



First Nations Parents Club

Bulletin

“So, how was your day?”

Keeping the Lines of Communication Open this School Year

As the kids head back to school this fall, it is back to the First Nations Parents Club for the rest of us! We hope that you will find some interesting reading and ideas in the September issue of the Parents Club newsletter.

Please send us your stories and photos for the newsletter and the Club website. We always appreciate hearing news from the local clubs and we would love to have more funny or inspiring stories about parenthood to share. Send your submissions to info@fnesc.ca or by fax to 604-925-6097. Photo permission forms are online at fnsc.ca/parentsclub/index.html

When Lauren Hudson’s daughter was in Kindergarten she was a chatterbox – Laurie heard so much about her daughter’s teachers, her best friends, and her day-to-day life that she sometimes had to tell her daughter, “Enough!” But that gradually changed. “My daughter is a pre-teen now. I ask her about school but most days I get the same old answer that school is fine - it is like pulling teeth to get even basic information about tests and school events, much less about her friends and experiences. I just feel like I should be having more meaningful discussions with her.”

Laurie’s experience isn’t uncommon. As children grow up, their need for privacy increases and friends, rather than parents, may be their confidantes of first choice. Still, it is important for parents to work to keep the communication happening for many reasons, including to support their children academically, to provide them with encouragement when times are tough, and to demonstrate that they care.

Here are a few strategies that might work for your family.

Make a Listening Time

When are the best conversation opportunities for your family? Whether it is at the dinner table, in the car, or when your kids come in the door from school, identify those opportunities and then use them to give your child your full attention. Want to hear more about your child’s school friends? Make conversation opportunities by offering to drive them with your kids to sports activities or inviting them to join you for a dinner or a family outing.

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Contact Us!

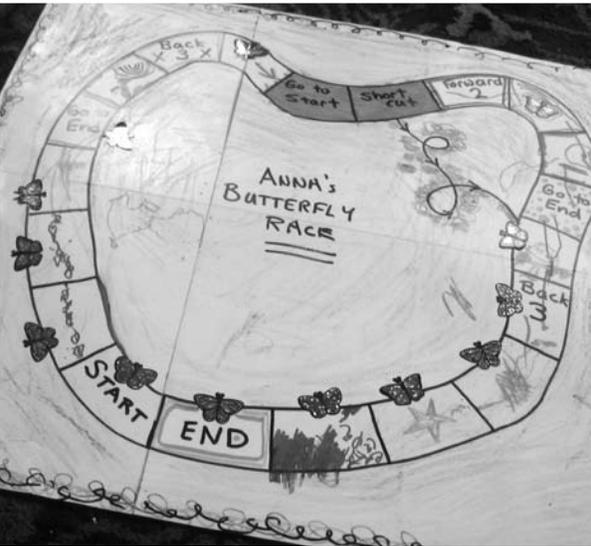
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September 2008





The “Added” Advantages of Board Games for Kids



Introducing kids to board games at a young age is not only great fun, it can build their math skills too!

This was demonstrated in a recent study in which preschoolers played a game that required them to move markers along a path of numbered squares. Children who played this game improved their ability to count, recognize numbers, compare number values and estimate number values. When the children were tested 9 weeks later, they retained those improved math skills.*

Don't have a counting game handy? Here is an activity that young children will enjoy. Take a big sheet of paper and use a thick marker to draw a circular path of 25 squares (more or less depending on the age of your child). Mark the start and the end. Young kids can help colour in the squares and you can make a few special squares by adding notes like “Go Ahead 2” or “Go Back 1”. Get two game pieces and a die, then you are off to the races!

A special incentive for Parents Club members - send us a story or photo to share and the Parents Club will send you a board game, upon request.

**Source: Kids' board games help to build math skills, study finds, March 26, 2008 Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

“So how was your day?” *continued from page 1*

Use a Family Calendar

Do you have the Parents Club Calendar? Every now and then, have your kids help you update the calendar with the dates of upcoming projects, school events, and extra-curricular activities. It is a great conversation starter and it will help your family support them during busy times. Some schools require parents to initial student daytimers on a regular basis, and if this is the case for you, that is another good opportunity to catch up.

