



# Enriching the Parent

Information & Support  
for Families of Children with Special Needs  
Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, & Yancey

February 2009

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## WITH SUPPORT FROM

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## Upcoming Events: Support Group Meetings

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## Parent to Parent FSN-HC Presents: Pearls of Love and Logic Special Thoughts on Raising Kids



### Arguing

Young people need to know their parents mean it when they set limits. Parents need to know that there are ways to say "no" without waging a major battle.



I wish your children would thank you for having the strength to set limits. But children have never been known to say, "Thanks, Dad, I feel a lot more secure now that I know you mean what you say. Thanks for loving me enough to set these limits." Instead, they may pout, complain, stomp around, run to their rooms, whine, or talk back. This often leaves the adult angry and confused.

Why are children so testy when we give them limits that help build their sense of security and self-confidence? Children need to test limits just to make sure they are firm. Each youngster seems to have his or her own special testing routine. Some use anger, some use guilt, some are sneaky, while others use forgetting to test your resolve.

It helps parents to remember that kids hear the word "no" far too often. It seems to be a call to arms, a fighting word. A child often wages war against "no" in a very subtle way-by trying to get the parent to do all the thinking while he or she stands back and criticizes.

You can turn the tables on children by forcing them to do most of the thinking. **Just replace "no" by saying "yes" to something other than the child's explicit request/demand.** Use "thinking words" instead of "fighting

words." For example:

**Fighting words:** "No, you can't go out to play. You need to practice your lessons."

**Thinking words:** "Yes, you may go out to play as soon as you practice your lessons."

Most youngsters will try to argue when faced with "thinking words." However, since you started the conversation with "yes" instead of "no," you shouldn't feel guilty or explain or justify anything. State-of-the-art arguing is now in your hands. No matter what your child says, simply agree that it is probably true. Then add the word "and." Follow this by repeating your first assertion.

### Compare these two approaches:

Teen: I need to use the car to go skiing.

Dad: You can't use the car until you pay your gasoline bill.

Teen: But, Dad, I promised my friends.

Dad: Why don't you make them drive?

Teen: But you don't like the way they drive!

**Here's how Dad could guide the teen to do all the thinking:**

Teen: But, Dad, I promised my friends.

Dad: I'm sure that's true...and...feel free to use it as soon as you pay the bill.

Teen: But I have to buy the lift ticket.

Dad: I bet that's true too...and...feel free to use the car as soon as you pay...

Teen: I know! Don't say it again.

Easy-to-learn tools like the above example can be used to eliminate fights with your children.

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# Enriching the Parent



## Cherry Granola Hearts

Healthy Holiday Recipe

### Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup dried cherries or golden raisins
- 3 cups granola
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 4 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 2 tablespoons honey

### Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350-degrees. Lightly grease two cookie sheets.

In a small bowl, combine the dried cherries with enough hot tap water to cover. Set aside. In a large bowl, toss together the granola, flour and baking powder.

Stir in the butter, egg and honey until the mixture is evenly moistened. Drain the cherries and add them to the mixture, stirring until well combined. Scrape out the batter onto a clean surface and pat it into a 1/4-inch-thick rectangle.

Using a 1-1/2-inch heart-shaped cookie cutter, cut out cookies and place them 2 inches apart on the prepared cookie sheets. Reroll the scraps.

Bake the cookies for 12 to 15 minutes, until they are golden brown around the edges. Transfer the cookies to a wire rack to cool completely.



## Motivating School-Age Kids to Be Active

Sixty minutes. Ideally, that's how much physical activity kids should get each day of the week. But as kids get older, with increasing demands on their time, getting a full hour of exercise can become a challenge. Some kids may gravitate toward sedentary pursuits like watching TV and computer time. Even doing a lot of studying and reading, while important, can result in too little physical activity.

Meanwhile, during these years, kids often come to a fork in the road when it comes to sports. Those who are athletic might end up increasing their time and commitment to sports, which is great for their physical fitness. But the more casual athletes may lose interest and decide to quit teams and leagues. Unless they find replacement activities, their physical activity levels can go way down.

But being active is a key component of good health for all school-age kids. It will strengthen their muscles and bones and ensure that their bodies are capable of doing normal kid stuff, like lifting a backpack or running a race. It also will help control their weight and decrease their risk of obesity-related illnesses. So how do you get kids motivated to be active, especially those who aren't natural athletes?



Your child can be fit even if he or she isn't the type to win sports trophies. The key is finding activities your child enjoys. The options are many — from in-line skating, to bike riding, to tennis, or even badminton. When kids find an activity that's fun, they'll do it a lot, get better at it, feel accomplished, and want to do it even more. Likewise, if you push them into activities they don't like, they're unlikely to want to do participate and will end up feeling frustrated.

