

# Parents©TOGETHER PRIMER

Summer 2007

A Newsletter for Greenwich Parents of Children from Birth Through Fifth Grade ©  
[www.parentstogetherct.org](http://www.parentstogetherct.org)

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To all our readers:

Wishing you a happy,  
healthy, safe  
and relaxing summer  
with your family  
and friends!

## Cyberbullying 21<sup>st</sup> Century Harassment

By Elizabeth Ramirez

In the last ten years technology has dramatically changed communication. The proliferation of the World Wide Web, cellular telephones, and instant messaging has enhanced our lives. We now have, at our fingertips, amazing conveniences such as online transactions, job applications, business and school research, video game play, music downloads, and even video viewing.

The art of letter writing is quickly being replaced by e-mail messages and text messaging. The wealth of these technologies, however, has also posed new challenges to parents and their children. Computer-hackers, swindlers, and even child predators have made the Internet a potential hazard. Added to this, our children are now facing the threat of cyberbullying.

### WHAT IS CYBERBULLYING?

At present, there is no accepted legal definition for cyberbullying. The general consensus is that cyberbullying is "the use of any electronic device to send unwelcome messages that are intended to embarrass, intimidate, threaten, or humiliate the intended victim." Unlike the more traditional schoolyard bullying of our youth, cyberbullying can occur at any time of the day and in any locale. Cyberbullying goes under the radar of most parents and so it is important to raise our awareness.

### HOW IS CYBERBULLYING CARRIED OUT?

The two main tools of the cyberbully are the personal computer and the cellular telephone. Using the personal computer's internet connection, the bully can send harassing e-mail messages and instant messages and even create personal web spaces or weblogs or blogs dedicated to attacking a person's or a child's character. These attacks can come in the form of altered pictures (pasted photos of the victim on pornographic pictures), caricatures, and slurs.

Cyberbullies have even learned to use legitimate website functions such as instant polling to set up polls such as "Who's the ugliest person in school?" A group of bullies may also gang up on one child in chat rooms and bombard him/her with insulting messages and e-mail messages, or simply exclude the child from conversations. Such incidents can even occur in chat rooms dedicated to children. In one example, a seven-year-old girl who was participating in a children's-only website monitored under adult supervision, was subjected to insulting comments and name calling from other children using the site.

While most of us think of the personal computer as the bully's weapon of choice, the cellular telephone is rapidly becoming the

*continued on page 2*

favored tool of harassment. 16 million American children between the ages of 10 to 18 now own cellular phones.

The cellular phone is “the” essential accessory for many children. It has become the umbilical cord to their social life and gives them constant access to the outside world. Text messaging is a popular new way for children to communicate. But, in the hands of the bully, hurtful or threatening messages can be sent to the victim and forwarded to other students in a matter of seconds. Newer models of cellular phones now have internet access with integrated digital still and video cameras.

A recent trend known as “cyber bashing” is the video recording of people being bullied or beaten up. The video material is then uploaded to internet domains such as My Space®, You Tube™, and Google video™. A recent case of cyber bashing occurred in Long Island, New York, in which a 12-year-old girl was recorded being beaten by two 14-year-old-girls. The recording was later posted on a My Space® web page. The two attackers were subsequently arrested.

Unlike hurtful notes of years past, these humiliating images or videos can't be torn up and thrown away. Once on the World Wide Web, they can remain in the public domain forever and may even expose parents to civil lawsuits. An example of this kind of harassment is the story of Ghyslain Raza, also known in the Internet world as the, “Star Wars Kid.” In 2003, Ghyslain Raza brought the issue of cyberbullying to the forefront of the Canadian education system. This 15-year-old student made a two-minute video using a golf club to duplicate the sword-swinging light saber moves of Darth Vader. Though the video was intended to be a school project, three classmates posted it on a website. The video quickly spread across the web. In the end, Ghyslain required psychiatric treatment due to the constant harassment from fellow students and complete strangers. The

video of Ghyslain remains on the Web to this day.

### HOW IS CYBERBULLYING DIFFERENT FROM SCHOOL YARD BULLYING?

While cyberbullying might be considered an extension of schoolyard bullying, it is different in a number of ways. In traditional schoolyard bullying, the bully gets the immediate gratification of seeing his/her victim suffer. The bully achieves the desired result and then usually backs off. With cyberbullying, tormentors do not see their victims' suffering and therefore, don't know when to stop. Cyberbullies also have the benefit of anonymity, which provides a sense of power and a lack of accountability or consequences. Thus, cyberbullies are more likely to push the boundaries of cruelty.