Not Just, “How was school?”

Avoid asking questions that can be easily answered by “fine,” “yes,” or “no”. Instead, try to target your questions to specific events that are happening in their lives. Don't be afraid to ask big questions now and then about their goals for the future or their opinions on things having to do with relationships and values. It might feel awkward at first, but it opens the doors to valuable conversations.



Talk to the Teacher

If you are a member of the Parents Club, chances are you are already involved in your local school. Participating in the work of the school is a great way to gain a better appreciation of your child's school experience. Another good strategy is to chat with your child's teacher, whether in person or on the phone. You don't have to wait for parent-teacher interviews or for problem issues to arise. Your child's teacher may have some good insights about your child to share, and the teacher will probably appreciate the opportunity to get to know you better.

On That Note...

Ask about their day, but also let them know you care – after all, communication is a two-way process. One nice tradition is to slip a short note into their lunch bags or backpacks each day– whether it's wishing them well on their test or just a few words saying how proud you are of them.

Persist!

Whether or not you get the answers you'd like, keep asking the questions. They may mumble their reply, but they will remember that you cared enough to ask!



Updates From Our Members

Reminder –

the Parents Club needs your up-to-date Club contact forms. Submit your form by **October 10, 2008**, to be entered in a draw for one of five great prizes. Forms are online at fnsa.ca/parentsclub/club.html.



Need more information?

Is this the first time you've heard about the First Nations Parents Club? If you would like more information about the initiative, please contact our office at (604) 925-6087. The First Nations Parents Club is sponsored by the First Nations Schools Association to recognize the tremendous dedication of parents who support their children's learning. All Club materials and activities are available for free. To start a Club in your community, just contact us and request a Parents Club start-up package. We'd love to hear from you!

Carol Shaughnessy, Correlieu Parents Club, Correlieu Secondary School, Quesnel

At our April meeting there were a number of parents in attendance and we had the opportunity to discuss several issues that concerned parents, one of which was drug awareness. It was decided that we would invite a member of the RCMP and a drug and alcohol counselor to speak to parents and their children at our next meeting regarding the consequences of drug use. We made plans to provide dinner for the large number of parents and youth who would attend. At this meeting we also planned for our upcoming 3rd Annual Aboriginal Celebration Week and received a commitment from parents to volunteer for that week. The celebrations will include our annual Elders luncheon and entertainment from a world champion hoop dancer, as well as our girls flute group who will play our home-made Native American flutes for the Elders. We have a number of activities on the go right now, and we are starting to feel the pressure of the fast-approaching end of the year. With our appreciation and thanks, we will sign off for now.

Raising a Young Athlete

If your child or teen is interested in sports and wants to be a positive role model for others, then he or she can become involved in the Aboriginal Sports and Recreation Association. For more information check out the Youth link at www.asra.ca where you will find information about programs designed to help your child gain the confidence to stay healthy and enhance their team-building skills.

Kwakiutl Band Head Start Program Parents Club, Port Hardy

At our third Parents Club meeting on June 3rd, we started our recipe books. The parents seemed very interested in learning new, healthy recipes for their families and we tried a new recipe with the group. Everyone enjoyed the meal; even the kids. One of the little girls shouted, "This is good soup. It's better than my mom and dad's hamburger soup!" After we ate, the parents started on their recipe books, using scrapbooking materials to make the title page and binding supplies to put the book together. Next time we meet, the parents are going to bring some of their favourite recipes to share with the group and we will try a new recipe. The parents seemed to enjoy this project and we plan to continue with it until we have a good collection of recipes.

Karen Green, Riverview Elementary School

Today we had an appreciation luncheon for our parents who volunteer their time to help make and serve breakfast and lunch in our school. We had four First Nations parents attend our luncheon and we were able to host this luncheon due to the grant money we received through FNEESC. Our First Nations parents greatly appreciated being recognized for their voluntary efforts. We have also used the grant money to buy books and games with First Nations content for our First Nations office. We at Riverview Elementary School, along with our First Nations parents, send our gratitude.