## Keep to the Basics for 6- to 8-Year-Olds

Expose younger kids to a variety of activities, games, and sports. Keep the focus on fun. A mix of activities at home and at school is often ideal, and be sure to include some free time for kids make their own decisions about what to do.

At this age, kids are still mastering fundamental physical skills, such as jumping, throwing, kicking, and catching. It will take a few more years before most children can combine these skills the way many 11-year-olds can (for instance, being able to scoop up a baseball, run toward the base, and throw the ball — all in one fluid motion). So if your child is on a sports team, make sure you and the coaches are setting realistic expectations.

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# Enriching the Parent



Reasonable expectations are also important when it comes to how much kids can handle mentally. Younger kids often are not ready for the pressure of competition, nor can they grasp complex strategy. Look for teams, leagues, and classes that stress the basics and provide encouragement and praise for kids as they improve their skills. Done correctly, team sports and other group activities can teach kids a lot about teamwork and good sportsmanship.

## 9- to 12-Year-Olds Are More Coordinated

Older school-age kids usually have mastered basic skills and can start enjoying the benefits of being more coordinated. That means a kid who likes basketball isn't wildly throwing the ball at the basket anymore, but is perfecting the free throw. Kids this age are also better able to understand the rules. Parents of kids involved in team sports might want to talk about handling setbacks and losses, and remind kids that sports should still be fun even as competition heats up.

Whether it's soccer or dance, if your child doesn't enjoy an activity or feels frustrated by failure, it may be time to switch to something else. That doesn't mean the time spent on those endeavors was wasted. Instead, ask what activities your child would like to try next. Achieving this transition smoothly, without making a child feel like a failure, can prevent negative feelings about sports and physical activity in general.

## Help Kids Find Their Niche

If you're trying to help your child choose an activity, consider his or her interests, abilities, and body type. A bigger child might be suited for football because size is an advantage. A smaller child might succeed at baseball or might consider a non-team sport.

Also, consider your child's temperament. A mild-mannered boy who might not be comfortable playing football may like the challenge of karate. Likewise, an active girl may not have the patience and control required for ballet, but is well-suited to a more fast-paced activity, like soccer. Personality traits and athletic ability combine to influence a child's attitude toward participation in sports and other physical activities. Which of these three types best describes your child?

**The nonathlete:** This child may lack athletic ability, lack interest in physical activity, or both. By this age, children are aware of these differences and some kids may have even been teased about them. The danger for a child like this is not leaving one activity that didn't work out; it's abandoning all physical activity altogether.

**The casual athlete:** This child is interested in being active but is not a star player and is at risk of getting discouraged in a competitive athletic environment. Most kids fall into this category, but in a culture that is obsessed with winning, it's easy to overlook these kids as athletes. Encourage them to remain active even though they aren't top performers.

**The athlete:** This child has athletic ability, is committed to a sport or activity, and is likely to ramp up practice time and intensity of competition. Some children are happily settled in a sport or activity by the older school-age years. In this situation, a parent can continue to support the child's efforts while watching for any changes. It's important to ensure that the child manages school-work, gets enough rest, and still enjoys the sport. Continue to let your child try out new things and enjoy a variety of physical activities.

## Parents Can Make a Difference

No matter what your child's fitness personality, remember that he or she looks to you for guidance and needs your support and encouragement. Also it's important to set a good example, so **don't groan about your own exercise**, and look for chances to be physically active as a family.

Source: [http://kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition\\_fit/fitness/schoolage\\_active.html](http://kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition_fit/fitness/schoolage_active.html)

### SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

#### **Alleghany County:**

First & Third Thursday of each month at 6:00 pm at The Family Resource Center, Sparta. For more information or to RSVP contact Norma at: 336-246-3222 or 1-866-812-3122.

#### **Ashe County:**

Last Tuesday of each month at 6:00 pm at Midway Baptist Church Fellowship Hall, 1670 Mount Jefferson Rd, West Jefferson. For more information or to RSVP contact Norma at: 336-246-3222 or 1-866-812-3122. Meal provided with RSVP.

#### **Mitchell & Yancey:**

Call Teresa Emory 866-448-5781 for dates and times

#### **Watauga County:**

Second Friday of each month at 6:00 pm at Unitarian Fellowship "House" 381 E. King Street, Boone. (Beside the Playhouse) For more information or to RSVP contact Kaaren at: 828-262-6089 or 1-866-812-3122. Meal and childcare provided with RSVP.

#### **Wilkes County:**

Last Thursday of each month at 6:00 pm at "Our House" 203 E. Main Street, Wilkesboro. For more information or to RSVP contact Norma at: 336-246-3222 or 1-866-812-3122. Snacks will be served.



**Parent to Parent  
FSN-HC**

2359 Highway 105  
Boone, NC 28607

**Information and Location for ALL Support  
Groups enclosed! See page 3**



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