

## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

**April 5-9** – Kingsport City Schools closed for Spring Break; Center open regular hours

**April** – St. Jude Trike-a-Thon for 3's and 4's

**April 20** – Kohl's Cares for Kids Day

**April 27** – Kingsport City Schools Kindergarten Registration

**May 19** – Last day for Kingsport City Schools

**May 24** – Official start of Summer Program

## **NEWS FROM THE OFFICE**

Last fall, we asked parents to contribute Kleenex, wipes, and hand sanitizer to their child's classroom. Our supplies have run out and we ask that you send these supplies again. We really appreciate you helping us out in this way!

If you would like for me to be able to communicate with you via email, please give me your email address. Sometimes, that is the preferred way!

As you know, all of our teachers take and display lots of pictures of your children. Developing film is very expensive. I have recently set up an account on Snapfish that will allow you to view pictures, make purchases, and donate gift certificates to our account. According to the company, if you want to view pictures on my account, you will need an account of your own. My account address at Snapfish.com is [kbaker@fbsumc.org](mailto:kbaker@fbsumc.org) and the password is "center." I will also be able to copy a link to the Center's Facebook page. If you want to donate to the photo developing fund, you can purchase a gift certificate at [www2.snapfish.com/storegiftcertificates](http://www2.snapfish.com/storegiftcertificates). We will be grateful for any donations! Please let me know if you have any difficulties with this.

## **Parenting Keys**



We all want to be good parents. We are all doing the best job we can with the circumstances of our lives. But time and again, I see parents struggling with the same five issues, over and over and over again. Struggling, fighting, sinking, and never really changing things for themselves or their children. Below, you will find the five most common parenting challenges and ways to succeed where others fail.

As you read, be aware of the areas in your family that need attention, but don't be critical of yourself or others. Simply become conscious of the areas that need change and begin to implement strategies, one at a time, and you *will* see major changes in your family's dynamic.

Before we begin to talk about the five great mistakes that parents make, I want to make one important point: So often we find ourselves parenting in moment-to-moment, chaotic situations. Parenting is not just about situation control! In order to be a really great parent, you have to keep the big picture in mind. What do you want for your children? What life skills do you want them to have? What values do you think are the most important to pass along to them?

Here's what I want for my kids: I want my children to be healthy in all aspects of life: relational, physical, spiritual/emotional, creative and financial. I want my children to have the skills to handle conflict, to be empathetic and caring and to be passionate about whatever work they choose to do in the world. I want my children to understand the importance of nurturing, loving relationships - with themselves, with others, and with God. Keeping these goals in mind, and understanding that parenting goes way beyond situation control, I can now go beyond unconditional love to setting healthy boundaries and consciously modeling for my children every behavior and value that I want them to master.

Do you see? Great parenting doesn't happen in chaotic moments of stress and fear. Great parenting happens constantly, consciously, as we model and teach life skills to our children. Parenting goes beyond behavior modification, way beyond punishment for past aggression and far beyond simple rules and regulations. To truly make parenting a positive endeavor, we have to be proactive about teaching life skills, and remember the great goal: happy, healthy children.

**Exercise:** Take some time to answer the following questions, with as much detail as possible. Then pick one answer to start working on today. Perhaps there's a value that you want to start working on with your children, like peace, abundance, orderliness, or kindness. Maybe there's a life skill that you realize they need to begin to learn, like how to approach conflict in a healthy way or how to be financially independent. Begin to work these values and skills into your everyday teaching moments and watch your family thrive!

1. What do you want for your children?
2. What skills do you want them to have as adults?
3. What values are important to you?
4. What is one aspect of your family dynamic that you would like to change today?
5. What are your goals for your children in each of these areas:
  - a. Finances (often tied to creativity and career choice)
  - b. Relationships (with family, with friends and others)
  - c. Spirituality and/or Religion (relationship with God)
  - d. Creativity (often tied to career choice)
  - e. Physical Health

Happy children don't just happen. They have conscious, connected parents. They feel loved in every moment - a love that surpasses all behaviors and challenges. Happy children have relaxed, contented parents who remember that in order to be great parents they must first be aware humans. Happy children have parents who aren't afraid to make rules and who aren't afraid to change the rules when they aren't working. In

order to have authentically happy children, we must have happy families.

