

**Grooming Your Child for Greatness:  
Strategies That Work**  
a NSLA School **Parent Empowerment Workshop**  
February, 2018  
Presented by **Dr. Gail L. Thompson**  
Equity and Professional Development Expert: Illuminate Education  
Website: [www.drgailthompson.com](http://www.drgailthompson.com)  
Email: [gthompson@illuminateed.net](mailto:gthompson@illuminateed.net)

### **Theme**

As a parent or guardian, you are powerful, because you have been entrusted with the care of a precious child. The ways in which you use your power on a daily basis will have a huge impact on the type of adult your child becomes. If you use your power wisely, your child can have a great future.

### **Basic Parenting Strategies**

1. Know that loving your child and merely being involved in his/her life are not enough.
2. Deal with and get help for any personal issues that will cause you to engage in negative parenting behaviors.
3. Deal with your mental baggage.
4. Make sure that you have the right attitudes and beliefs about your child.
5. Know the difference between discipline and abuse.
6. Know how to help your child during the elementary, middle, and high school years.

### **Strategies to Help Your Child Succeed at School and in Life**

- Emphasize the importance of education by making learning activities, academic skill-building exercises, and educational games priorities at home.
- Don't allow your child to pick on, tease, ridicule, or bully high-achieving students.

- Don't permit your child to walk, talk, and dress like a thug or gang member, or permit your child to wear revealing and age-inappropriate clothing.
- Teach your child how to deal with "haters" and the "Mean Girl and Mean Boy Syndrome."

### **Reading Strategies**

- Help your child develop good reading skills.
- Encourage your child to check out books from the school library or classroom library on a regular basis.
- Read to your younger children daily or ask older children to read to them.
- Ask your child to read to you on a regular basis. (This can take place while you're cooking dinner, doing the laundry, or some other household chore.)
- Encourage your child to read to his/her younger brothers and sisters.
- Create personalized books with your child.
- In order to ensure that your child is understanding the reading material, ask him/her to tell you what the story or reading assignment is about.
- If your child does not know a word in the story or textbook, ask him/her to look up the word in a dictionary and write the meaning on an index card. The child can keep a box of index cards of new words and review them often.
- Model reading by letting your child see you read books, newspapers, and magazines for pleasure.

### **Math Strategies**

- If your child has weak math skills, you can help him/her improve them by using elementary-level math workbooks, and then, higher level math books.
- By the time that your child is required to do algebra, make sure that he/she knows the "order of operations": parentheses, exponents, multiply, divide, add, and subtract, and make sure that he/she knows how to *perform* each operation.
- Make sure that your child learns all of the rules about adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing numbers that have positive and negative signs.
- Be diligent about making sure that your child has high enough math grades in order for him/her to be prepared to go into the college-preparatory high school math courses.
- Learn the difference between the college-preparatory high school math courses and the non-college preparatory courses.
- During summer, winter break, and spring break, insist that your child spends part of the time reading for recreational purposes, and improving his/her math skills.

### **Writing Strategies**

- Make sure that your child knows how to write a basic sentence that consists of a subject and a predicate.

- Make sure that your child knows how to write a basic paragraph: topic sentence, supporting details, closing statement
- Make sure that your child knows how to write an essay: introduction, body, conclusion
- Familiarize yourself with the writing standards for your child's grade level.
- Make sure that your child spends an adequate amount of time on writing assignments, instead of waiting until the last minute.
- Remind your child to proofread his/her work multiple times before he/she gives it to the teacher.

### **Positive Behavior Strategies**

- Make sure that your child understands school and classroom rules.
- Read the "Cradle to Prison Pipeline" report.
- Read the "Dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline" report.
- Talk to your child about bullying, fighting, and "Zero Tolerance Policies."
- Teach your child to treat adults and other children respectfully.
- Teach your child the difference between an "inside" voice and an "outside" voice.
- Teach your child not to talk back to teachers, school administrators, or other individuals who are authority figures, even when the adult-authority figure appears to be wrong.
- Teach your child to use his/her time wisely when the child finishes class work early.
- Never condone inappropriate behavior.
- Teach your child non-violent ways to resolve conflicts.

