food items.**
- 4. Assist with special tutoring.**
- 5. Make a presentation or performance.**
- 6. Read to students.**
- 7. Job sharing.**
- 8. Help make classroom decorations and design learning walls, etc.**
- 9. File, sort, hole punch, copy etc. Help with secretarial chores.**
- 10. Make learning games.**
- 11. Contact and/or organize other parents.**
- 12. Chaperone a field trip (even if it is just to the grove of trees at the end of the campus).**
- 13. Help prepare materials for labs and projects.**
- 14. Donate materials.**
- 15. Help with special classroom or *school events and projects.**
- 16. Assist with pet or plant care.**
- 17. Contact businesses about possible donations or sponsorships.**
- 18. Help with class newsletter.**
- 19. Help with web site.**
- 20. Help students with computers and other technological aids.**

3. Every student has her/his own strengths.

Checklists for Assessing “How Students Are Smart”

Adapted by Debbie Silver

from *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom* by Thomas Armstrong

Name of Student- _____

Check all the items that apply:

Linguistic Intelligence (Word Smart)

- 1. Is a good reader.
- 2. Enjoys word games.
- 3. Is a good joke teller/ storyteller.
- 4. Has a good vocabulary for age.
- 5. Enjoys listening activities.
- 6. Likes to write stories and/or poems
- 7. Communicates with others in a highly verbal way.
- 8. Appreciates rhymes, puns, and/or nonsense words.
- 9. Has a good memory for words, stories, details.

Other linguistic strengths:

Logical-Mathematical Intelligence (Number Smart)

- 1. Asks a lot of questions about how things work.
- 2. Has a good sense of cause and effect.
- 3. Finds math games interesting.
- 4. Can see and repeat patterns easily.
- 5. Enjoys working puzzles and brain teasers.
- 6. Understands computer programming.
- 7. Is a logical thinker.
- 8. Can estimate things involving numbers with relative ease.
- 9. Can work math concepts in head.

Other logical-mathematical strengths:

Visual-Spatial Intelligence (Picture Smart)

- 1. Reports clear, visual images (or dreams).
- 2. Can envision objects from more than one perspective.
- 3. Daydreams more than peers.
- 4. Likes to draw and/or create art projects.
- 5. Has a good eye for detail and color.
- 6. Is good at spatial games like chess and Tetris.
- 7. Likes movies, slides, or other visual presentations.
- 8. Can move between 2-dimensional and 3 dimensional representations with ease.
- 9. Can read and/or create maps.

Other visual-spatial strengths:

Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence (Body Smart)

- 1. Is very coordinated.
- 2. Exceptionally mobile: moves, twitches, fidgets, taps when seated for long.
- 3. Enjoys working with clay, finger paint, and other tactile media.
- 4. Can mimic others' gestures, posture, and movements
- 5. Must touch anything new or interesting.
- 6. Loves to take things apart and put them back together.
- 7. Uses dramatic body movements for self-expression.
- 8. Enjoys running, hopping, climbing, wrestling, or similar activities.
- 9. Exhibits fine motor control (crafts, painting, etc.).

Other bodily-kinesthetic strengths:

Musical Intelligence (Music Smart)

- 1. Can detect music that is off-key, off-beat, or disturbing in some way.
- 2. Remembers melodies of songs.
- 3. Taps rhythmically as he/she works or plays.
- 4. Sensitive to environmental noise (rain on the windows, etc.).
- 5. Plays a musical instrument and/or sings in a choir.
- 6. Has a good singing voice.
- 7. Responds favorably when music is played.
- 8. Sings songs that he/she has learned.
- 9. Unconsciously hums much of the time.

Other musical strengths:

Interpersonal Communications Intelligence (People Smart)

- 1. Establishes meaningful peer relationships.
- 2. Seems to be a natural leader.
- 3. Empathizes with others.
- 4. Likes to play with others.
- 5. Shows good teamwork skills.
- 6. Others seek this student's company.
- 7. Has two or more close friends.
- 8. Frequently acts as a mediator and/or peace maker.
- 9. Enjoys teaching others.