When combined with the continuous, intrusive access that technology provides, bullies are able to reach their victims at all hours, even in their own homes. It is this ability to abuse victims in their own homes that makes the greatest distinction between traditional and cyberbullying. In traditional scenarios, the child could at least find some respite at home. The loss of this last barrier between victims and their tormentors has, in some cases, led to devastating results. In one case constant, intrusive bullying eventually led to suicide.

Ryan Halligan was a kind and sensitive child who was never a discipline problem. Issues of bullying started in fifth grade and continued to worsen during middle school. In the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Ryan became very interested in computers, especially in instant messaging. His parents established the typical Internet safety rules early on, but never thought to cover online bullying. During this time, the bullying at school increased to an all time high, eventually leading to Ryan's death by suicide. Ryan's father eventually logged onto Ryan's Internet account and discovered the true extent of the bullying to which his son was subjected. He discovered that Ryan was not only being intensely bullied at

school, but was also receiving harassing e-mail messages and instant messages at home. He also found that Ryan was communicating with a peer whom Ryan's father had never met. This peer, it turned out, was encouraging Ryan to take his own life.

### HOW COMMON IS CYBERBULLYING?

The Children's Charity (NCH), in England, was the first organization to recognize the trend of cyberbullying and to take the issue to a national level. In 2005, the NCH surveyed youngsters ages 11 to 19 and found that one in five young people had been bullied via cellular phone or the Internet.

While there are no hard statistics for the United States, the research team for i-SAFE™ surveyed 1500 students ranging from the fourth to eighth grade. They found that a staggering “58% of students admitted someone has said something mean or hurtful to them while online” and “42% said they have been bullied online.” This study corresponds to results found by the nonprofit organization “Fight Crime, Invest in Kids”. They surveyed 1000 students nationwide ages 6 to 11 and 12 to 17 and estimated that 13 million children aged 6 to 17 were victims of cyberbullying. They also found that one in six pre-teens and one in three teens have been victims of cyberbullying. Pre-teens were just as likely to receive harmful messages at school (45%) as at home (44%), while teens received 30 percent of the messages at school and 70% at home. The poll revealed that approximately 2 million of the children who were bullied online told no one.

### WHAT CAN PARENTS DO TO PROTECT THEIR CHILDREN FROM CYBERBULLYING?

The first and most important thing that we, as parents, must remember is that cyberbullying must be taken seriously. It is easy for us to tell our child to simply delete or ignore hurtful messages. To the child, however, reputation and self-image means everything. This constant damage to their self-esteem can pose a

genuine danger.

There are a number of steps that parents, children, and educators can take to put a stop to cyberbullying before it poses a danger to your child.

- ♦ **First and foremost is to teach your child that they do not have to suffer in silence.** Talk about the issue of online bullying. Encourage your child to come to you if they feel threatened, uncomfortable, or if they know of someone else who is being bullied.
- ♦ **Keep the computer out of your child's bedroom.** Computers should be kept in the common areas of the house. This not only provides a safety barrier against bullies, but against other threats such as online pedophiles.
- ♦ **Know the law.** Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) applies to the online collection of personal information from children ages 13 and under (<http://www.coppa.org/comply.htm>). This law requires that websites remove the information immediately.
- ♦ **Teach your child not to respond to or engage in the abusive behavior.** Remind them that whatever they write, type, or text in anger will be permanent (remember the Star Wars boy). Explain that engaging the bully online only gives the bully the feedback they seek.
- ♦ **Do not erase harassing messages.** These may be needed later for evidence.
- ♦ **Ask your child to show you their cellular phone or e-mail 'buddy' list.** Ask for the real names and how they know that person. You may be surprised to find that one of these 'buddies' is someone the child has only met online!
- ♦ **Teach your child never give out private information** such as passwords, PIN numbers, and Social Security numbers. This is especially true for someone they've only met online.
- ♦ **Contact the cellular service provider if your child is being bullied via the cellular phone.** Each cellular phone company has a different policy. Some companies may require you to file a police report before they can

change the number. Again, teach your child to save any messages.

- ♦ **Does your child's school have an anti-bullying program?** Every school should have an anti-bullying program that addresses any form of bullying, including those perpetrated by cellular phone or computer.
- ♦ **Contact your ISP provider** to find out what their rules are concerning harassment and bullying.
- ♦ **Invest in software that allows you to monitor your child's activity while online.** The product "Web Watcher" ([www.AwarenessTeach.com](http://www.AwarenessTeach.com)) allows you to see everything your child does online from any computer.
- ♦ **Ask yourself: "Does your child really need a cellular phone?"** If you must give your child a cellular phone, consider phones that are designed specifically for kids, such as Firefly®. These phones do not have text messaging features or internet access. They also have a limited number of programmable phone numbers and can screen out calls from unknown numbers. Remember, it is much harder to monitor the activities that are taking place through cellular phones.
- ♦ **Take nothing for granted!** Remember that our children *will* always test the boundaries of our rules. Don't hesitate to engage and re-engage your child. Ask if there are problems at school. Don't be afraid to check on your child's Internet and cellular phone activities.

