

Parents TOGETHER PRIMER

Winter 2007-08

A Newsletter for Greenwich Parents of Children from Birth Through Fifth Grade ©
www.parentstogetherct.org

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PARENTS TOGETHER PROGRAMS

February 11th: "Parenting in
Non-Traditional Family
Environments and
Situations"

March 3rd "Underweight,
Overweight: Body Image"

April 7th: "Essence of
Adolescence"

May 12th: "How to Raise
Your Parenets: A Teen Girl's
Survival Guide"

*Please refer to page 8 for
program details*

Our Heartfelt Thanks!

Your donations are continuously
needed to fund the newsletters
we publish each school year.

Our sincere thanks to the
contributors listed below

Speakers - \$100 or more
Jane & Vaughn Dunn
Maya & Will Hyland

Differences From Birth: Looking at a Child's Temperament

By Robert Brooks, Ph.D.

As a clinical psychologist I have often been asked questions about the nature-nurture issue such as, "Are our personalities determined primarily by inborn, biological factors or by environmental factors?" Most people now recognize that both biology and environment are very influential forces in shaping who we are, how we think, and how we behave.

When we interact with others we sometimes are guided by assumptions that fail to consider how each of these forces has an impact. I can think of many instances in which parents have said to me that they know children are different from each other at birth, but a few minutes after making this statement they noted, "I treat each of my children the same. That's the fairest thing to do." Yet, if children are different from infancy, then is it fair to have the same expectations for all of them?

One of the main questions I am asked pertaining to nature vs. nurture is the ways in which children are different from birth. There are various inborn qualities that distinguish infants from each other. I have selected one quality to discuss in this article, namely, temperament, since I believe that many stresses in parent-child or even husband-wife relationships are based on expectations that we have for the other person, that given her or his unique temperament, she or he is not

able to meet.

When I first entered the field of clinical psychology in the mid-1960's, I was taught, and as a young psychologist believed, that all infants were the same at birth. This belief unintentionally created within me a rather negative, accusatory view of the role of parents in causing problems in their children. I am embarrassed to admit that in the early stages of my career, when I consulted with parents who had a child with emotional or behavioral problems, my initial thought was, "You really screwed up. Since all children are the same at birth and you have a child with problems, you must have done something wrong to cause these problems." Fortunately, I was wise enough not to utter this sentiment, although most likely it was conveyed nonverbally to many of the parents with whom I was doing parenting counseling. I was not alone in my accusations towards parents; it was a time when mental health professionals readily blamed parents for almost every emotional problem their child manifested including schizophrenia, autism, depression, anxiety, and obsessive-compulsive disorders.

Thankfully, this phase of my career that I call "parental blame" was soon to be challenged, first by the birth of my own children and then by research. At the same time my children were

continued on page 2

born, child development researchers and clinicians were beginning to take an increasingly closer look at differences in children in terms of such qualities as temperament, learning styles, and coping styles.

Two of the pioneers in the field of examining differences in infant temperament are psychiatrists Stella Chess and Alexander Thomas. They and their colleagues studied many infants and identified nine characteristics of temperament. They strongly advocated that parents understand and appreciate these characteristics so that they could interact with their children in a more effective and satisfactory manner. For example, Chess and Thomas reported that some infants are born more active, others less active, some seem to have a happy mood while others appear more negative, some adjust quickly to new situations while others cry at the smallest modification in routine, some are hypersensitive to touch or sound while others enjoy sensory stimulation, and some quickly develop regular eating and sleeping patterns while others never seem to do so.

Given these variations in the temperamental patterns of children, Chess and Thomas provided labels for three kinds of children: the "easy" child, the "slow-to-warm-up" child, and the "difficult" child. They noted that these are not precise labels since many children do not fit neatly into any of these three groups, while other youngsters appear to possess attributes from at least two of the groups. Still others may appear one way in some situations and with some people but another way in other situations. Although further refinements of their labels may not be possible in light of how complex each person is, the work of Chess and Thomas has major implications for

how we parent and teach children and, even as adults, how we relate with each other.