Other interpersonal communication strengths:

Intra-personal Awareness Intelligence (Self Smart)

- 1. Displays a sense of strong will.
- 2. Enjoys playing or working alone.
- 3. Has high self-esteem.
- 4. Has a good sense of self-direction.
- 5. Does not mind being different from others.
- 6. Has a realistic view of his/her strengths and weaknesses.
- 7. Is able to deal effectively with successes and failures.
- 8. Has an interest or talent that is not readily shared with others.
- 9. Seems to "march to the beat of a different drummer."

Other intra-personal awareness strengths

Naturalistic Intelligence (Nature Smart)

- 1. Likes to identify and classify living and nonliving things in nature.
- 2. Cares for pets or animals.
- 3. Understands repeating patterns in nature and the universe.
- 4. Seems more "in tune with nature" than peers.
- 5. Would rather be outside than inside.
- 6. Has a demonstrated appreciation for a part of the natural world (i.e. dinosaurs, clouds, rocks, etc.)
- 7. Likes to garden and/or appreciates plants.
- 8. Understands and appreciates the environment.
- 9. Loves to collect things from nature.

Other naturalistic strengths

4. People approach life in different ways.

Dominant Style Characteristics

(From work by Dr. Anthony Gregorc, Ph.D. <www.gregorc.com>)

The following classifications are the property to Dr. Anthony Gregorc. They have emerged from his extensive research on the topic of learning styles. For a full presentation of this material along with a self-scoring inventory, please visit Dr. Gregorc's website at <<http://www.gregorc.com/instrume.html>>

The **Concrete Sequential** learner is usually slow and hesitant about change. His approach to life is realistic, patient, and conservative. He prefers an environment that is ordered, quiet, and stable. He has a finely tuned ability to derive information through direct, hands-on experience. This person has an extraordinary development of the five senses and likes touchable concrete materials. He likes step-by-step directions when confronted with a new situation. He does not like surprises and prefers to be in control of most situations. He is the one learner who not only looks for directions, but follows them!

The **Abstract Sequential** learner is indecisive about change. He focuses on knowledge and facts; he insists upon documentation before "buying in" to new ideas. His approach to life is realistic, serious, logically intellectual, and determined. He likes an environment that is mentally stimulating but non-authoritative. He likes to direct his own learning. He has excellent decoding abilities in the areas of written, verbal, and image symbols. He has a preference for presentations which are rational and have substance. He pays attention to detail, and he usually prefers to work alone.

The **Concrete Random** learner is open and amenable to change; this person is sometimes the instigator of change. His approach to life is inquisitive and independent. He likes an environment that is competitive and stimulus-rich. This person has an experimental attitude that is often accompanied by a trial-and-error approach to problem solving. He gets the gist of ideas quickly and demonstrates the uncanny ability to make intuitive leaps in exploring unstructured problem-solving experiences. This person is often self-motivated and not interested in details.

The **Abstract Random** learner's approach to change is subject to emotions and his level of interest. His approach to life is idealistic, emotional, and always intense. He prefers an environment that allows emotional and physical freedom, is "active," and is colorful. He is distinguishable by his attention to human behavior and an extraordinary ability to sense and interpret "vibrations." He prefers to receive information in an unstructured manner, and is therefore, comfortable in groups and with busy environments. He tends to evaluate all experiences "as a whole" and see the world in "black and white."

5. Every student deserves a reasonable chance at success.

Zone of Proximal Development...ZPD

Zone of Proximal Development, an idea developed by Lev Vygotsky over one hundred years ago, seeks to define the process through which students effectively learn in cooperation with a teacher.

A student's Zone of Proximal Development, or ZPD, is defined as the student's range of ability with and without assistance from a teacher or a more capable peer. On one end of the range is the student's ability level without assistance. On the other end of the range is the student's ability level with assistance.

6. Students Need Parents to Set Limits and Give Authentic Feedback.

Tips from The Experts: Healthy Self-Esteem From Families First

Children's self-esteem has been an important subject among parents and professionals working with children and families for many years. Developing positive self-esteem for our children means helping them see themselves as having strong value and worth. Children with high self-esteem have greater respect for themselves, are more confident and competent, and are more likely to view difficulties as challenges rather than obstacles. Research has shown that children with high self-esteem are better able to resist peer pressure and risky or destructive behavior and are better able to establish healthy, satisfying relationships with others. It is no surprise that raising children who have high self-esteem, tops many parents priority lists.