Remember, this is not about fixing people: it's about making small changes that will improve your family's communication, connection and joy of life. Bringing blame and aggression to the table is not the way to improve things. Real change is only possible when each member of the family is being open-minded and self-aware. Do your best to begin again, wipe away the hurts of the past, and start to learn and implement new techniques and parenting styles. You can do it! I believe in you and in your family's ability to be strong and happy.

## 1. Anger and Aggression

Every child has to learn how to handle his strong emotions. There's no way out of this human experience without experiencing strong feelings. How we handle anger is one of the most important life skills we will ever learn. So many of life's great mistakes are made in moments of anger and fear - mistakes that can literally ruin a life.

Few of us were actively taught how to handle our emotions. Instead, we were taught to stuff them down, stamp them out, cry alone (if you can cry at all) and "be strong." What if it were the case that true strength lays not in destroying emotion, but in experiencing it?

We all get angry sometimes. The question is: what do we *do* in those moments? Do we lash out verbally, and sometimes physically? Do we stuff the anger down, down, down until it explodes into rage *or disease*? Do we relive the moment, feeling that anger again and again because we don't know what to do with it?

The reason I ask these questions is because you are your children's first and most important teacher. Think about what tools you want to give your children and begin to model for them the best way to handle these strong emotions. Here's what I want for my children: I want my children to be able to feel and then release their anger. I want them to learn how to communicate in healthy and appropriate ways even when they feel strongly emotional. I want them to know that their emotions are okay and that they are actually in charge of their emotions - never a victim. Think about what you want for

your children and begin to behave in ways that show them how to deal with their emotions.

Here are a few simple ideas:

- When your child is angry, allow him to feel that anger. Validate it. "I see that you feel really angry." If he wants to, allow him to talk it out. But don't try to talk him out of his feelings. Let him own them, then he will be able to put them aside and find a constructive way to handle the situation.
- Help her to think of positive, appropriate ways to deal with the situation that made her so angry. Does she need to have a conversation with someone? Maybe she just needs to change what she's thinking about the situation. Sometimes, things happen that are simply not fair. Maybe she just needs to feel angry for a while.
- I often encourage children to stamp their feet and pump their fists as they really feel their anger. Emotions should be worked out through the physical and energetic systems. Telling children that "stamping their feet gives the energy to Mother Earth, who uses her magic to turn it into flowers" is a wonderful way to help children release their anger.
- Often, anger is a cover for another emotion, usually fear. When he's ready, try to find out what the fear is beneath the anger. If he's angry because his best friend sat with someone else on the bus, maybe he's really afraid that he's losing his friend. Reassurance that he is loved and accepted is often enough to help move him beyond his fear.
- Children who experience chronic anger are often reacting to outer chaos. Make sure that your child has as much consistency as possible in her life. Healthy boundaries are critical to a child's emotional stability. Creating healthy boundaries means setting rules for the entire family's safety and behavior and following through on those rules. Nothing makes a child more insecure, and, often, angry than having a parent that he can't respect. Commanding respect means

following through and keeping your word. (We'll talk more about that in Part 2 of this book.)

- Feed her need for love and acceptance and feed her body with healthy food and watch her blossom like the flower she is! We'll talk more about this in Part 5, but proper sleep and nutrition is often all it takes to help a child control her behavior more. This is especially true of those children who have otherwise healthy families. Watch the sugar intake and make sure she's getting to bed early and you may be surprised at how quickly she settles down.

### **Real-Life Story:**

The angriest child I ever knew was a boy named Anthony. Anthony lived with his mother, who worked hard to provide for them, but was often verbally and sometimes physically abusive. Anthony was tough on the outside, sometimes violent with other children, and had a grin that would make the Venus de Milo smile back.

Anthony got in trouble on a daily basis. He couldn't seem to keep his hands to himself and his temper was quick and fierce. I kind of got used to Anthony being the "bad kid" and, I'm ashamed to say, started to react to his behavior instead of looking for the real feelings behind those behaviors. But one day, I had a moment of pure fun with him and I started to see him for what he really was: a scared little boy who rarely had a word of affection given to him. When I let my guard down and gave him a moment to be real, we immediately became friends. He rarely acted out in my class again and we shared many jokes together from then on.