While there is always a danger of pigeonholing children into categories, I believe it is helpful to describe the three kinds of children mentioned by Chess and Thomas and to reflect upon how each requires a different kind of parenting approach. Also, as I mentioned earlier, if we fail to appreciate these differences we may hold expectations for our children that will be difficult for them to achieve. We should also understand that these temperamental differences are not cast in stone, and that life experiences will significantly impact the kind of person we are. Certainly biology is not destiny.

My description of "easy" children is that from the moment they are born they seem to say to their parents, "Don't worry, we're going to help you feel like the best parents in the world." They are easily satisfied, easy to raise, develop regular sleeping and eating patterns, love to be held, and always seem to smile.

Although I am exaggerating to make a point, I often say "You can spend one minute of an hour with easy children and they feel they are getting all of the love in the world."

Easy children are the ones you enjoy bringing to your own parents as if to say, "See, this is how you raise children."

When they begin school, teachers respond to easy children in the same positive way as parents. As temperamentally easy children develop, parents enjoy taking them places, assured that they will behave appropriately. Parents of easy children eagerly anticipate school conferences since they know that positive comments will pervade the meeting. These parents also look forward to sporting events in which their children are participating because they know

that their children will make them proud. In essence, easy children help us to feel like excellent parents. Consequently, they receive positive feedback from us, and a very positive interactive cycle is set in motion.

Of course, not every child is born with an easy temperament. Slow-to-warm youngsters tend to be more cautious, needing additional time to acclimate to new situations. Their behavior often prompts people to describe them as shy, timid, or anxious. Their innate temperament requires more time to become adjusted to new people and new situations than their less cautious peers. Many well-meaning parents, not realizing that shyness is an inborn trait for a number of youngsters, will often exhort their children to say hello, look people in the eye, and go out and make friends. I have seen young children in my office who feel as if they are total disappointments to their parents, since their parents constantly tell them that they should be putting in more of an effort to relate to people.

In the school environment, children who are shy often sit in terror at the thought of being called upon to answer a question or to read aloud. There are things we can say or do that will help our cautious child, but we must first recognize that telling shy children to say hello or look people in the eye typically increases their anxiety and withdrawal, so that it has the opposite effect of what we desire.

As the name implies, "difficult" children are very challenging to raise and educate. They often have problems adapting to new situations. Their behavior is frequently characterized by intense reactions and overreactions — the seemingly smallest upset triggers anger, tantrums, and meltdowns, features of their behavior that Ross Greene discusses in his book "The Explosive Child." These youngsters reveal little pleasure, rarely smile, typically seem tense, appear to be insatiable in their demands (their favorite words are "it isn't fair"), have

Temperamental differences are not cast in stone; life experiences will significantly impact the kind of person we are.

problems with eating and sleeping, are inflexible, and demonstrate hypersensitivities (e.g., they are children who are very bothered by loud sounds or complain of the irritation caused by labels in their clothing). Difficult children from birth will have a greater struggle to make friends, get along with others, develop high self-esteem, and do well in school.

One mother of a difficult five-year-old summed up what it felt like to be the parent of a difficult child when she said, "My son made me feel like the most inadequate mother in the world from the moment I first held him." When I asked why she felt this way, she tearfully answered, "Do you know what it feels like to hold your newborn and he squirms out of your arms? Do you know what it feels like to give him a bath and dry him off with a soft towel and he begins to cry?"

Obviously, almost from the birth of her son, this mother felt estranged from her own child. She received little pleasure from parenting him, felt as if she were inadequate, and also was very angry with him. Unlike the joys experienced by parents of a temperamentally easy child, this mother experienced only frustration, disappointment, anger, and failure. Having a difficult child typically requires an inordinate amount of effort and patience, and the results may not reflect the energy that is expended. Parents have told me that they hesitate to take their temperamentally difficult child to a restaurant or sporting event or to the house of relatives for fear of how their child will behave and how it will reflect on their parenting.