And yet, many child development experts are now worried that, as a society, we have taken our efforts in building self-esteem to such an extreme, that in fact we are not helping our children. Parents, teachers and others have often translated helping children feel good about themselves into helping children feel special and unique, different from and to a degree better than their peers. Additionally the use of praise, by many parents and teachers, has become excessive. This has made many children dependent upon praise, while for many others, it has made praise meaningless and unbelievable. Children who are

dependent upon or oblivious to praise are in fact avoiding difficult challenges, losing interest in activities faster, and feeling less confident about their abilities.

So, how can we as parents develop our children's self-esteem in positive and productive ways? Here are some suggestions from experts:

- 1 **Praise less, but praise more authentically**, suggests Dr. Ron Taffel, a child and family therapist and well-known parenting author. Praise a child when the effort truly warrants it, he advises and be specific about praising the efforts of the child, not simply the accomplishment. For example, "You worked for a long time on that puzzle and didn't quit when it got really hard" rather than "Wow, you did a great job doing that puzzle".

- 2 **Stop saying, "Good Job"**, or at least say it less often says education and human behavior specialist Alfie Kohn. These words have become so overused that they are ineffective. Instead ask questions about what the child is doing or tell what you are seeing, without judgment. Remember the goal is that children be motivated to venture further. We don't want to distract this by encouraging them to seek out the next compliment.

- 3 **Allow children to make mistakes**, notes Dr. Bob Brooks, an expert in the fields of self-esteem, resilience and motivation. Parents often want to protect their children from failure, yet research shows that children who learn to handle the disappointment and set backs that making mistakes offer, actually are better risk takers and more confident learners.

- 4 **Help children experience mastery of skills**, recommends psychologist, Dr. Martin Seligman. Children need to experience success at gaining new skills in order to become self-driven and motivated. He notes that breaking difficult tasks into manageable steps is an important role parents take in this process.

- 5 **Help children find connections**, urges child and adult psychologist Edward (Ned) Hallowell. Encouraging our children to make strong connections to others (individually and in groups) allows for the development of a sense of belonging and a commitment to others. This creates an internal and intrinsic sense of importance to others and an understanding that our contributions have impact. This is what underlies our goals for developing strong self-esteem and relationship building.

- 6 **Set appropriate limits**, reminds world renowned pediatrician Dr. T. Berry Brazelton and child psychiatrist Dr. Stanley Greenspan. When

parents have appropriate expectations for their children; set limits which help children meet these expectations; and use suitable consequences, their children develop self-control. When children have self-control, they receive more natural positive feedback for their behavior. They also have a more realistic definition of themselves and thus a truer sense of self-worth.

- 7 **Give children responsibility**, encourages Elizabeth Crary, parent educator. Children naturally learn a sense of value and contribution when they are given responsibility. Working hard at a task and helping others encourage children's motivation and self-esteem.

- 8 **Teach children gratitude**, advises Dr. Ron Taffel, child and family therapist and parenting educator. Just as we now often praise too much, we also allow our own generosity and kindness to go unnoticed and unappreciated. This is often to try to avoid children acting out of guilt notes Taffel, but there is a middle ground. Modeling gratitude and appreciation are effective methods parents should use to encourage this connectedness.

6. It's important to make time for them.

A Thousand Marbles

A few weeks ago, I was shuffling toward the basement with a steaming cup of coffee in one hand and the morning paper in the other. I turned the dial up into the phone portion of the band on my ham radio in order to listen to a Saturday morning swap net. Along the way, I came across an older sounding chap, with a tremendous signal and a golden voice. He was telling whoever he was talking with something about "a thousand marbles."



I was intrigued and stopped to listen to what he had to say. "Well, Tom, it sure sounds like you're busy with your job. I'm sure they pay you well but it's a shame you have to be away from home and your family so much. Hard to believe a young fellow should have to work sixty or seventy hours a week to make ends meet. Too bad you missed your daughter's dance recital." He continued, "Let me tell you something Tom, something that has helped me keep a good perspective on my own priorities." And that's when he began to explain his theory of a "thousand marbles." "You see, I sat down one day and did a little arithmetic. The average person lives about seventy-five years. I know, some live more and some live less, but on average, folks live about seventy-five years. Now then, I

multiplied 75 times 52 and I came up with 3900 which is the number of Saturdays that the average person has in their entire lifetime.