The other thing I did for Anthony was that I started to validate his feelings. When he was angry, I no longer attempted to shut him down out of fear. I simply took him aside and gave him a safe place to be angry - and he had a lot in his life to be angry about! Letting him own his feelings was key to his ability to stop acting them out on the other kids.

But, you'll notice, I had to see beneath the shell of anger and really feel affection for him before he could feel safe enough with me to share

his feelings. *Sometimes, even parents forget to see the truth beyond the shells of their children.* We can get so caught up in their behaviors that we forget to love the children behind the behaviors. A little unconditional love goes a long way toward helping children to feel safe with their feelings. And remember, teaching them positive ways to handle their emotions is critical to their current and future well-being.

*If you struggle with a child who has chronic anger, and you would like more help, contact me at [Shelly@ParentingKeys.com](mailto:Shelly@ParentingKeys.com)*

## **CLASSROOM NEWS**



### **Little Lambs**

Spring is in the air! The Little Lambs love to look out the windows and see the birds at the feeds and all the signs of spring.

We would like to wish Jake the best as he moves to the Butterfly room with Piper and his friends – we really miss them!

Jacob and Isabella are pulling up to the shelves and Katie and Lily are crawling all over the room. Tiffany is learning to crawl forward now and Matthew is sitting alone to play with his friends.

The Little Lambs would like to welcome Jonas and Ruby to the room! They are adjusting well.

With the weather getting warmer, please make sure you have an extra set of clothes that are lightweight and short sleeved. Also, the Little Lambs sometimes go outside for a walk, so please bring in sunscreen labeled with your child's name. There will be a permission slip in the room for you to sign allowing us to use the sunscreen on your child.

If you would like, you may bring in a family picture for our family tree.

Ms. Melinda, Mrs. Heather, Mrs. Barbara, Mrs. Heather, Ms. Hannah



### **Butterflies**

We are so excited that spring is here, though recently it's felt like summer! We have been taking full advantage, and the children have been enjoying getting to be outside once again. We would like to ask parents to bring in tear-free sunscreen for your children, along with an extra change of clothes that are appropriate for warmer weather. Thank you to all our parents who brought food for our parties – it was much enjoyed!

We welcome the newest addition to our class, Jake Burns. He has adjusted very well and is enjoying all the new experiences of the toddler room.

We all enjoy being able to have your children in our classroom. Aiden, Dominic, and Eli love to ride the cars. Kenadee, Lexie, Mya, and Bailey love to carry around their baby dolls. Braylon loves to be read to, and Piper loves looking at the pictures. Jake loves to push around the lawn mower.

Mrs. Kim T., Ms. Nancy, Ms. April, Mrs. Kim J, Ms. Rachel



### **Friendly Frogs**

We are excited to say the Friendly Froggies are back! We are going to have an extra-special spring filled with many activities, fun with friends, and trips to the library. We are working on our colors, counting 1-10, ABC's and practicing our life skills. We are pleased to welcome a new friend, Abbey Wells, to our room. We are starting our field trips back to the library for Story Time this week and we will continue also through the summer for their Summer

Reading Program. Some of the topics we have covered so far have been the weather, insects, colors, and everything green.

Our Easter egg hunt was a hit! All the Froggies had a great time and pictures from the hunt will be posted soon.

We have gotten off to a hopping great start for spring!

Mrs. Kim, Mrs. Melinda, Mrs. Kim J., Ms. Rachel



### **Dancing Ducks**

Spring has sprung! Hallelujah! We are so grateful for the warm, beautiful bright sun. The sandbox and tire swing are the favorites on the playground. Since it is warm, please make sure your child has weather appropriate clothes. Sandals and crocs are not allowed due to possible injury to feet.

We are still collecting money for St. Jude – we're trying to fill our bank.

Our gerbil did escape Monday night, but was captured by Tonia and Rachel at nap time yesterday. Thank goodness Lisa was not here!

I wanted to let you know about the book orders. Every time you order books, our classroom gets bonus points that help our room to earn free books. So check over the order forms when they come home! There are some great deals.