Parents of difficult children typically face other problems including marital stress as well as receiving advice (better known as criticism) even from people they don't know. I often tell people that none of us should ever judge another person's parenting unless we have walked in their shoes. I emphasize that I have been fortunate to meet many parents who are thoughtful, dedicated, and courageous, but you

would never know this from the behavior of their difficult child.

When I first began to describe these temperamental differences in my workshops and writings, many parents wondered if these inborn characteristics were open to change. Could shy, timid children become more outgoing? Could difficult children become less tense, less rigid, less demanding? Do some easy children become less easy as they grow? The answer is that changes can and do take place. Jerome Kagan, a developmental psychologist at Harvard, has found that many shy babies become more gregarious by the time they are 10 years old. In contrast, some seemingly easy children become more timid. There are difficult children who become more at ease, more cooperative, and less demanding.

The basis of these changes is a complex process. Not unexpectedly, our own temperamental styles, goals, and expectations greatly influence our perception of and reaction to each child's unique style. Our reaction, in turn, will often play a significant role in the ways in which our child's temperament will undergo changes. Thus, as a first step to helping our children, it is important for parents to appreciate these innate differences, so that we can become more empathic, develop more realistic goals and expectations for our youngsters, and respond to our children in ways that foster their confidence and self-esteem.

In terms of our role as parents, and other caregivers, we must realize that if our children are to change, if our children are to feel more comfortable with themselves and in their relationships with us, then we must make the first changes and learn how to accommodate in reasonable ways to the temperament of our children.



Dr. Robert Brooks is a clinical psychologist, author and motivational speaker. View this article and more at www.drrobertbrooks.com.

The Greenwich Hospital Center for Integrative Medicine

This past June, Greenwich Hospital's Center for Integrative Medicine opened at 35 River Road in Cos Cob. Integrative Medicine offers a balance of traditional and complementary therapies to achieve a healthy body, mind and spirit. At the state-of-the-art facility, adults and children can receive traditional medical care combined with evidence-based integrative therapies which have shown to benefit the healing process and maintain wellness.

The integrative approach benefits all ages. The physicians and therapists work as a team to create a personalized, holistic program that will meet the overall health and lifestyle needs of adults and children. Because medical and complementary services are seamlessly united into one comprehensive program, it is called Integrated Medicine.

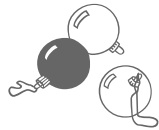
The staff includes physicians with credentials from top universities and additional training in complementary therapies. The therapists are licensed in a wide range of integrative specialties, such as naturopathy, cranial sacral therapy and traditional Chinese medicine including acupuncture and massage.

The Women's Healthy staff offers a wide range of services including those related to fertility, perimenopause and menopause.

There are numerous programs available for young people, including Yoga Girl, Mother/Daughter Yoga, and Teen Yoga. Adult classes, such as Gentle Yoga, Restorative Yoga, Foundations of Meditation, Kundalini Yoga, Tai Chi, Natural Impact Aerobics, Pilates, Music Therapy, Music and Meditation, Priming for Pregnancy, Cancer Wellness, Stress Management, and Prepare for Surgery, Heal Faster are also provided. Please call 863-3627 or visit www.greenhosp.org for further information.

WINTER FAMILY CALENDAR

December



1 Saturday

Father's Forum: "Developing Communication Skills for Parents With Teens"

8 AM
YMCA, Greenwich
Interactive workshop with Sonya Rencevicz, L.C.S.W., that will provide tools, skills, and small group practice to improve communication between dads and teens. Sponsored by the Greenwich Coalition to Combat Underage Drinking. Free.
GCCUD@yahoo.com

Model Railroad Holiday Show

Noon - 5 PM; 7 - 9 PM
St. John's Episcopal Church, Stamford
Annual show sponsored by the Stamford Model Railroad Club. \$5 adults, \$4 children 12 years and under. Also 12/8. 655-1928

2 Sunday

Height & Lights: Rappelling Santa!