Now stick with me Tom, I'm getting to the important part. It took me until I was fifty-five years old to think about all this in any detail," he went on, "and by that time I had lived through over twenty-eight hundred Saturdays. I got to thinking that if I lived to be seventy-five, I only had about a thousand of them left to enjoy. So I went to a toy store and bought every single marble they had. I ended up having to visit three toy stores to roundup 1000 marbles. I took them home and put them inside of a large, clear plastic container right here in the shack next to my gear.

Every Saturday since then, I have taken one marble out and thrown it away. I found that by watching the marbles diminish, I focused more on the really important things in life. There is nothing like watching your time here on this earth run out to help get your priorities straight.

Now let me tell you one last thing before I sign-off with you and take my lovely wife out for breakfast. This morning, I took the very last marble out of the container. I figure if I make it until next Saturday then I have been given a little extra time. And the one thing we can all use is a little more time. It was nice to meet you

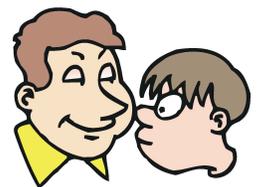
Tom, I hope you spend more time with your family, and I hope to meet you again here on the band. 75 year Old Man, this is K9NZQ, clear and going QRT, good morning!"

You could have heard a pin drop on the band when this fellow signed off. I guess he gave us all a lot to think about. I had planned to work on the antenna that morning, and then I was going to meet up with a few hams to work on the next club newsletter. Instead, I went upstairs and woke my wife up with a kiss. "C'mon honey, I'm taking you and the kids to breakfast." "What brought this on?" she asked with a smile. "Oh, nothing special, it's just been a long time since we spent a Saturday together with the kids. Hey, can we stop at a toy store while we're out? I need to buy some marbles."

7. Your child wants to know that you “get” her/him.

Helpful Hints For Communicating With Your Child

1. Listen with your FULL attention. A good way to ensure *her/his* full attention is put them in the front seat of your car and drive them around as you talk with them. (Unless they want to hurl themselves from a moving vehicle, they've got no place to run.)
2. Be aware of body language, both yours and theirs.



3. Use silence to understand your child's meanings and feelings.
4. Use open responses to keep the child talking. "I see." "Tell me more about that part."
5. Accept and respect your child's feelings. Feelings don't have to be justified, they just ARE.
6. Don't interrupt.
7. Check out your child's feelings by reflecting what s/he says.
"I think I heard you say that you were really angry with Susan."
"So you were feeling helpless? Like you wanted to hide?"
8. Be calm. Speak in a quiet voice. Use economy of words (don't talk too much).
9. Stick to the subject.
10. Don't assume that you are making yourself clear. Check for understanding periodically. "Can you tell me in your own words what you think I'm telling you?"
11. Problem solve by discussing a variety of solutions. Emphasize your child's choice in selecting a plan of action.
12. Give your point of view as just that. It's not the law or the only good solution.
13. Don't be a dictator. Remember that children also learn by failing. Allow the child to learn successful problem solving from failing once in a while
14. Avoid nagging, threatening, criticizing, lecturing, or probing.
15. NO Name Calling!!! Attack the problem, not the person.
16. Whenever possible, use humor!

For the Parent to Take:

How Much Do You Know About Your Child?

1. If your child had a choice, what would s/he prefer to be called?
2. Who is your child's closest friend?
3. Who does your child most admire?
4. Of what is your child most afraid?
5. What is your child's favorite thing to do with his/her friends?
6. What is your child's favorite kind of music?
7. What was the best movie your child ever watched?
8. At what age does your child plan to leave home?
9. What is your child's favorite color?
10. If your child had to wear one outfit for a month, which outfit would it be?
11. What most embarrasses your child?
12. If your child could change one thing about herself/himself, what would it be?
13. If your child could change one thing about your family, what would it be?
14. What trait do you have that your child most values?
15. What trait do you have that your child would most like to change?
16. If there were suddenly no electricity in the world, what appliance would your child miss the most?
17. What is your child's weight (within 2 pounds)?
18. What was your child's proudest moment?
19. What was your child's saddest moment?
20. If your child could make one wish come true, what would it be?

