

Parents are the most essential and effective teachers!!!

"...by the time the kids are in MS, we can't reach many of the kids because they've already been trained up in a very different way." where are parents now? Where do they need to be? How can we influence them?"

Theological Impetus for Primary education of children being in the home:

"1 These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, 2 so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. 3 Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you.

4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."

- Deuteronomy 6:1-9

- Evidence which illustrates the need for high quality parenting during the crucial years of a child's development:
 - From *Development through the Lifespan*, 3rd edition, Laura E. Berk:
 - Infancy and toddlerhood
 - Brain development
 - Early on, faster than any other organ
 - Stimulation determines which neurons will survive and continue to establish new synapses
 - First few years, brain plasticity is high
 - Heredity and early experience contribute to brain organization
 - Cognitive development
 - (Piaget) As child interacts with environment, he / she will be forming schemes, the psychological structures in which reality is understood.
 - Today, researchers believe that we are born with more built-in equipment for making sense of the world than Piaget assumed.
 - Information processing
 - As infants get older, they remember experiences longer. They also attend to more aspects of the environment and take information in more quickly.

- During the first year, infants group stimuli into increasingly complex categories, and this categorization shifts from perceptual to a conceptual basis.
 - By the second year, children become active categorizers, spontaneously sorting objects during play.
 - According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, complex mental activities originate in social interaction. Through the support and guidance of more skilled partners, infants master tasks within the zone of proximal development – ie. tasks just ahead of their current capacities. As early as 2 years old, cultural variations in social experiences affect mental strategies.
 - Mental development
 - Research with the Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME) shows that an organized, stimulating home environment and parental encouragement, involvement, and affection **repeatedly** predict early mental test scores.
 - Quality of infant and toddler child care has a major impact on mental development. Standards for developmentally appropriate practice specify program characteristics that meet the developmental needs of young children. Intensive early intervention can prevent the gradual declines in intelligence and the poor academic performance of many poverty-stricken children. Findings of the Carolina Abecedarian Project reveal an IQ advantage still evident 21 years of age and better school achievement, which translated into greater high school graduation rates for the treatment group than the control group.
 - Developing compliance and self-control
 - Respond to the toddler with sensitivity and support.
 - Provide advance notice when the toddler must stop an enjoyable activity.
 - Offer many prompts and reminders.
 - Respond to self-controlled behavior with verbal and physical approval.
 - Encourage sustained attention. Children who can shift attention from a captivating stimulus and focus on a less attractive alternative are better at controlling their impulses.
 - Support language development. Early language development is related to self-control. During the second year, children begin to use language to remind themselves of adult expectations.
 - Gradually increase rules in accord with the toddler's developing capacities. As cognition and language improve, toddlers can follow more rules related to safety, respect for people and property, family routines, manners, and simple chores.
 - Emotional development
 - During toddlerhood, self-awareness and adult instruction provide the foundation for self-conscious emotions, such as shame, embarrassment, and pride. Caregivers help infants with emotional self-regulation by relieving distress, engaging in stimulating play, and discouraging negative emotion. During the second year, growth in representation and language leads to more effective ways of regulating emotion.
- 2-4 years

- cognitive attainments
 - shows a dramatic increase in representational activity
 - takes the perspective of others
 - distinguishes animate beings from inanimate objects; denies that magic can alter everyday experiences
 - notices transformations, reverses thinking, and explains events logically in familiar contexts
 - categorizes objects on the basis of common function and behavior and devises ideas about underlying characteristics that category members share.
 - Sorts familiar objects into hierarchically organized categories.
- 4-7 years
 - becomes increasingly aware that make-believe are representational activities
 - replaces magical beliefs about fairies, goblins, and events that violate expectations with plausible explanations.
 - Shows improved ability to distinguish appearance from reality

Fostering a healthy self-image in young children

○ **Build a positive relationship**

- Indicate that you want to be with the child by arranging times to be fully available. “Quality time is found in the midst of quantity time.” (Walt Larimore, MD, *The Highly Healthy Child*)
- Listen without being judgmental, and express some of your own thoughts and feelings. Mutual sharing helps children feel valued.

○ **Nurture success.**

- Adjust expectations appropriately and provide assistance when asking the child to do something beyond his or her current limits. Accentuate the positive in the child’s work or behavior.

