

# NEWS FROM YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELORS

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## RAISING TEENS TOGETHER

### AVOID THE "FREAK OUT" ROUTE

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*<http://www.shouldertoshoulderminnesota.org>*

Most parents and teens do battle, and these "power struggles" test everyone's patience. You casually ask your daughter if she is going to wear that shirt, and she retorts, "Don't freak out mom!" What's a parent to do? While these challenges are a normal part of everyday life with teens, there are steps to take to avoid (or at least reduce) the "freak out" route.

#### STAY COOL.

If we overreact or lose our cool, we diminish our control with teens and escalate the conflict. Parents show they are in charge by staying calm and dealing with an issue even-handedly. *(Yes, it's easier said than done.)*

the world if they play one more CD? Probably not. The key to successful parenting is to know which battles are worth tackling. Concentrate only on those issues that genuinely need your attention to protect your teen's well-being.

can go to other adults and friends for advice and answers. Like it or not, it's natural for a teen to question adult authority, and it's ok if they don't agree with us all the time.

#### IT'S NOT "COOL" TO BE WITH PARENTS.

Teens are developing their sense of identity - and it can be an anxious time for them. The bad news? Teens will go to great lengths to distance themselves from us so they can establish their identity and independence. The good news? Questioning the rules and re-examining beliefs we taught them is the norm. And while teens may disagree with adults sometimes for no other reason than to be different from us, they may also have a logical reason for coming to their own conclusion. It's a challenge, but we must try to better understand how teens weigh decisions.

*Adapted from "Positive Parenting of Teens" University of Minnesota Extension Service & University of Wisconsin -Extension, 1999.*

#### STICK TO THE GROUND RULES.

Decide on a few non-negotiable rules. These can be as simple as "no television until homework is finished," or "put dirty clothes in the hamper." When a teen pushes back, don't argue over details or negotiate. Simply say, "Sorry, that is against the family rules." Teens will try and outwit us or start an argument. Don't over-explain, and don't renegotiate. Just remind them of the rule.

#### KNOW WHEN TO LET IT GO.

Conflict carries different meanings and feelings for parents and teens. When teens blow up about something we feel is "insignificant," teens tend to forget about the issue soon afterwards. For us, the tension can linger and make us more upset. Sometimes, we just have to let it go. Learn to ignore the "attitude," the flip remark or the threat of disobedience from your teen.

#### WHY ALL THE FREAKING OUT?

"Because I'm the parent" doesn't work anymore. Teens know they can reach conclusions on their own, think independently and question and debate *(this may also mean arguing)*. Their world has expanded, and they

IGNORE THE "SMALL STUFF."  
Many conflicts are not worth your time and energy. Does it really matter if their bedroom is clean for a sleepover? Would it be the end of

## BULLY PREVENTION



### How do I know if my child may be a bystander to bullying?

- Saying that the victim is a "loser"
- Saying that the victim 'deserved' to be bullied
- Saying that the bullying will 'toughen up the victim'
- Saying that they would rather be part of the 'in group' than defend the victim

### What can I do if I suspect my child may be a bystander to bullying?

- **Encourage** your child to mobilize his/her friends to join together to protect the victim. There is safety in numbers.
- **Explain** to your child that bullying does not toughen people up, but that it can cause real emotional and physical harm, which can be long lasting, and life threatening.
- **Teach** your child that being friends with those who inflict this kind of pain on their peers is not what you want them to do. Encourage them to find friends who value kindness and integrity.

## WKCE SCORES ARRIVE!

In November, your child participated in the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations (WKCE). The purpose of the WKCE is to measure student progress related to state content standards. Every child was assessed in reading and math, and children in grade 8 were also assessed in language arts, social studies, science and writing.

Your child's Individual Profile Report that shares WKCE results for your child was mailed home on 2/24/11 along with a letter describing how to review the report.

Remember, no single test completely reflects an individual child's full academic profile. The most accurate picture of student performance is determined by reviewing a collection of assessments over a period of time.

Feel free to contact your child's school counselor if you have questions!

## SUMMER SCHOOL RECOMMENDATIONS

Summer school recommendations were mailed home in the same envelope as your child's WKCE report. More information regarding summer school can be found on the Elmbrook School District website.