#### RESOURCES FOR CYBERBULLYING

[www.internetsuperheroes.org](http://www.internetsuperheroes.org)  
[www.wiredkids.org](http://www.wiredkids.org)  
[www.isafe.org](http://www.isafe.org)  
[www.cyberbullying.ca](http://www.cyberbullying.ca)  
[www.stopcyberbullying.org](http://www.stopcyberbullying.org)



*Elizabeth Ramirez has over 15 years of experience working with children with various behavioral issues. She is the mother of two children who attend Cos Cob School.*

## Lyme Disease

According to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Lyme disease is one of the fastest-growing infectious diseases today. In 2002, a 40% increase in cases occurred nationwide. The following are some steps you can take to minimize the likelihood of becoming infected:

- ♦ **Wear lightly colored clothing** so ticks are more visible to you and tuck pants into socks to prevent ticks from attaching to your skin.
- ♦ **Avoid tall, grassy, moist, wooded, or leafy areas** where ticks love to hide.
- ♦ **Use tick or insect repellent** on clothing and use appropriate repellents on skin.
- ♦ **Perform frequent tick checks** on family members and pets.
- ♦ **Remember that ticks love to hide** in moist places, such as the groin, back of the knees, arm pits, and the back of the neck.

Prompt and proper removal of a tick can help minimize the likelihood of contracting Lyme disease. Do not panic and remove the tick with your fingers, or burn or smother the tick. Here are some helpful tips on removing a tick:

- ♦ **Use a fine-point tweezer** and grasp the tick behind its head, as close to the skin as possible.
- ♦ **Gently pull the tick straight out.**
- ♦ **Place the tick in a plastic bag** and seal and label it with your name, address and date. Place a blade of grass inside the bag to help keep the tick alive. This may allow you to receive the test result more quickly.
- ♦ **Wash your hands and disinfect** the site of the bite. Disinfect the tweezers.
- ♦ **Have the tick identified and tested** by a lab. The Town of Greenwich has a lab located on the ground floor of Town Hall. Call 622-7843 for more information on the submission process.
- ♦ **Contact your local physician** to determine if treatment is necessary.

# Preparing Children for a Multicultural World

By Betsy Benenson

**W**e all want our children to grow up in a world where they feel accepted for who they are, and where their differences are appreciated and understood. But the reality is that cultural prejudices, racial tensions and other forms of bias exist in our society and continue to have an impact on us. Just think about the recent remarks by radio show host Don Imus and comedian Michael Richard. Discrimination hurts.

We all have an identity. It is influenced by a number of factors including our ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability or disability, national origin and religion. All of these factors, plus the economic, social, historical and cultural experiences we've had throughout our lives, have shaped us into who we are today. It is important that children be proud of themselves and their family traditions; it is equally necessary that they understand that other identities are just as important as their own, and that they can learn from their friends' and classmates' unique experiences. How can we best prepare children to meet the challenges and reap the benefits of the increasingly diverse world they will inherit?

## THE NEED FOR A MULTICULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

The United States is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. For hundreds of years different groups have been immigrating to the U.S. for many of the same reasons: they believe in the basic values of democracy and individual freedom,

and desire opportunities to fulfill their dreams. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the current racial/ethnic makeup of students in public schools in the United States is about 1% Native American, 4% Asian/Pacific Islander, 16% African American, 19% Hispanic/Latino and 57.4% European/White American. Future projections indicate that by 2020 a majority of children attending public school will be from diverse cultural, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds. Trade and capital have also become more global, and so have the people with whom we interact. Kids today need to understand and accept the perspectives of others in order to prepare them to be viable in the multicultural life of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

As our nation grows increasingly diverse, there is an excellent

"Kids today need to understand and accept the perspectives of others in order to prepare them to be viable in the multicultural life of the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

opportunity to learn about our differences and maximize the positives inherent in diverse communities. However, for some people, differences may fuel conflict, fear and uncertainty. Researchers have found that prejudice and racism are maladaptive responses to the anxieties provoked by human differences. Consider these statistics from *Indicators of School Crime and Safety*, a report issued by the National Center for Education:

- ♦ 11% of students ages 12-18 reported that someone at school had used hate-related words against them.
- ♦ 38% of students ages 12-18 reported they had seen hate-related graffiti at school.