### **College Preparation Strategies**

- Start to develop a college-going mindset in your child as early as possible.
- Explain why attending college is important.
- Take your child to visit local colleges and universities.
- Expose your child to college-educated individuals who are down-to-earth.
- Enroll your child in college-preparatory and summer enrichment programs.
- Make sure that your child takes the required number of courses and the correct math, English, and science courses that are necessary to enroll in college.
- Help your child learn how to navigate the college admissions process, find out about application deadlines, how to get applications, how to apply for financial aid, etc.
- Use the Internet, bookstores, college graduates, and school counselors as resources.
- Encourage your child to select friends who have the same values that your child has been taught.
- Protect your child from negative family members who can become bad role models.
- Protect your child from organizations and individuals who have an anti-education agenda.
- Protect your child from individuals who will ridicule, disparage, or undermine the values that you are instilling in your child.

## **How to Work Effectively With Educators**

- Always try to be polite and respectful.
- Plan what you are going to say ahead of time by making an outline, consisting of your main concerns and outcomes that you would like to see.
- Be persistent and unwavering in serving as an advocate for your child.
- Don't use put downs, profanity, insults, or a condescending tone or language.
- Don't point your finger, roll your eyes, yell, put your hands on your hips, roll your neck, or engage in behaviors that are viewed as combative, hostile, or threatening.
- Don't let educators' degrees, credentials, level of education, or big words intimidate you or make you feel dumb or inferior.
- Don't be embarrassed or ashamed to ask educators to repeat, re-explain, or give examples to make what they are saying easier to understand.
- Keep a "paper trail," consisting of names, dates, and a description of all meetings and telephone conferences with school personnel.
- Put your concerns in writing and keep copies of any letters, notes, etc. that you send to school personnel.

## **Continuing to Empower Yourself**

- Visit libraries and bookstores on a regular basis to find new information about parenting tips, and how to improve the quality of your child's life.
- Visit your child's school as often as you can.
- Stay in touch with your child's teachers to find out how your child is doing academically.
- Use the Internet to Find Additional Resources:
  - National PTA: Contains Parent Guides and Tips
  - Reading Rockets: Contains Strategies, Reading Guides, and Research for Teachers and Parents
  - Put Reading First: Helping Your Child Learn to Read: A Parent Guide from the National Reading Panel
  - Read, Write, Think (International Reading Association) Contains Valuable Information for Parents and Teachers

## **Homework**

In order to strengthen your parenting skills, use the following scale and statements to measure your weekly progress:

**Good   Satisfactory   Needs to Improve**

- I spent quality time with my child/children.

- I made sure that my child/children arrived at school on time.
- I made sure that my child/children attended school each day this week.
- I read to my child/children or had my child/children read to me or siblings.
- I encouraged and complimented my child/children.
- I hugged my child/children.
- I told my child/children "I love you."
- I asked my child/children to tell me about what happened at school.
- I made sure that my child/children completed homework.
- I disciplined my child/children in appropriate ways when necessary.

### **References**

*Yes, You Can! Advice for Teachers Who Want a Great Start and a Great Finish With Their Students of Color* by Dr. Gail L. Thompson & Rufus Thompson

*Up Where We Belong: Helping African American and Latino Students Rise in School and in Life* by Dr. Gail L. Thompson

*Through Ebony Eyes: What Teachers Need to Know but Are Afraid to Ask About African American Students* by Dr. Gail L. Thompson

*Dear Beautiful! A Self-Empowerment Book for Black Women* by Dr. Gail L. Thompson

*A Brighter Day: How Parents Can Help African American Youth* by Dr. Gail L. Thompson