4:30 PM
Landmark Square, Stamford Town Center
Watch and cheer for Santa as he makes his 22-story descent. Free.
www.stamford-downtown.com



5 Wednesday

First Day of Hanukkah

6 Thursday

"Learning Difficulties in Children with Developmental Conditions: What Parents Can Do" Lecture

7 - 8 PM
Noble Conference Center, Greenwich Hospital
Lecture by Developmental Psychologist and Geneticist Elena Grigorenko, Ph.D. Sponsored by Greenwich Hospital. Free. 863-3627

Greenwich Board of Education Work Session

7 - 9 PM
Havemeyer Building, Greenwich
625-7400

7 Friday

"Scrooge" Puppet Show

4 & 6 PM
Bush-Holley Historic Site, Cos Cob
With 18 large-scale marionettes. Best suited for ages 5 and up. \$10 members, \$12 non-members. 869-6899

"Freedom Writers" Film

8 PM
Cole Auditorium, Greenwich Library
A young teacher in LA inspires her class of at-risk students to learn tolerance and cope with gang violence and pressure. Rated PG-13. Free. 622-7900

8 Saturday

Exhibit Opening: Navajo Textiles

Museum Hours
The Bruce Museum, Greenwich
Exhibition will explore methods of weaving where replaced by technological advances. Thru 3/24/08. \$7 adults, \$6 seniors and students. 869-6786

Pancake Breakfast with Santa

8 - 11 AM
The Boys & Girls Club, Greenwich
The Greenwich Academy Chorus will sing holiday carols at 10 AM. Free. 869-3224

"The Nutcracker" Ballet

5 PM
The Palace Theatre. The final year of George Balantyne's production featuring principal dancers from NYCB and ABT. Thru 12/16. Show times vary. \$49-\$59. Visit stamfordcenterofthearts.org for performance dates and times.

9 Sunday

Jingle Bell Jog

9 AM
Church Street near Threads & Treads, Greenwich 3-mile jog. Sponsored by Threads & Treads. \$12 pre-race; \$15 race day. 661-0142

Bush-Holley Candlelight Open House

4 - 7 PM
The Bush-Holley Historic Site, Cos Cob
The historic home is decorated for the holidays. Entertainment, costumed guides and refreshments will add to the festivities. Free. 869-6899

11 Tuesday

Public Night at Bowman Observatory

7 - 9 PM
On the grounds of Julian Curtiss School, Greenwich
Sponsored by the Astronomical Society of Greenwich and The Bruce Museum. Weather permitting. Free. 869-6756



20 Thursday

Greenwich Board of Education Meeting

7 - 10 PM
Greenwich High School, Greenwich
625-7400

27-28 Thursday-Friday

December Vacation Workshops: Bugs, Nuts, Onions and Wool: Navajo Dyeing and Weaving.

10:30 AM
The Bruce Museum, Greenwich
Craft hour for children in grades 1-3, who explore the exhibition *Navajo Textiles from the Bruce Museum Collection* and then participate in dyeing and weaving their own wool. Suited for students of all abilities. Materials included. Reservations required. \$5 members, \$7 non-members per child, per day. 869-6757

January 2008



10

Thursday

Greenwich Board of Education
Work Session
7 - 9 PM
Havemeyer Building, Greenwich
625-7400

12

Saturday

"High School Musical"
Call for time
The Rich Forum, Stamford
Highly acclaimed and popular show will
be performed by Stamford students with
live music performed by professional
musicians. \$14 students 17 and under;
\$20 adults and seniors. Also 1/13.
www.stamfordcenterofhearts.org

23

Wednesday

SummerFare '08
6 - 9 PM
Greenwich High School, Greenwich
Event features more than 100 summer
programs offering diverse activities for
teens, from traditional camps and sports
training to adventure travel and
educational endeavors. Free.
Snow date 1/24.