- ♦ 28% of students ages 12-18 reported having been bullied at school during the last six months.
- ♦ 24% of students ages 12-18 reported the presence of gangs at their schools.
- ♦ 6% of students ages 12-18 reported they were afraid of attack or harm at school.

In addition, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation 7,163 hate crime incidents were reported in 2005, which translates into approximately 20 incidents *every* day.

The ability to interact sensitively and competently with a variety of different cultures has many benefits. Researchers have discovered that people who are able to recognize and respect differences tend to have strong interpersonal and leadership skills, high self-esteem, and positive psychological and physical health. It has also been found that having a positive ethnic identity is related to higher school engagement, lower aggression, and higher self-esteem. Cultivating skills and attitudes that will help children interact more effectively with others from diverse backgrounds will help children to become caring, cooperative members of society. In doing so, today's children can help to build a more equitable world.

## ADDRESSING DIVERSITY

In early childhood, preschoolers have a natural curiosity about themselves, others, and the world. Their self-understanding is based on the various roles and categories that define who they are. For example, 4-year-old Kate knows that she is a girl, has blond hair, is a soccer player, and likes to ride her bike. At this age preschoolers begin to notice differences in appearances: Kate may say, "I'm different from Sarah because I have blond hair and she has brown hair."

While children this age may distinguish themselves from others through physical attributes, they are not making value judgements. This is an ideal age to help children learn that the world and the people with whom they interact are richly diverse.

It is important to remember that children are not born with biases. Children learn social behavior by observing what is going on around them, and they may imitate what they see. Parents can do a lot to foster an environment that allows children to become racially, ethnically and culturally healthy. The following suggestions, from the staff at the New York University Child Study Center, can help parents teach tolerance and acceptance at an early age:

- ♦ **Value your children.** Children who are brought up in a nurturing environment, where they feel accepted, respected and valued, have the best chance of developing a healthy self-image. If your child feels good about herself and confident about her place in the world, she will be less likely to feel threatened or fearful of people who are different from her, and more likely to treat others with respect.
- ♦ **Set a good example.** Model the behaviors and attitudes you want your children to develop. Children learn from observing how you interact with others. If you are consistent in how you treat others, and are respectful of all people, regardless of such characteristics as race or gender, your children will likely do the same.
- ♦ **Know yourself.** Increase your own self-awareness. Understand that your own biases will have an impact on your children's developing ideas about differences in regard to race, religion, skin color, gender, etc. A seemingly innocuous statement such as, "that must be a male driver," made after the car in front of you does not use a turn signal, is saying something.
- ♦ **Identify intolerance when your children are exposed to it.** Point out or respond to stereotypes and cultural misinformation that is depicted in

movies and TV shows, or exhibited by neighbors, friends, or family members. If an ethnic joke or racial slur is used in front of you and your child, do not let the moment pass. You do not necessarily have to confront the person who says the offense, but a question to your son such as, "What do you think about what Uncle Andrew just said?" will start a dialogue with your child.

- ♦ **Be honest about differences.** It is a mistake to tell

children that we are all the same; we're not. When your children ask about skin color or other differences they have noticed about other people, answer them

in a straightforward way. If children sense embarrassment or discomfort in your words or from your facial expression, she may think something is wrong with differences. Explain to your children that all of us experience the world in various ways, and those experiences help shape us into who we are. Help your child understand the viewpoints of others. For an older child, it is important for him to take the perspective of those from groups that are different from his and ask himself, "How would I feel if I were a member of their ethnic or cultural group?" or "If I were in their shoes, how would I behave?" Such perspective-taking often increases a child's empathy and understanding.

- ♦ **Challenge intolerance when it comes from your children.** It is important to let children know from a very early age that name calling of any kind is hurtful. If your children say or do something that is insensitive, point it out: "How do you think Jason would feel if he knew you were making fun of him because he has a disability?" Remind them how they feel when they aren't being treated well by their friends. As

children begin to identify with other people's feelings, they will gain insight into the unfairness of prejudice.

- ♦ **Create opportunities for children to interact with people who are different from them.**

The friendships your child makes can have a lasting effect. Visit playgrounds where a variety of children are present. Consider school, childcare or after-school programs that embrace diversity.

- ♦ **Showcase multicultural**

**materials in your home.** Read books that feature multicultural characters and themes about tolerance and diversity. This is a great way for your children to learn about the world from a different perspective. Provide

access to diverse music, art, toys, etc.

Teaching tolerance is an ongoing process that cannot be captured in a single discussion or moment. Children need to be reassured that differences exist and are inherent to human nature. By creating an environment of openness and respect, and by fostering a healthy understanding of group identities, children will learn to appreciate, rather than fear, differences. In doing so, children will be able to move with confidence in an increasingly diverse world.