○ **Foster the freedom to choose.**

- Choosing gives children a sense of responsibility and control over their own lives. Where children are not yet capable of deciding on their own, involve them in some aspect of the choice, such as when and in what order a task will be done.

○ **Acknowledge the child’s emotions**

- Accept the child’s strong feelings, and suggest constructive ways to handle them. When a child’s negative emotion results from an affront to his or her self-esteem, offer sympathy and

comfort along with a realistic appraisal of the situation so that the child feels supported and secure.

Foundations of Morality

- Discipline using fear of punishment and loss of parental love does not foster conscience development.
- Social learning theory regards reinforcement and modeling as the basis for moral action. Effective adult models of morality are warm, powerful, and practice what they preach.
- Frequent, harsh punishment does not promote moral internalization and socially desirable behavior.
- When parents use punishment, they can increase its effectiveness by being consistent, maintaining a warm relationship with the child, and offering explanations.
- The cognitive-developmental perspective views children as active thinkers about social rules. By age 4, children consider intentions in making moral judgments and distinguish truthfulness from lying. Preschoolers also distinguish moral imperatives from social conventions and matters of personal choice. Through sibling and peer interaction, children work out their first ideas about justice and fairness. Parents who discuss moral issues with their children help them reason about morality.
- Ineffective discipline and a conflict-ridden family atmosphere promote and sustain aggression in children. Televised violence also triggers childhood aggression. Young children's limited understanding of TV content increases their willingness to accept uncritically and imitate what they see. Teaching parents effective child-rearing practices, providing children with social problem-solving training, reducing family hostility, and shielding children from violent TV can reduce aggressive behavior.

Parenting Styles:

Permissive >> Authoritative >> Authoritarian

- Compared to permissive and authoritarian styles, the authoritative style of parenting promotes cognitive, emotional, and social competence (also spiritual). Warmth, explanations, and reasonable demands for mature behavior account for the effectiveness of the authoritative style.
- Child maltreatment is related to factors within the family, community, and larger culture. Child and parent characteristics often feed on one another to produce abusive behavior. Unmanageable parental stress and social isolation greatly increase the chances that abuse and neglect will occur. When a society approves of physical force as a means of solving problems, child abuse is promoted.
- Maltreated children are impaired in emotional self-regulation, empathy and sympathy, self-concept, social skills, and academic motivation. Over time, they show serious adjustment problems.

- *Successful prevention of child maltreatment requires effort at the family, community, and societal levels.*

Parents who create stimulating learning environments at home, monitor their child's academic progress, help with homework, and communicate often with teachers have children who consistently show superior academic progress.

Most essential is the marriage of the parents:

The marriage is indicative of the relational health of the mother and father; raising children is a spiritual and relational endeavor.

15 Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? **Because He was seeking godly offspring.**

So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth.

16 "I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel, "and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment," says the LORD Almighty.

So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith." Malachi 2:15, 16

The height, depth, and breadth of love in which a child grows up will determine her health, vitality, development, and success in all of life. In the invisible realities of a marriage sits the reality of what is desired for children – truth and honesty, faithfulness, selflessness, sincerity, compassion, humility, beauty, grace, wisdom, understanding, righteousness, true unfailing love!

In the final admonition of the Old Testament, before the Advent of the Messiah, Israel is exhorted to...

Realize and acknowledge that God is faithful to His covenant with Levi (the worship leader of the community who taught families to follow the Lord)

- **The Covenant of Life and Peace**

- calls for reverence
- true instruction

- produces godly offspring
- preserves knowledge

4 "Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel. 5 "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. 6 He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse." Malachi 4:4-6

Primary problem identified:

The hearts of the fathers are not turned towards their children and the hearts are not turned towards their fathers.

When this occurs, God strikes the land with a curse!

“God is looking for families where the hearts of the fathers are turned to the children and the hearts of the children are turned to their fathers. That is, families where the biblical faith of the fathers is maintained. These are families in which there is repentance from sin, and the authority structure in the home is honored and respected. God is looking for Malachi 4:6 families.”

- <http://www.growingchristians.org/rfgc/malachi/malachi4a.htm>

Evangelical impetus in ministering and equipping parents of our students:

Through Christ, people can once again become true lovers of God and each other in spirit and in truth. These are true worshippers of God who obey His commands to love even as He loves.

“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." Jn.13:35