24

Thursday

Greenwich Board of Education
Meeting
7 - 10 PM
Western Middle School, Greenwich
625-7400

26

Saturday

"Robotics" Exhibition Opening
Museum Hours
The Bruce Museum, Greenwich
Explore the impact of robots in science
and technology and their place in the
realm of popular culture. Hands-on
exhibitions. Thru 3/20/08.
869-6786

February

2

Saturday

"What Our Kids are Dealing With,
Part I" Father's Forum
8 AM
YMCA, Greenwich
Panel with area high school teens will
portray "high risk" events they are facing.
Sponsored by the Greenwich Coalition to
Combat Underage Drinking. Free.
GCCUD@yahoo.com



7

Thursday

Greenwich Board of Education
Work Session
7 - 9 PM
Havemeyer Building, Greenwich
625-7400

8

Friday

"Flying Karamazov Brothers"
8 PM
The Palace Theatre, Stamford
Fun, exciting, juggling, dancing, and
audience participation. \$30-\$39.
www.stamfordcenterofhearts.org

8

Friday

"Our Town"
8 PM
First Congregational Church,
Old Greenwich
Classic play by Thornton Wilder,
performed by the Acting Company of
Greenwich. Call for additional dates and
cost.
629-2094

11

Monday

"Successful Parenting: How to Support
Your Family Through Divorce, Single
Parenthood, Remarriage and Other
Transitions"
Parents Together Program
9:15 AM
Cone Room, Greenwich Town Hall
Elizabeth Tullis will discuss separation,
divorce, step-parenting and working
parents. All are welcome. Free.
637-7719 or 329-2243

28

Thursday

Greenwich Board of Education
Meeting
7 - 10 PM
International School at Dundee, Riverside
625-7400

Keep in Mind:

Preschool story hours at Greenwich
Library, 622-7942
Preschool story hours at Byram Schubert
Library, 531-0426
Preschool story hour at Cos Cob Library,
622-6883
Preschool story hour at Perrot Library,
637-1066
Parents Exchange, 863-3794

Sibling Rivalry:

Hints to Maintaining Peace

Most siblings argue and bicker from time to time. They fight over possessions, space on the sofa, time in the bathroom, who can have the last donut. The possibilities are endless. Quarreling is an inevitable part of sibling relationships. On some days, brothers and sisters are rivals and competitors. But on most days, they are friends and companions. This ambivalence between love and hate is part of all close relationships, and it can become more intense in siblings because both are vying for the love and attention of their parents. Some amount of conflict between siblings is actually healthy. It teaches children how to interact with others, how to compromise and stand up for their rights, and how to control aggressive impulses. The following recommendations can help you maintain limits on how far these disputes can go.

ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO SETTLE THEIR OWN DISAGREEMENTS

Have a rule: "Settle your own arguments, but no hitting, property damage, or name calling." The more you intervene, the more you will be called upon to intervene and referee. When possible, stay out of disagreements as long as they remain verbal. Children can't go through life having a referee to resolve all of their differences; they need to learn how to negotiate with people and find common ground. Arguing with siblings and peers provides this experience. The only exception is if they are both under age 2 or 3 and one of them is aggressive. At this age, they do not understand the potential dangers of fighting and need to be supervised more closely.

STAY OUT OF THE MIDDLE

Try to keep your children from

bringing their argument to you for an opinion. Remind them again to settle their differences themselves. If you do become involved, help them clarify what they are arguing about. To achieve this, try to teach them to listen to one another. Encourage each child to describe the problem for a minute or so without being interrupted by the other. If they still don't understand the issue, reframe it for them. Unless there's an obvious culprit, do not try to decide who is to blame, who started it, or who is right. Interrogation in this area can be counterproductive because it may cause them to exaggerate or lie. Also do not impose a solution. Since it's their problem, let them find their own solution whenever possible.

IF AN ARGUMENT BECOMES TOO LOUD, DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT

If the arguing becomes annoying or interferes with your ability to think, go to your children and tell them, "I do not want to hear your arguing. Please settle your differences quietly or find another place to argue." If they do not change at this point, send them to the basement, outdoors, or to time-out in separate rooms. If they are arguing over an object such as the TV, take it away. If they are arguing over who gets to sit in the front seat of the car, have them both sit in the back seat. If they are arguing about going somewhere, cancel the trip for both.