## RESOURCES FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

[www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org): provides practical tools to promote tolerance.  
[www.adl.org](http://www.adl.org): offers recommendations of multicultural books by grade level.  
*Teaching Tolerance* by S. Bullard, Main Street Books, 1997.



*Betsy Benenson is co-editor of Parents Together. She lives in Greenwich with her husband and three children.*

## Kid-Friendly Recipe

### Summer Chicken

This is a quick and delicious supper for the family. Add your favorite salad and a steamed vegetable for a healthy meal. Enjoy!

#### Ingredients:

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 2 large summer tomatoes, chopped
- 3 scallions, sliced
- 12 ounce box fresh sliced mushrooms
- 3 tablespoons canola or vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 2 teaspoons butter
- 4 ounce. fat-free or low-fat chicken broth
- 1 teaspoon thyme (optional)
- 1 8-ounce carton light or fat-free sour cream
- Small bowtie pasta

#### Preparation:

Pound chicken breasts to even thickness. Salt and pepper chicken. Saute in oil on medium heat for 5 minutes on each side. Transfer chicken to oven-proof dish; cover and place in oven at 250 degrees. Stir mushrooms and a tablespoon of water into pan drippings. Reduce heat to saute mushrooms slowly until soft. Add chopped tomatoes and scallions and cook until soft. Stir to release sauteed bits and add 2 teaspoons butter and 1 tablespoon flour. Cook on low for 1 minute and add 4 oz. chicken broth. Season with thyme and stir until silky. Remove from heat and stir in sour cream. Serve immediately over chicken and pasta.

# SUMMER FAMILY CALENDAR

## June



1

#### Student Showcase

6 - 8 PM  
Greenwich Art Society Gallery,  
Greenwich  
Student artwork will be on display thru  
6/23. Free.  
629-1533

#### "Fair for All"

6 - 10 PM  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Riverside  
Rides, food, baked goods, books and  
plants. Also 6/2, 9 AM - 10 PM.  
Proceeds support local charities.  
637-2447

7

#### Greenwich Board of Education Work Session

7 PM  
Havemeyer Building, Greenwich  
Avenue  
625-7400

9

#### 75th Annual "AKC All-Breed Show"

8:30 AM  
Taylor Farm Park, Norwalk  
\$5 adults, children 12 and under free.  
Rain or shine.  
860-350-8138

#### 3rd Annual "Renaissance Fair"

10 AM - 7 PM  
International School at Dundee,  
Riverside  
Live horseback jousting, chess board,  
sword fights and lessons, mud show,  
music and artisan market. \$12 adults, \$8  
children 5-12, children 4 and under free.  
367-3800

10

#### "Rock and Mineral" Family Day

1 - 4 PM  
The Bruce Museum, Greenwich  
Learn how to polish amber, make  
jewelry and mineral kaleidoscopes.  
869-6786

7

#### Greenwich Board of Education Meeting

7 PM  
Town Hall Meeting Room, Greenwich  
625-7400

15

#### "Cook Your Buns:" 3-Mile Run and Barbecue

6:30 PM  
Greenwich Point, Old Greenwich  
Kick off your summer with a friendly  
jaunt around the trails and roads of Tod's  
Point followed by a Whole Foods  
barbecue of burgers, hot dogs, fresh  
salads and watermelon. Adults \$15  
pre-entry or \$20 race day; kids  
\$10 pre-entry or \$15 race day.  
661-0412



17

#### Father's Day Bike Ride

Time TBA  
Starts at Cos Cob Library  
Flat 3 1/2 mile ride. Okay for young riders.  
Call for cost.  
637-0031

19

#### Greenwich High School Graduation

Time TBA  
Greenwich High School, Greenwich  
Rain or shine.  
625-7400

30

#### Town Fireworks

Dusk  
Binney Park, Old Greenwich; Greenwich  
Point, Old Greenwich  
Celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup> of July! Raindate 7/1.  
622-7814

# July

## 16

### "Family Night"

6:30 PM Picnic; 7 PM Children's Concert; 8 PM Movie  
Western Greenwich Civic Center, Greenwich  
Call for movie selection. Rain date 7/17  
Sponsored by the Greenwich Department of Parks and Recreation.  
Free.  
618-7650



## 19

### Sidewalk Sale

Store hours  
Greenwich Avenue, Greenwich  
Thru 7/21. Either find great sales or avoid  
Greenwich Avenue!  
869-3500



## 21

### "A Taste for Chocolate" Exhibit

Museum Hours  
The Bruce Museum, Greenwich  
The exhibition explores the historic role  
chocolate has played throughout history.  
Thru 2/24/08. \$7 adults, \$6 seniors and  
students, children under 5 free.  
869-0376

