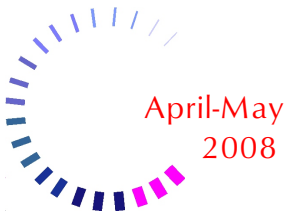


FOSTER CARE JOURNAL



Foster Care Journal, 2008
© American Foster Care Resources, Inc., Jacob R. Sprouse, Jr., Publisher
P.O. Box 271, King George, Virginia 22485
Published Quarterly; AFGR, Inc., A non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization.
FIEN 54-1220248
<http://www.afcr.com>
afcr@afcr.com

Attitude is Everything

Jacob R. Sprouse, Jr

You may want to invigorate your organization, group, committee or task force with a new attitude - one that emphasizes how to cultivate and build on individual strengths. Research demonstrates that attitude truly is everything, and when we look at things positively, we'll have positive thoughts and positive results. What are the two most important ways to achieve that?

Believe in yourself. Research shows that not comparing yourself to others is the best way to overall life satisfaction. Forget about who is richer, more talented, drives a better car, etc., and focus on your own abilities and excellent qualities. Accept who you are. Learn to like yourself and appreciate your positive attributes.

Be optimistic. Develop a "can-do" attitude. Psychologists suggest that an upbeat state of mind will loosen and broaden your thinking. It will also make you more flexible, creative, and more willing to explore new ideas. Remember that you can control your own inner thoughts about what happens, even if you can't always manage the variables outside yourself.

Basically, say researchers, it really comes down to a simple concept: Do your best to get positive and stay positive about yourself and your responsibilities.

Better Attitude for Better Leadership

The importance of leadership to the success of any organization is a tad like "common sense" – not so common that it is easy to find. Effective

leadership has to be ingrained into the inner core of the group - a total part of the culture - in order for that group to be truly successful. An group can have great people and programs and still not be successful. Without good leadership, even the best teams fail.

Leadership is not just the man or women "at the top." A group needs leaders up and down the ladder practicing strong direction and performing the critical tasks that need to be done at every level. True, it starts at the top, but a group needs multiple leaders creating an environment that allows the organization to win.

So what are the critical elements that leadership provides? There are five key ingredients that define leadership. You find them in both individuals and in the best-run groups and committees. These key ingredients are fundamental:

- Leadership provides direction. Strong leadership knows where it's going and why, and more importantly, exactly how it is going to get there. Doubt should not exist. This sense of direction breeds the feeling of pride and purpose. When it is there, you know it as soon as you walk through the door. If you, the leader, do not know the "why" you are organized and the "where" you are going, how then can you expect anyone to want to follow you? Remember: if you don't know where you are going you may wind-up somewhere else!



- Leadership allows a group to set high standards in all areas. This one usually comes from the top. Anybody who accepts anything less than excellence is a compromiser. If the leader compromises, then so will the entire organization. It's true in the personal relationships within the organization and the relationships of your organization/group with other organizations.
- Leadership must also provide a sense of urgency and importance of mission. An organization cannot always wait for the magical "right time" to proceed.



Better Television Habits

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) offers ten suggestions to parents:

1. Set an example: Don't leave the TV on all the time, even when you're eating or engaged in other activities. Select specific programs for information or entertainment, and don't watch "adult" programs when children are present.

2. Don't use TV as a baby-sitter: Keep interesting items handy as an alternative to TV, such as jigsaw puzzles, board games, crayons, pencils, paper, books, and magazines.

3. Reject all other violent "media": Make it a family rule that violence has no place in your home, whether on videotapes, video games, radio programs, music lyrics, or reading materials.

4. Schedule daily activities: Teach your child to plan a daily after-school schedule in which TV fills only a small block of time-or perhaps none!

5. Plan a weekly TV schedule: Sit down each week with your child and choose suitable children's and family programs from the weekly TV listings.

6. Use TV to teach: Children interpret what they see differently than adults. They may not be able to distinguish fiction from fact, and something you think is funny may terrify a child. Therefore, it's a good idea to watch programs with your child and explain the difference between news and entertainment, reality and make-believe, education and exploitation. Discuss programs with your children and compare your family values with those shown on TV.

7. Keep an eye on the tube: Locate the family TV in a central location where you can monitor who is watching what. Children should not have TV sets in their bedrooms, although radios may be permitted and books are encouraged. Watch and evaluate new programs—even cartoons—before you let your child tune in.

8. Encourage other activities: The average American child watches TV for almost as much time as is spent in school! You can reduce TV time by requiring or promoting other at-home activities, such as exercise, hobbies, crafts, reading, playing games, tending pets, helping with household tasks, doing homework, keeping a journal, and writing letters.

9. Look for good TV: There are many fine programs on television that you can watch with your children including concerts, plays, sports events, nature and wildlife shows, animated films, and movies suitable for children.

10. Join forces to oppose TV violence:

Cooperate with teachers and other parents in efforts to reduce TV violence by writing or calling local and network television officials, government regulatory agencies, and Congressional leaders. Let them know that you are concerned about TV violence and advocate the development of quality programs for children.