DO NOT PERMIT HITTING, BREAKING THINGS, OR NAME CALLING

Under these circumstances, punish both of your children. If they are hurting each other, send them both to time-out in separate places no matter who you see doing the hitting when you come on the scene. That may not be the person who took the first

swing or provoked it. Name calling or teasing hurts people's feelings and should never be allowed (i.e. calling a child who is not doing well in school "dummy," or who is not athletic, "clumsy"). Derogatory comments such as these can be harmful to self-esteem and should not be permitted.

STOP ANY ARGUING THAT OCCURS IN PUBLIC PLACES

If you are in a shopping mall, restaurant, or movie theater and your children begin arguing, you need to stop them because it is annoying to other people. If the arguing continues after a warning, separate them (i.e. by sitting between them). If that doesn't work, give them a brief 2-5 minute time-out outside or at an out-of-the-way spot. If they are over age 4 or 5, you can sometimes tell them to stop or they will get a 30-minute time-out, or loss of TV privileges upon arrival at home. Sometimes you will have to leave the public setting and take them home.

PROTECT EACH CHILD'S PERSONAL POSSESSIONS, PRIVACY, AND FRIENDSHIPS

When children argue over toys, if the toy belongs to one of the children, return it to that child. Although children don't have to share their possessions, point out to them that sharing works both ways. For family "toys," such as video games or board games, teach taking turns. Also teach sharing toys when friends come over. Sharing is a skill they will need in order to have friends and to get along in school. Younger siblings often intrude on older siblings' friendships and play. It is helpful if the younger sibling is provided with a playmate or special activity when your older child has a friend over. Your child's study time also deserves protection from interruption.

Designating a study room often helps.

AVOID SHOWING FAVORITISM

It is crucial that all punishments for arguing or fighting be “group punishments.” Parents should be careful in believing in myths such as fighting is always started by the brother rather than the sister, by the older child rather than the younger one, or by the child who is the “troublemaker.” Rivalry will become more intense if the parent shows favoritism. Do not take sides, compare them, or polarize them into “good” ones and “bad” ones. Do not listen to tattling. If one of your children complains about you not being fair, either ignore this comment or restate the rule that has been broken.

PRAISE COOPERATIVE BEHAVIOR

When your children are playing together in a friendly way, compliment them for helping each other and politely settling disagreements.

PREVENT FIGHTING OR NAME CALLING

First, help your children acknowledge their feelings. Let them know that it is all right to be angry toward a sibling, but that they should not vent their anger by fighting or name calling. Give them useful alternatives to hurtful arguing, such as talking to you about it. Second, provide access to outside friends and different settings, rather than expecting your children to constantly play with each other. Third, avoid showing favoritism toward one child over another. Try to talk with each child every day and to schedule a special individualized activity once or twice a week. Most importantly, show your child how to settle disagreements peacefully and in a calm voice. Lead by example. Try not to act disrespectful or ill-tempered to you children or to other people.

Source: *The Children’s Medical Group, PC, Greenwich, CT*

MRSA Facts

Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) is a kind of staph infection that may be more difficult to treat but is otherwise the same as a “staph infection.” Mild infections may look like a pimple or boil and can be red, swollen, painful, or have pus or other drainage. More serious infections may cause pneumonia, bloodstream infections, or surgical wound infections.

Staph is passed from person to person through direct contact with skin or through contact with contaminated items. The bacteria may live in people’s noses and on their skin, and most of the time do not cause any problem. Staph can enter the body through breaks in the skin and sometimes cause infection. The main ways to prevent staph infection are to wash hands and care for wounds properly.

PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR PARENTS

- ◆ Clean wounds and cover them with a clean, dry bandage. Wounds that do not heal properly need medical attention. The only way to determine if an infection is caused by MRSA is through laboratory testing ordered by a physician or other health care provider.
- ◆ Teach children to wash their hands regularly, such as before eating and after using the toilet. See www.cdc.gov/germstopper/home_work_school.htm for additional information on how to stop the spread of germs at home, work and school.
- ◆ Be sure your family members use antibiotics properly. Take all that are prescribed, even if the symptoms stop before the prescription is used up. Do not share prescriptions.
- ◆ Children who participate in sporting events should wash their hands after each practice and game. They should not share equipment, uniforms, towels, or other personal items, such as razors. Wash uniforms and towels with hot water and detergent after each use.