### "Sand Blast" Sand Sculpture Festival

9:30 AM registration  
Greenwich Point, Old Greenwich  
Great fun for the whole family!  
Sponsored by the Greenwich  
Department of Parks and Recreation.  
Free.  
618-7650

# August

## 13

### "Family Night"

6:30 PM Picnic; 7 PM Children's Concert;  
8 PM Movie  
Western Greenwich Civic Center,  
Greenwich  
Call for movie selection. Rain date 8/14  
Sponsored by the Greenwich Department  
of Parks and Recreation. Free.  
618-7650

## 14

### Annual "Carnival of Fun"

Call for hours  
St. Catherine of Sienna Church, Riverside  
Annual fair featuring rides, games, food,  
entertainment and dancing. Thru 8/18.  
637-3661

## 28

### Grades 6 & 9 Greenwich Public School Orientation

Half-day orientation for incoming 6<sup>th</sup> and  
9<sup>th</sup> grade Greenwich public school students  
going into middle school and high school.  
625-7400



## 29

First Day of School  
Greenwich Public Schools

## Greenwich Beaches

Beach passes are required from  
May 1<sup>st</sup> through October 31<sup>st</sup>.  
During that time, prior to 7 AM  
and after 5 PM, only vehicle  
permits for residents and vehicle  
fees for visitors will be required; no  
per person fees will be charged. A  
park pass or guest card/ticket and  
a vehicle permit/parking pass is  
required between 7 AM and 5 PM.  
From November 1<sup>st</sup> through April  
30<sup>th</sup>, no fees will be charged to  
enter Greenwich Point and Byram  
Park. Lifeguards are on duty from  
Memorial Day weekend thru Labor  
Day weekend from 10 AM - 6 PM.  
Call the Town Hall Beach Card  
Office, 681-3019 or  
[www.greenwichct.org](http://www.greenwichct.org) for more  
information.

### Byram Beach / Pool

This park has the only public pool  
in town. Bathhouses are available  
for those using both beach and  
pool. Hours of Operation:  
Saturday before Memorial Day-  
Labor Day: Daily Hours: 9:00 AM -  
7:45 PM Pool Hours: 10:00 AM -  
7:45 PM (until August 13<sup>th</sup>);  
10 AM - 5:45 PM (August 14<sup>th</sup> to  
Labor Day); Family Swim: 5 - 6  
PM, M, W, F.

### Greenwich Point

Open daily from 6:00 am until  
sunset. Activities include jogging,  
walking, cycling, nature study,  
boating, fishing, sailboarding, sun  
bathing, swimming,  
and picnicking.

### Island Beach

Island Beach is situated in Long  
Island Sound about two miles  
south of Greenwich Harbor. Ferry  
service from June 9<sup>th</sup> to September  
16<sup>th</sup>; 10 AM - 7 PM (6/9 thru 8/19)  
and 10 AM - 6 PM (8/20 thru 9/16).  
Ferry runs every hour, M-F; every  
half hour Sat., Sun. and holidays.  
Adults \$2; children \$1; seniors no  
fee; 4 and under no fee; guests \$6.

# Oppositional Defiant Disorder

## Tips for Parents

All children are oppositional from time to time. Walk into any classroom, into any home, or onto any athletic field: children often argue, talk back, disobey and defy teachers, parents or other adults, especially when upset, tired or stressed. Oppositional behavior is also a normal part of development, especially during the early toddler and adolescent years, when there is an intense desire to be separate. However, these behaviors are of concern when they are so frequent that they seriously interfere with a child's social, academic or family life, or seem extreme when compared to the child's peers.

### WHAT IS OPPOSITIONAL DEFIANT DISORDER (ODD)?

According to the American Psychiatric Association, a child with Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) exhibits a recurring pattern of negative, hostile and disobedient behavior that persists for at least six months. Behaviors may include:

- ♦ frequent temper tantrums
- ♦ excessive arguing with adults
- ♦ active defiance and refusal to comply with adult requests and rules
- ♦ deliberate attempts to upset people
- ♦ blaming others for their misbehavior or mistakes
- ♦ being touchy or easily annoyed by others
- ♦ frequent anger and resentment
- ♦ hurtful talking when upset

Symptoms of ODD usually show up before age 8 and are seen in multiple settings, but will probably be more noticeable at home or school. Three to 16 percent of children have ODD, and it is more common in boys than girls. ODD can also coexist with other disorders such as attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, anxiety disorders and depression.

