

Raising Strong Girls

Raising strong girls in today's society is no easy feat! We parents are up against some pretty tough and savvy opponents -- best friends, jewel-encrusted cell phones, and instant messenger. However, we can give our daughters the tools to thrive with grace and strength in this media- saturated world.

Listed below are some ways we can give our girls the armor they need to fend off negative influences and come out the other side smiling:

- **Encourage diverse interests:** Help your daughter realize she has other talents than talking on the phone. Sign her up for something she's interested in such as dance, karate, kick boxing, yoga, a photography class or an outward-bound adventure. Diversifying your child's interest will increase her self-esteem and feelings of self-worth.
- **Help her feel buddha-ful:** It is important to feel beautiful from within. Help your daughter talk positively to herself. Help

her to understand what she is saying to herself throughout the day and make sure the messages are positive and encouraging. Also, notice what you are saying about yourself. Kids pick up on how we talk about ourselves. Try to stay positive.

- **Empower her:** Tell your daughter only she gets to choose what and who she is and no one else has the power to define her. Have her make a list of everything she is and hopes to be. Only positive things, please. Help her realize she is the only one who has access to this list. She is the only one who gets to add, change or delete things. So when someone says she is a "bad dancer," have her consult her list. Teach her to say, "Oops, 'bad dancer' isn't on there, so I'm not going to own that. Thanks, though."
- **Don't take it personally:** Help your daughter realize that 99 percent of the time people are thinking about themselves, their own lives and their families. That means no one is really

concerned with what your daughter is wearing or what she said at lunch time. In a loving way, teach her that everything is not all about her.

- **Respect and trust:** Teach your daughter to respect herself and her family. Tell your daughter that your family is based around respect and trust. Family members listen to and hear what each other has to say. They also treat one other with love and understanding. You should work toward earning your daughter's trust by creating a safe environment in which your daughter can confide in you. Adolescence is an especially difficult time for girls. They need to know they can come to you with absolutely anything and you will be able to listen empathetically and rationally.

Above all, fill your daughter with love and encouragement. You can never be too cheesy when expressing your love to your daughter. No matter what her reaction is, tell her everyday how capable, intelligent and beautiful she is!

Written by Erin A. Williams, LMSW

The Family Center's Annual Parenting Symposium

Saturday, March 8
8 a.m check-in until 12:30 p.m.

Fee is \$20 per person before March 1,
\$25 per person after March 1.

Grosse Pointe South High School,
11 Grosse Pointe Blvd.
Grosse Pointe Farms.

To register, see page 4.

8:30 a.m. Keynote Address "**Kids Are Worth It!**" with Barbara Coloroso

Session I at 10 a.m.

- A. The Bully, The Bullied and The Bystander – Barbara Coloroso
- B. Keeping the Shine on Your Marriage – Mary Anne Lushe, LMSW
- C. Recognizing and Responding to The Signs (ADHD, autism, learning disabilities) – Aimee Miller, BA
- D. Parents: The Anti-Drug – Victoria Music, CPC-M

Session II at 11:30 a.m.

- E. Is This Normal? Coping with Adolescence – Dr. Karen Alton, MD
- F. The Whole Child – Denise Sweat, BS, SpA
- G. Raising Strong Girls – Erin Williams, LMSW
- H. How to Survive Parenthood Without Losing Your Mind or Your Marriage – Dennis Muzzi, LMSW

BOOK REVIEW

By Diane Strickler

The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander:

From Preschool to High School – How Parents and Teachers Can Help Break the Cycle of Violence.

By Barbara Coloroso

203 pp. HarperResource

Barbara Coloroso's thesis is that the terms "bully," "bullied" and "bystander" identify only roles being played by our children – three characters in a tragic play.

She writes, "A bully who gets what he wants from his target, a target who is afraid to tell, bystanders who watch, participate, or look away, and adults who see bullying as teasing or a necessary part of growing up is a deadly combination."

Most children at some time try out these roles – the posturing, the words and actions – but then they move on. The problem occurs when children become typecast and find it difficult to break out of that role. Consequently, they fail to develop more constructive social skills. Coloroso contends that children should never be labeled as being a bully, bullied or a bystander.

In the first half of her book, Coloroso describes the players and their inner motivation:

- Bullying is not about anger, but rather contempt. There is an imbalance of power, intent to harm and threat of further aggression and terror.
- The bullied has been singled out as an object of scorn, subject to verbal, physical or relational aggression. It is how the child responds to the bully that will influence whether she moves from target to victim.
- The bystanders are the supporting cast "who aid and abet the bully through acts of omission and commission." Coloroso addresses the factors that contribute to the breakdown of the bystanders' inner controls against antisocial behavior.



In part two, Coloroso helps parents to identify if they have a bully, a victim or bystander in the house and then she addresses what to do about those suspicions.

Coloroso's uplifting message is that the bully and the bullied can be moved out of their roles. The bystander can move to witness. We can mend and restore rather than isolate and punish. We can indeed rewrite the script.

Join The Family Center at our Parenting Symposium, Saturday, March 8 to hear Barbara Coloroso talk more on the principles that foster moral independence in our children and our role as parents and professionals in promoting the values of empathy, tolerance and compassion. For more information, see page 4.