Winter Safety Tips

Whether winter brings severe storms, light dustings or just cold temperatures, the American Academy of Pediatrics has some valuable tips on how to keep your children safe and warm:

- ◆ Dress children warmly for outdoor activities. Several thin layers will keep them dry and warm. Clothing for children can include thermal long johns, turtlenecks, one or two shirts, pants, sweater, jacket, warm socks, boots, gloves or mittens, and a hat.
- ◆ The rule of thumb for young children is to dress them in one more layer of clothing than an adult would wear in the same conditions.
- ◆ If your child suffers from winter nosebleeds, try using a cold air humidifier in the child’s room at night. Saline nose drops may help keep tissues moist. If bleeding is severe or recurrent, consult your pediatrician.
- ◆ Cold weather does not cause colds or flu. But the viruses that cause colds and flu tend to be more common in the winter, when children are in school and are in closer contact with each other.
- ◆ Frequent hand washing and teaching your child to sneeze or cough into the bend of her elbow may help reduce the risk of colds and flu.
- ◆ Children between the ages of 6 and 9 months should get the influenza vaccine to reduce their risk of catching the flu.
- ◆ Set reasonable time limits on outdoor play to prevent frostbite. Have children come inside periodically to warm up

Source: *The American Academy of Pediatrics. Check out www.aap.org for more tips.*

Who We Are

Parents Together is an independent, nonprofit organization in Greenwich, CT, that offers ongoing opportunities for parents to communicate, share, support and learn together. We work in cooperation with the Parent Teacher Associations of the public, private and parochial schools in town. The *Parents Together* organization and delegates from Greenwich schools plan programs for parents of children in grades K through 12. We also publish two quarterly newsletters: *Parents Together Primer*, for parents of children from birth through fifth grade, and *Parents Together*, for parents of adolescents.

Distribution: *Parents Together Primer* is distributed to parents through their children's preschools and elementary schools. *Parents Together* is mailed to parents of children in grades 6 through 12 in all Greenwich public and independent schools.

Newsletter Subscriptions and

Correspondence: We invite parents and other readers interested in local parenting issues to subscribe to either or both newsletters. For an annual subscription, please indicate which newsletter you wish to receive, and send your name, address and \$10 for each subscription, in a check payable to **Parents Together**, to P. O. Box 4843, Greenwich, CT 06831-0417.

Contact Us!

Do you have a story idea, writer suggestion or comment for the *Parents Together Primer* staff? You may fax it to 698-3376 or e-mail it to ptprimer@optonline.net.

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Upcoming Parents Together Programs

February 11th: "Successful Parenting: How to Support Your Family Through Divorce, Single Parenthood, Remarriage and Other Transitions" presented by Elizabeth Tullis. Discussion will address separation, divorce, step-parenting, working parents.
9:15 AM Greenwich Town Hall, Cone Room.

March 3rd: "Underweight, Overweight, and Body Image" with Diane Mickley, M.D., founder and director of the Wilkins Center, which specializes in treating people with eating disorders and weight control issues.
9:15 AM Greenwich Town Hall, Cone Room.

April 7th: "The Essence of Adolescence" with Sonya Rencivitz, L.P.S.W.
9:15 AM Greenwich Town Hall, Cone Room.

May 12th: "How to Raise Your Parents: A Teen Girl's Survival Guide." Author Sarah Burningham will address teen/parent relationships.
9:15 AM Greenwich Town Hall, Cone Room.

To our readers

Wishing you a joyful holiday season surrounded by family and friends. We look forward to seeing you in the New Year. If you have any questions about our programs or newsletters, please contact the delegate at your school.

This issue of *Parents Together Primer* was made possible by the donations of generous supporters

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