

BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL PRESENTS: PEARLS OF LOVE AND LOGIC

Special Thoughts on Raising Kids

Grades

Our kids are starting school. It won't be long until we get their report cards, right? Wrong! **We** don't get the report cards—**they** do! That's the point. In fact, it brings us to the first rule about handling report cards:

Keep the monkey on your child's back

It's important that students know report cards are their business. As parents, we care. Our caring might even border on concern. But worrying? That's your child's business.

Foster W. Cline, M.D. often talks about how his wise old dad always kept the report card problem on his back. As a young child, Foster had a severe learning disorder, usually bringing home straight D's on his report card. Looking over the report card, his father would always poise his fat black fountain pen, and inevitably ask, "Son, are you proud of this?" Foster would then reply, "No, Sir." And then Dad would say, "That's good, Son," and sign the report card. Heaven help Foster if he ever said he was proud of the report card.

Wise Mr. Cline knew that when a child performs like a "turkey," he often wishes to become an "eagle." But when a child performs like a "turkey" and feels like an "eagle," he won't fly very far!

Show more excitement about high grades than low grades - Children want pizzazz. They crave parental emotion. On an unconscious level, surprisingly, it doesn't matter whether the parental emotion surrounds great things or poor things. Children always shoot for emotion.

A parent handling the situation might say, "Hey! A big 'A' in art! Wow, a 'B' in gym. Well, of course, you always did run like the wind. Hey, a big 'B' in typing. You'll

probably be able to turn out papers quickly. That's important. Humm, a 'D' in math. Well, I suppose that could be better. Wow, a big 'B' in social studies. It's important to know history!" Then non-emotionally ask, "How are you going to handle the math?"

Poor grades are not the problem - The reason for the poor grades is the problem - Students receive poor grades because of poor self-images, rebelliousness against parental value systems, anxiety, depression, learning problems, and a host of other reasons.

Sometimes the reason is an attitude problem, and sometimes we need to accept that. One evening, for example, Foster's daughter had an attitude problem. She said, "I hate algebra. I'm not going to look at the problems. I'm not going to even do my homework!" Such a poor attitude, out of character for Robin, surprised him. In his parental wisdom, he replied, "Well, Robin, your attitude surprises me. Would you like some help on your algebra tonight?" She brightened right up, answering, "Oh sure, Dad. Thanks!"

Foster tried an algebra problem, and finally worked out an answer. He was pretty proud of himself until Robin checked his answer with the one in the back of the book. He had forgotten that some of these books actually provide the answers to the problems. His answer was **dead wrong!**

He worked the problem again. The answer was wrong again. A half an hour later he said, "I hate algebra! I never liked it! I've always had problems with it. Shut the darn book! Ask your teacher how to do it tomorrow! At that point he realized how difficult it can be to maintain a positive attitude when taking on a tough assignment.

We Don't Get Report Cards, Kids Do