Thank You's

Thank you, thank you to the following donors who responded to our annual appeal and to HOLLY FEST with gifts to The Family Center:

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From The Director

Several months ago, I made the decision that it was time for new leadership, new skills and new energy to take The Family Center forward. It has been nearly eight years since I wrote a concept paper that defined the need for a center of support for families in our community. My vision was an entity that linked parents and professionals to the resources they needed to meet the challenges of raising healthy children in an increasingly complex world.

As a pediatric and emergency room nurse and, later, as a school social worker in an inner city school, I saw tragedy and dysfunction. I became convinced that prevention - being proactive rather than reactive - was to be my *raison d'être*. After I moved to Grosse Pointe in 1997 and joined the Youth Summit, the opportunity arose to fulfill my mission.

It has been an amazing journey which was made possible by the incredible support of individuals in this community. Hundreds of you have shared your time, talent and treasure to the evolution of this nonprofit enterprise. Room does not permit me to list all your names, but you know who you are. Thank you! You made The Family Center not only possible, you made it successful.

Thank you to our Board of Directors who, although not happy to accept my resignation, was supportive and responsive. They formed a search committee to find our next Executive Director. They excelled in their task and have named Debbie Liedel to that position. I leave the leadership of The Family Center in her very capable hands that I know you - the community - will continue to support.

Letting go of The Family Center elicits the same emotions as when my children left home. There is a sense of sadness, but also great hope that the foundations are in place for more success as we reach ever greater numbers of caregivers and families who raise ever greater numbers of healthy, resilient and successful children.


Diane Strickler, Founder



Debbie Liedel and Diane Strickler
Photo courtesy of Donald Schulte,
www.notablestock.com

Events Calendar

PARTNERS IN PARENTING

Join The Family Center for four new **FREE** parenting classes offered in partnership with the pediatricians at St. John Hospital. Each one-hour session is followed by a question and answer period. Includes a light dinner and beverages.

- Wednesday, January 16 at 6:30 p.m. Healthy Life Styles: Discover easy ways to help your family with proper nutrition and exercise. Dr. Karen Alton
- Wednesday, February 20 at 6:30 p.m. Immunizations: Learn about new vaccines, the recommendations and schedule. Bring your questions.
- Wednesday, March 19 at 6:30 p.m. Soothing Your Baby: Have your baby become "The Happiest Baby on the Block" using Dr. Harvey Karp's techniques.
- Wednesday, April 16 at 6:30 p.m. Understanding Your Child's Temperament: Learn how to identify potential significant behavioral issues.

All sessions are held at St. John Hospital, Van Elslander Pavilion, Third Floor. Cardiology Conference Room. Sessions and parking are FREE. Registration is required. Call The Family Center at (313) 432-3832 or St. John Health Connect at (888) 440-7325.

YOUR CHILD & TECHNOLOGY: WHAT EVERY PARENT NEEDS TO KNOW

Are you a technologically challenged parent raising tech savvy children? Learn how our "millennial" children think; the social implications of technology they use; how technology is being used to enhance learning; and how to safeguard our children.

- Tuesday, February 5 at 7 p.m., FREE
Grosse Pointe North High School, Room B312, 707 Vernier Rd., Grosse Pointe Woods.
Space is limited: pre-registration is recommended by contacting The Family Center at (313) 432-3832 or info@familycenterweb.org.

PARENT PARTIES

Choose a topic of interest, decide upon a date, invite your friends and let the Family Center provide a professional facilitator for your discussion. Easy and convenient! Topics could include: communicating with your teen daughter, temper tantrums, sibling rivalry, discipline strategies, or anything that relates to childhood development or family functioning. Email: info@familycenterweb.org for information on how to plan a party or call (313) 432-3832.

PLAY CENTRAL

A place for parents, grandparents and all caregivers to play with their children while socializing with others.

- Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Fee is \$3 per family.
The Neighborhood Club upstairs gym, 17150 Waterloo, Grosse Pointe
- Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
First English Lutheran Church gym, 800 Vernier, Grosse Pointe Woods

Play Central will not meet Easter week, March 25 & 26

YOUNG CHILD CELEBRATION: GROWING UP GREEN

The Family Center's Month of the Young Child Celebration: Growing up Green
An afternoon of family fun with recycling races, crafts from art scraps, entertainment and yoga.

- Sunday, April 6 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Barnes Early Childhood Center. 20090 Morningside Dr., Grosse Pointe Woods
No registration required. Fee is \$5 per family

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The Family Center - Building healthy, resilient, successful kids...together
familycenterweb.org

REGISTER NOW FOR

The Family Center's 2008 Parenting Symposium

Please select first and second choice for each break-out session. Seating is limited at several sessions. Every attempt will be made to accommodate your first choice. No refunds.

	first	second		first	second
Session I	choice	choice	Session II	choice	choice
A. The Bully	_____	_____	E. Is this Normal?	_____	_____
B. Shine on Marriage	_____	_____	F. The Whole Child	_____	_____
C. Recognizing Signs	_____	_____	G. Raising Strong Girls	_____	_____
D. The Anti-Drug	_____	_____	H. Survive Parenthood	_____	_____

Mail check (\$20/person before March 1, \$25/person after March 1) payable with registration information to:

The Family Center, 20090 Morningside Dr., Grosse Pointe Woods, MI 48236

For more information, call **(313) 432-3832** or visit our Web site: familycenterweb.org.

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Years of children's birth(s) _____

Phone Number _____ E-mail Address _____