Ms. Tonia, Mrs. Lisa, Mr. Brett, Ms. Hannah, Ms. Rachel



### **Busy Bumblebees**

We are so excited for the beautiful spring weather – being able to go outside to play! We hope everyone had a good Easter and we would like to thank everyone who came to our Easter Dinner. We have many fun things planned for the spring and summer!

Quotes from the Bumblebees:

Brock – “Was there really dinosaurs on the ark?”

Aria – “I have an ideal Jesus.”

Tiara – “Just chill out Missy!”

Hayden – “Where did you get that dress at?”

Brooks – “It’s called scabs” (hulls on peanuts)

Kayla – “My belly is crumbling”

Reagan – “I’m gone to get jarberries” (strawberries)

Hannah B. – “I have been seriously thinking about changing my name.”

Hannah S. – “I caught a lot of eggs.”

Thomas – “Poofy heads are the things you blow off dandelions.”

Andrew – “My big sister is my best friend.”

Caleb – “Will you not take me out of the car table if I go potty?”

Brylee – “I’m going to have a baby. It’s up in Heaven and God is fixing her.”

Please remember to check your child’s cubby to make sure they have a complete change of summer clothes and please send sunscreen if your child needs it.

Also, the Bumblebees would like to say a special thank you to Mrs. Ramona for bringing all kinds of fun things to do with our lesson plans.

Mrs. Jennifer, Mrs. Missy, Mrs. Jo, Mrs. Heather



## Angels

The Angels have had an exciting month! We planted beans and grass. We enjoyed watching the beans and grass grow. We celebrated St. Patrick's with a party and dancing the Irish jig. Thank you, parents, for the goodies for the party. We also celebrated Matthew's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday! We are always working on writing the alphabet and our names. We welcome our new friend Kaleb to our classroom. The Angels are very excited to play outside and enjoy the warm weather. We are looking to spring time!

Ms. Bettie, Ms. Tiffany



## \* Bouncing Bears

The Bouncing Bears have had a wonderful March, exploring Lent and Passover through The Story of Easter, The Prince of Egypt, and The Passover Story. We enjoyed a Seder meal provided by Jonathan and his mother and heard a wonderful story called The Spider's Passover about Sammie the Spider. We learned how the Easter egg came to be, we hatched an addition egg, we explored  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$  and 1 dozen as well as adding and subtracting. We heard the story Peter Cottontail and Benjamin Bunny. We learned about planting and new life and are extending our spring focus on growing, insects, bugs and beetles. We have touched on traditions and legends such as meal time, gatherings, shamrocks, and leprechauns. We had a fun St. Patrick's party and thank our parents for all they do.

We helped Holden celebrate his 5<sup>th</sup> birthday on the 31<sup>st</sup> and are waiting for Abigail to turn 5 in April.

We are awaiting the arrival of our caterpillars and frogs (tadpoles). We are

beginning our Personal Safety talks and are also learning about stranger-safety.

We are currently exploring "drought." We are experimenting with our "dried up" grass and are hoping our watering can will revive it. (drought causes famine)

Jane Ann is returning and we are all celebrating!

Mrs. Debbie, Mrs. Barbara



## Big Kids

We are enjoying springtime and being able to play outside. I am amazed at the energy and physical strength of our students. Whether inside or outside, they get plenty of exercise and I am so thankful for that part of our program.

For this article, I decided to ask the Big Kids what they liked best about the After School Program. Their opinions are very important to us, and they offered helpful ideas. You won't be surprised at their comments, but I was pleased that they liked so many things! Here is their list: **1.** playing outside and in the gym, **2.** playing with friends, **3.** playing in centers such as art where they draw, paint, make jewelry and work on projects, **4.** blocks where they can build racetracks or just stack blocks and see what they become, **5.** kitchen where they cook and create restaurants, **6.** all kinds of toys such as action figures, dolls, animals and games, **7.** having snack time, and **8.** having a movie day.

Do you know how nice it is to hear the kids mention liking their teachers? Brett and I appreciate them and all of you!

The summer promises to bring even more activities and opportunities. Please join us if you can.

Thank you,

Ms. Marcy, Mr. Brett