

Thursday Packet

Principal's Message

Kensington Elementary School

Judy Sanders, Principal

April 10, 2008

We frequently talk about the partnership between home and school, parent and teacher. Those of us who are educators know that we rely upon parents for so many things: we ask you to send your children to school on time, well-rested, and ready to learn. We ask you to help your children with their homework, to proofread their papers, to help them practice their spelling words. We ask for your assistance in the classroom, on the yard, in the library, and at fundraisers. One of the most important things we ask of parents, however, is rarely requested explicitly.

Parents teach children about the most important things in life. We teach our values, priorities and principals; our examples of good behavior can guide our children toward the high road when other roads look tempting. It is a well-known saying that parents are a child's first teacher. In reality, parents continue to teach their children long after those children enter school and begin to learn from other adults. We teach our children by our words and by our actions. They learn from watching and listening to us. They listen to what we say directly to them, and to what we say to others when we think they're not listening.

Remember that children do not learn our values simply by being *told* about them; they don't simply "do what we say, not what we do." They learn by seeing the people around them act on and uphold those values in their daily lives. By our behavior we can show our children that we respect others. We can show them our compassion and concern when others are suffering, and our own self-discipline, courage and honesty as we make difficult decisions. It is important to share our thinking with our children, to talk to them about how we make choices and to verbalize our decision-making. We can role-play situations in which we have taken courageous stands and allow them to see that we, too, are presented with a myriad of choices.

We need to be consistent in upholding the values we want our children to respect and not present them with conflicting values. We need to remember that abstract lessons that we offer to our children that are not backed up by our deeds are not going to be very effective. Our actions need to reflect what we want to teach our children; our children are constantly paying attention, and they are measuring us, and the lessons we teach, by the behavior we model. We are continually presented with "teachable" moments in our lives with our children: waiting our turn at the grocery store, obeying traffic laws when we drive, repaying money we borrow, treating all people with respect.

Remember that children grow and change so fast that their understanding of the world is constantly evolving. They need to be reminded of your expectations and values; they need to hear them stated in ways that are appropriate for their new stages of mental, emotional, and social development. Educating a child is a continually evolving process; parents are our partners in the process, and are the critical piece in the development of character and values.

Upcoming Dates to Remember:

- April 11 - Art Night
- April 13 - Dads' Club/Hilltop Outdoor Classroom Work Party
- April 15-18 - Scholastic Book Fair, School library
- April 22-May 20 - STAR testing
- May 8 - PTA Meeting
- May 10 - Carnival

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