### WHAT CAUSES ODD?

The specific causes of ODD are unknown. However, there are several biological and environmental factors that may exacerbate behaviors associated with oppositional behavior. A child's temperament may play a role. Children who are unable to self-regulate and are easily frustrated tend to have higher rates of noncompliance behaviors. In fact, many parents report that their child with ODD was more rigid and demanding than the child's siblings.

Another thought is that parental factors may play a role in the development of oppositional behavior, particularly inconsistent discipline, low supervision and involvement, and inflexible discipline

Researchers believe that it is not the child or parental characteristics themselves that solely account for the child's oppositional behavior, but the incompatibility between the two. In essence, the child's defiant behavior tends to intensify the harsh reactions by the parents creating a vicious cycle in which the parent and child bring out the worst in each other.

A child's environment may also be a factor in the development of ODD. There is a significant association between

environmental violence and economic hardship and stress associated with urban living and poverty. Children who live in an unstable home, where there is marital discord, or substance abuse are also at risk for developing ODD.

Another theory is that there may be an inherited predisposition to the disorder. ODD appears to be more

common in families where at least one parent has a history of a mood disorder, conduct disorder, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, antisocial personality disorder, or a substance-related disorder.

### TIPS FOR PARENTS

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry offers the following ways that parents can help their child with ODD:

- ♦ Build on the positives. Give your child praise and positive reinforcement when he shows flexibility or cooperation
- ♦ Help your child identify what increases her anxiety.
- ♦ Have your child talk about the feelings she is experiencing, rather than acting on them.
- ♦ Help your child find and use ways to calm herself.
- ♦ Encourage your child to get involved in tasks and physical activities that provide a healthy outlet for energy.
- ♦ When you find yourself about to make the conflict with your child worse, take a time out. Acknowledge your child when she decides to take a time out to prevent overreacting.
- ♦ Pick your battles. A child with ODD has trouble avoiding power struggles. Therefore, prioritize the things you want your child to do.
- ♦ Be consistent. Set up reasonable, age appropriate limits that can be enforced. And follow up.
- ♦ Get support from others. Work with your child's teachers, coaches and significant adults so that you can find what works best.
- ♦ Social skills training may help increase your child's flexibility and improve frustration tolerance with peers.

“Three to 16 percent of children have ODD and it is more common in boys than in girls.”

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# Sun Protection Is a Must

## For Summertime Outdoor Fun!

The sun is the main cause of skin cancer, the most common form of cancer in the United States. There will be a million new cases of skin cancer this year. Skin cancer can and does occur in children and young adults, but most of the people who get skin cancer are older. Older people get skin cancer because they have already received too much of the sun's damaging rays. Your skin remembers each sunburn and each suntan, year after year.

Most of our sun exposure, between 60 percent to 80 percent, happens before we turn 18 years of age. That's because children spend more time outdoors than most adults, especially in the summer. All skin cancers are harmful and some, especially malignant melanoma, can be deadly if left untreated. Malignant melanoma is the second most common form of cancer in women 25 to 34 years old. Sun exposure in early childhood and adolescence contributes to skin cancer.

Research has shown that two or more blistering sunburns as a child or teen increase the risk of developing skin cancer later in life. It is very important, therefore, to protect babies and children from sunburn. Do this by making sun protection a regular family event. You can be the best teacher by practicing sun protection yourself and teach all members of your family how to protect their skin.

It's up to you to protect your child's skin. Sunburns hurt. Sunburns can also cause dehydration and fever. Too many sunburns and too much sun exposure over the years can cause not only skin cancer, but also wrinkles and possibly cataracts of the eye. Babies under 6 months of age need extra protection from the sun. Babies have sensitive skin that is thinner than adult skin. This causes them to sunburn more easily than an adult. Even babies with naturally darker

skin need protection. Here are some specific rules for children younger than 1 year old:

- ♦ Babies younger than 6 months should be kept out of the direct sunlight. Move your baby to the shade or under a tree, umbrella or the stroller canopy.
- ♦ Dress your baby in clothing that covers the body, such as comfortable lightweight long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and hats with brims that shade the face and cover the ears.
- ♦ If your baby gets a sunburn and is younger than 1 year of age, contact your pediatrician at once - a severe sunburn is an emergency.
- ♦ For babies younger than 6 months of age, the risks or benefits of sunscreen use are not yet known. If your baby needs to be outdoors, discuss sunscreen use and other options with your pediatrician.
- ♦ For babies older than 6 months of age, choose a sunscreen made for children.