Compare your answers with those of your child. Score one point for each answer that is the same or reasonably close. If you score 16 or better, congratulate yourself for really knowing your child. If your score is 11 –15, you may want to think about spending more time catching up with what is new with your child. If your score is 10 or less, you definitely need to spend more time finding out about what is going on with your child.

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For the Child to Take While The Parent Takes Her/His Test:

About You

1. If you had a choice, what would you prefer to be called?
2. Who is your closest friend?
3. Who do you most admire?
4. Of what are you most afraid?
5. What is your favorite thing to do with your friends?
6. What is your favorite kind of music?
7. What was the best movie you ever watched?
8. At what age do you plan to leave home?
9. What is your favorite color?
10. If you had to wear one outfit for a month, which outfit would it be?
11. What most embarrasses you?
12. If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?
13. If you could change one thing about your family, what would it be?
14. What trait do you have that you most value?
15. What trait does your parent have that you would most like to change?
16. If there were suddenly no electricity in the world, what appliance would you miss the most?
17. What is your weight (within 2 pounds)?
18. What was your proudest moment?
19. What was your saddest moment?
20. If you could make one wish come true, what would it be?

Now compare your answers to those of your parent. Give her/him one point for every answer that is the same or reasonably close (you be the judge). Your parent has the scoring code.

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For a parent to fill out about her/his child:

What I See In My Child

The image shows a worksheet template for a reflective exercise. It consists of four concentric squares. The innermost square is the smallest and contains the text "Put Your Child's Name Here". The three outer squares are progressively larger, creating three distinct rectangular spaces around the center. These spaces are intended for the user to write descriptive words or phrases about their child's strengths. The entire design is enclosed within a large outer border.

Put your child's name in the center square. Fill in the spaces around her/his name with words that describe the strengths you see in her/him. Place the most important attributes in the spaces closest to the center. You can use Choose words from the *Strength Word List* or use your own. When you have finished filling in all the spaces, give this sheet to your child.

STRENGTH WORD LIST
(These can help you get started)

Be sure to include words that describe your child's:

SPIRITUAL STRENGTHS
MENTAL STRENGTHS

romantic
busy
kind
artistic
careful
convincing
friendly
gentle
loyal
distinctive
perfectionist
exact
tenacious
tenacious
ambitious
outgoing
steadfast
poised
strong
considerate
fulfilled
manager
open-minded
talented
witty
systematic
trustworthy
foresight
empathetic
cheerful
energetic
daring
coordinated

investing
strong-willed
motivated
understanding
disciplined
self-reliant
persistent
neat
caring
thinker
clever
self-determined
well-informed
creative
orderly
individualistic
searching
appreciative
fair-minded
respected
flexible
likes new ideas
forceful
predictable
intelligent
encouraging
imaginative
pursuing
compassionate
motivating
disciplined
risk taker
loyal

PHYSICAL STRENGTHS
EMOTIONAL STRENGTHS

serene
organizer
tactful
committed
spontaneous
commanding
tolerant
goal-directed
progressive
sharp
capable
certain
looked up to
dedicated
courageous
consistent
honorable
productive
determined
planner
efficient
cooperative
dependable
comforting
sociable
serious
adaptable
forgiving
visionary
artistic
sharing
courageous
fun-loving

prudent
confident
tireless
industrious
thoughtful
expressive
settled
persuasive
affectionate
graceful
reliable
leader
growing
eager
active
influential
giving
original
thrifty
unselfish
self-aware
self-directed
adjusted
inquiring
practical
unique
precise
listener
humorous
athletic
caring
patient
perceptive

9. Your child needs you to be an example.

Influencing a Child

A message every parent should read, because your children are watching and doing as you do, not as you say.

“When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you hang my first painting on the refrigerator, and I immediately wanted to paint another one.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you feed a stray cat, and I learned that it was good to be kind to animals.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make my favorite cake for me, and I learned that little things can be the special things in life.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I heard you say a prayer, and I knew there is a God I could always talk to, and I learned to trust in God.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you make a meal and take it to a friend who was sick, and I learned that we all have to help take care of each other.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you give of your time and money to help people who had nothing, and I learned that those who have something should give to those who don't.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I felt you kiss me good night, and I felt loved and safe.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw you take care of our house and everyone in it, and I learned we have to take care of what we are given.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw how you handled your responsibilities, even when you didn't feel good, and I learned that I would have to be responsible when I grow up.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw tears come from your eyes and I learned that sometimes things hurt, but it's all right to cry.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw that you cared, and I wanted to be everything that I could be.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I learned most of life's lessons that I need to know to be good and productive person when I grow up.

