



Parent Communication Network



Edina Parent Communication Network
Quarterly Newsletter

April 2004

PCN Calendar

Don't Miss Our Final Forum!

Transition to Kindergarten

April 12, 2004
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Edina Community Center
Room 350

Tentative Topics for 2004-2005

Manners and Respect

Nathan Dungan,
Author of
Prodigal Sons,
Material Girls

Nutrition at School and Home

Stress and Kids

Patty Wetterling
*Keeping Our Children
Safe*

Highlights of the Year with PCN

Thank you for helping to make this year's Edina PCN forums such a success. The high attendance at our forums along with the positive feedback we received in attendee evaluations showed us that our topics and speakers are meeting your needs.

We kicked off the year with **Homework Hassles** which provided advice about teaching our students to do homework independently. In November, nearly 300 people came to hear Bill Doherty talk about **Putting Families First**. Over 350 turned out to learn about **Girls and the Power of Cliques** in January and 230 joined us for some frank discussion of **Sex: Preteens and Teens** last month.

Our **National Speaker Forum** in February featured Harvard professor Dr. Dan Kindlon who spoke about overindulgence. The complimentary educator workshop drew 230 Edina educators despite heavy snow. Over 530 parents and others braved the weather to attend the evening public forum at the high school. Thanks to the evening forum ticket sales, we were able to offer the educator workshop free of charge.

For summaries of these topics as well as additional resources, please see our website at www.edinapcn.org.

We are busy planning our forums for next year. Please see the column on the left for a sneak peak at our proposed topic list and watch for our newsletters next year for more information. We hope to see you at all of our 2004-2005 forums!

Visit our website at www.edinapcn.org

Forum Highlights

Overindulgence: Too much of a Good Thing *with Dan Kindlon* Held February 2

Dr. Kindlon began by discussing changes in recent years that have made parents' jobs harder. Our society has become more permissive. There is less time for families and more pressure on students for academic success. We are more affluent and over-protective and kids are not getting enough sleep.

Despite all of these changes, children continue to need three basic things: Time, Limits and Care. (TLC). Research shows that spending more time together correlates with less drug use, less depression and less sexual promiscuity. Such simple things as having dinner together, or the father being involved in the life of the children can help avoid problem behavior.

We want our children to like us, but being too lenient leads to problems. We can set strict limits and expectations and still maintain closeness with our children. For example, research confirms that it's important to make kids keep their rooms clean. While it's easier to pick up after our children, it's always wrong. Don't let teens have phones in their bedrooms. It will allow their peers to have more influence at a time in their lives when parental guidance is critical. Show children how to become involved in their community, preferably by providing regular one-on-one help to someone in need. It gives them perspective and helps them become less self-centered.

Try to change one behavior at a time, using appropriate consequences such as doing the dishes if they don't sit at the dinner table or charging 50 cents if they say "shut up."

Our goal as parents should be to raise children who can get along successfully without us. Using Kindlon's TLC can help us get there.

Forum Highlights

Sex: Preteens and Teens

Held March 1

Our speakers were Molly Snuggerud of the West Suburban Teen Clinic, and staff from Edina Public Schools including Lillian Ziff, psychologist; Dr. Shannon Tassava, Edina Chemical Health and Mental Health Coordinator; and Dr. Jenni Norlin-Weaver, Director of Teaching and Learning.

Dr. Tassava began by presenting data regarding national, state and local trends in teen sexual behavior. Please contact Dr. Tassava at shatassava@edina.k12.mn.us for a copy of her slides.

Ms. Snuggerud recommended talking early and often when discussing sexual behavior with children. Research shows that parents' opinions really do matter. Teach children how to show respect and care for their partners in sexual situations. Help them consider equality in relationships. When discussing abstinence, get specific. Some definitions of abstinence can lead to STD and pregnancy risk. Pants must stay on, zipped and shut, for full safety. Sexual activity also means different things to different people. It can mean kissing and hugging, some sexual touching or sexual intercourse. Be clear about your definitions as well as your values. Tell kids to talk with partners about their definitions and expectations before the heat of the moment.

Teens need reassurance that their feelings of sexual attraction and curiosity are part of their development. Tell them that they can't control the chemicals in their bodies, but they can control their actions and take responsibility for their actions.

For information about what the Edina Schools are teaching about sexuality, please e-mail jenweaver@edina.k12.mn.us.

Upcoming Forum

**Transition to Kindergarten
Monday, April 12
7:00—9:00 p.m.
Edina Community Center
Room 350**

Kindergarten is an exciting and sometimes scary and nerve-wracking time for children and their parents. Learn how you can help your child get off to a great start in elementary school!

We have invited three knowledgeable educators to help you and your child prepare for that big transition to “real” school. Nan Nelson, Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) teacher, and Becky Danielson, parent, author, and former teacher will be returning as speakers this year. They will be joined by Michele Rock, a Concord Kindergarten teacher with nine years of classroom experience.

The speakers will discuss the social and academic development of kindergartners and how they spend their time at school. Please note that this forum will not focus on whether your child is ready for kindergarten. However, parents who are undecided may gain insight to aid in making that important decision.

Bring your questions and join us for a fun and informative session!

A videotape of the 4/24/02 *Oprah Winfrey Show* “*The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls*” can be ordered online for \$29.95 at www.oprah.com. Click on “order tapes and transcripts” and enter the title.

Forum Highlights

**Girls and the Power
of Cliques
Held January 12**

Our speakers included a panel of social workers and psychologists from the Wayzata School District and Patty Carney-Bradley, licensed parent educator in Edina.

As early as elementary school, groups of girls use power negatively, acting mean, exclusive, calling names and spreading rumors about girls not in the group. But girls also get strength from a group, especially in middle school. They are searching for a way to fit in and trying to break away from parents.

Our society teaches girls to act nice and to avoid conflict, even though conflict and anger are part of being human. As a result, anger and aggression go underground (talking behind backs and writing graffiti on walls in bathrooms) or are turned inward (eating disorders, depression, and self-injurious behavior.)

Strong girls express conflict and work through it. Parents can model expressing anger and praise girls for being direct. Encourage them to say “I am very angry” in an angry tone. Fathers are key in promoting acceptable ways for girls to express anger. Teach girls when to walk away, negotiate or stand up for justice. Mediate and help girls develop a plan to resolve conflict.

Girls also feel hurt and anger from media messages emphasizing the importance of being thin, having a flawless complexion and acting passive. Talk openly about altered images in magazines and how ads target teens to influence their purchases. Teach girls to self-nurture, love and respect themselves. Emphasize internal qualities like persistence, determination and courage.



Thanks to our Donors

Our heartfelt thanks to the donors who helped to make our year such a success.

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Q Cumber's, Edina

PCN Seeks Volunteers

PCN is busy planning next year's forums. We are currently recruiting volunteers to fill key positions including school liaisons and committee chairs.

As a PCN member, you will help facilitate and promote PCN programs. The time commitment is flexible, depending on the position.

Please contact Jayne Tuttle by the end of April if you are interested in learning about the volunteer opportunities available next year. Next year's volunteers are invited to attend the final PCN meeting and meet the parents you will be working with next year.

We hope you become involved in this dedicated group of volunteers that bring parenting information to Edina's families and educators.

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Edina PCNewsline is published in September, November, January and April.
This newsletter and more information about PCN can be found at www.edinapcn.org.