For children older than 1 year old and all family members, follow these simple rules to protect your family from sunburns now and from skin cancer later in life:

- ♦ Choose sunscreen that is made for children, preferably waterproof. Before covering your child completely, test the sunscreen on your child's back for a reaction. Apply carefully around the eyes, avoiding the eyelids. If a rash develops, talk to your pediatrician.
- ♦ Select clothes made of tightly woven fabrics. Clothes that have a tighter weave generally protect better than clothes with a broader weave. If you're not sure about how tight a fabric's weave is, hold the clothing up to a lamp or window and see how much light shines through. The less light, the better.
- ♦ When using a cap with a bill, make sure the bill is facing forward to shield your child's face. Sunglasses

with UV protection also are a good idea for protecting your child's eyes.

- ♦ If your child gets a sunburn that results in blistering, pain or fever, contact your pediatrician.

Here are some additional sun safety tips that apply to all members of your family:

- ♦ The sun's rays are the strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Try to keep out of the sun during these hours.
- ♦ The sun's damaging UV rays can bounce back from sand, snow or concrete; so be particularly careful when in these areas.
- ♦ Most of the sun's rays can come through the clouds on an overcast day; so use sun protection *even on cloudy days*.
- ♦ When choosing a sunscreen, look for the words "broad-spectrum" on the label - it means that the sunscreen will screen out both ultraviolet B (UVB) and ultraviolet A (UVA) rays.
- ♦ Choose a water-resistant or waterproof sunscreen. Sunscreens that are "waterproof" should be reapplied every two hours, especially if your child is playing in the water.
- ♦ Zinc oxide, a very effective sunblock, can be used as extra protection on the nose, cheeks, tops of the ears and on the shoulders.
- ♦ Use a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15.
- ♦ Rub sunscreen in well, making sure to cover all exposed areas, especially your child's face, nose, ears, feet and hands, and even the backs of the knees.
- ♦ Put on sunscreen 30 minutes before going outdoors - it needs time to work on the skin.
- ♦ Keep your child completely out of the sun until a sunburn is totally healed.
- ♦ Sunscreens should be used for sun protection, not to stay in the sun longer.

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# Our Heartfelt Thanks!

Your donations are continuously needed to fund the eight newsletters (four issues of *Parents Together* and four issues of *Primer*) we publish each school year. Our sincere thanks to the contributors listed below whose gifts were received in response to our 2007 appeal letter.

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## Dear Readers:

This issue concludes our 29<sup>th</sup> year of publishing *Parents Together Primer*, a unique resource for Greenwich parents. This nonprofit, advertisement-free quarterly newsletter, which contains articles of interest to the community, is possible only because of the generous support of our contributors, both editorial and financial. Please let us know the topics you would like to see covered in future issues by either contacting your *Parents Together* school delegate or by e-mailing us at [ptprimer@optonline.net](mailto:ptprimer@optonline.net).

Many thanks to those of you who responded to our 2007 fundraiser and appeal letter which was mailed in March. If you did not receive an appeal letter and wish to contribute, please complete the form below and mail to *Parents Together*, P.O. Box 4843, Greenwich, CT 06831.

Thanks for your continued support!

Betsy Benenson  
Polly Hyman  
Co-Editors

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## 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 \$12 for each subscription, with 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](mailto:ptprimer@optonline.net).

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## RISE Task Force: Developing Options

The RISE Task Force was recently established by the Greenwich Board of Education (BOE) to address *racial imbalance*, *space utilization*, and *declining enrollment* in the Greenwich Public Schools (GPS) within the context of providing *enriched educational opportunities* and the need to be accountable for allocating *limited resources*. The Task Force has been charged with developing multiple, viable options to address these issues.

In response to data presented earlier this year, RISE summary statements were developed and four subcommittees were formed to focus on data, site research, story and culture, and communication.

Throughout the month of May, RISE members and administrative staff developed emerging options. Input will be received from the community and from the BOE in June, and over the summer the Task Force will work on refining the options. Options will be finalized and presented to the BOE on September 27<sup>th</sup>, and BOE members will determine which option or combination of options to implement.

As a parent you can stay informed, participate and find out how RISE will impact you and your child's education by attending Task Force Meetings, school PTA meetings, public hearings, BOE meetings, community forums, and by reading RISE Task Force Updates. Please note below important RISE Task Force Dates:

May 29, 2007 Task Force Meeting Julian Curtiss School 4 - 8 PM Emerging Options	June 4 (EMS) 4 - 6 PM June 5 (CMS) 7 - 9 PM June 6 (WMS) 7 - 9 PM RISE Community Forums RISE Update, Q & A, Public Hearing	June 14, 2007 BOE Meeting Town Hall 7 - 10 PM RISE Update, Q & A Public Hearing
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For more information and updates about the RISE process visit [www.greenwichschools.org/RISE](http://www.greenwichschools.org/RISE)

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## Parents TOGETHER

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