When you thought I wasn't looking, I looked at you and wanted to say, “Thanks for all the things I saw, when you thought I wasn't looking.



10. Your child needs your unconditional love & support.

Welcome to Holland



I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it. Try to imagine how it would feel. It's like this . . .

When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous trip to Italy. You buy a bunch of guidebooks and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum, Michelangelo's David, the gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation the day finally arrives. You pack your bags, and off you go. Several hours later the plane lands. The flight attendant comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland!"

"Holland?!" you say, "What do you mean 'Holland'? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All of my life I wanted to go to Italy."

But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland, and there you must stay. The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible filthy disgusting place full of pestilence, famine, and disease. It's just a different place.

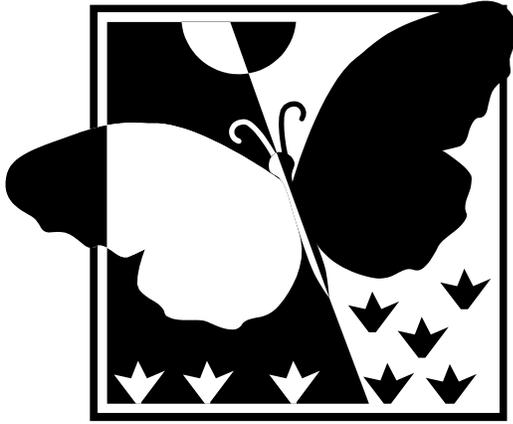
So you go out and buy new guidebooks. And you learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It is slower paced than Italy -- less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around. You notice that Holland has windmills, Holland has tulips, and Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going to Italy, and they're bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say, "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."

The pain of that will never, ever, ever go away because the loss of that dream is a very significant loss. But as you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, very lovely things about Holland.

Emily Pearl Kingsley



Butterflies

author unknown

A family in my neighborhood once brought in two chrysalides that were just about to hatch. They watched as the first one began to open, and the butterfly inside squeezed very slowly and painfully through a tiny hole that it chewed in one end of the chrysalid. After lying exhausted for about ten minutes following its agonizing emergence, the butterfly finally flew out the open window on its beautiful wings.

The family decided to help the second butterfly so that it would not have to go through such an excruciating ordeal. So, as it began to emerge, they carefully sliced open the chrysalid with a razor blade, doing the equivalent of a Caesarean section. The second butterfly never did spread its wings. Instead of flying away, it quietly died.

The family asked a biologist friend to explain what had happened. The entomologist said that the difficult struggle to emerge from the small hole actually pushes liquids from deep inside the butterfly's body cavity into the tiny capillaries in the wings, where they harden to complete the healthy and beautiful adult butterfly. By interrupting the process they family had ensured that the butterfly would never be able to fly.

In other words,

WITHOUT THE STRUGGLE, THERE ARE NO WINGS.

Book Recommendations:

Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. New York: Random House.

Haddon, Mark. 2003. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. ISBN- 0385512104

Hallowell, Edward, M. and Ratey, John J. 1994. *Driven to Distraction: Recognizing and Coping with Attention Deficit Disorder from Childhood through Adulthood*. ISBN- 0-684-80128-0

Levine, Mel, M.D. 1990. *Keeping A Head in School*. (A book about learning disorders and strengths for students 11-years- old and older). ISBN- 0838820697

Levine, Mel, M.D. 1993. *All Kinds of Minds: A Young Student's Book about Learning Abilities and Learning Disorders*. (For students 11-years-old and below). ISBN- 0-8388-2090-5

Levine, Mel, M.D. 2003. *The Myth of Laziness*. ISBN- 0-7432-1367-X

Salt, J.S. *Always Kiss Me Goodnight. Instructions on Raising the Perfect Parent*. ISBN 0-517-88738-X

Silver, Debbie. 2005. *Drumming to the Beat of Different Marchers: Finding the Rhythm for Differentiated Learning*. ISBN: 0865306087