

At Home and in the Classroom

In today's ever changing, fast paced world, teachers and parents alike benefit from support and guidance in their endeavors to build healthy, respectful relationships with students and children. Most teachers and parents share in the common goal of influencing their students and children to be responsible, capable and motivated to make good choices. While children don't come with instruction manuals that offer instructions for guiding behavior, utilizing resources and advice from professionals can help to make parenting and teaching more rewarding and enjoyable.

Love and Logic is one such resource based on a psychologically sound philosophy of raising and teaching children that allows adults to learn skills that make them feel more empowered in their interactions with children, and happier in the process of parenting and teaching. Love and Logic was co-founded by Jim Fay, a former school principle with over 30 years of experience in education, and Dr. Foster Cline, an internationally renowned child and adult psychiatrist. Both bring years of experience and expertise to the fields of parenting and teaching. The terms Love and Logic come from the philosophy that *love* allows children to grow through their mistakes and *logic* allows children to live with the consequences of their choices. Key principles of Love and Logic include:

- ❖ humor, hope and empathy to build up the adult/child relationship
- ❖ emphasizing respect and dignity for both children and adults
- ❖ providing real limits in a loving way
- ❖ teaching consequences and healthy decision making

The Love and Logic model offers resources to fit both the home and school environment, with material that fits all ages of children (birth-teenagers).

In the Classroom

Love and Logic offers simple tools geared to helping teachers and educators manage and maintain calm and effective classrooms. Today's students are faced with a plethora of challenges that increase their risk for emotional and behavioral problems that can have profound impacts on the classroom environment. Resources that offer support to teachers, educators and administrators are based on the following principles:

- ❖ When students feel respected, appreciated and even loved by their teachers, they are far more motivated and cause far fewer problems.
- ❖ Students are far calmer and more motivated when their teachers allow them to make choices and solve their own problems within limits.
- ❖ Successful educators focus most of their energy on simple tools for preventing misbehavior or keeping it small, rather than trying to provide consequences for every problem.
- ❖ When consequences are necessary, effective educators provide them with sincere empathy or compassion.



In the Home

Parents can utilize Love and Logic in the home to reduce the stress and chaos that sometimes interferes with parenting. Love and Logic offers a variety of resources that provide positive strategies for raising happy, well-behaved kids. Parenting resources support the following philosophies:



- ❖ Parents love their kids so much that they are willing to set and enforce limits.
- ❖ Limits are set and enforced with sincere compassion and empathy.
- ❖ Parents allow children to make decisions, make affordable mistakes and experience the natural or logical consequences.
- ❖ When parents are able to allow children affordable mistakes, and balance consequences with empathy, children develop the following logic: *The quality of my life depends on the quality of my choices.*

For additional information please visit www.loveandlogic.com or www.talkaboutalcohol.org

“Tea-Totaling” ...

Not What It Used To Be

A parent recently brought to our attention a homemade pipe (see photos below) along with cut open green tea bags she found in her high school student’s possession. The student admitted to smoking the tea and showed the parents many websites with information about it.



Smoking tea leaves originated in ancient China to help calm and relax the nerves; however it is also said to bring about an exotic feeling and leave one feeling light-headed. It appears that this trend is now brewing up once again among teens.

Youth are drawn to experimenting with and smoking the green tea leaves as they consider it a “legal” way to feel a bit high. It is also appealing to them as it is touted to have weight-loss benefits due to the antioxidant and caffeine properties that raise metabolism, keep you energized, and reduce the appetite.

The tea is smoked by filling a pipe with the leaves from green tea bags or rolling the leaves in cigarette papers.

While it may appear harmless to teens, they are actually inhaling carbon monoxide, which causes the light-headedness. Long-term effects of smoking the tea leaves could cause respiratory problems or even cancer. The caffeinated properties can also leave one with a severe headache or feeling drowsy and sluggish once you stop smoking and the effects wear off.

In light of the K-2 situation where dangerous chemicals are sprayed on potpourri and smoked, it would be wise to not shrug off as harmless any type of leafy substance teens are smoking to get high.



Preventing Youth Suicide

Tips for Parents, Educators and Students

In April of 2014, Nebraska Legislative Bill 923 was passed which contains the requirement that school personnel receive at least 1 hour of suicide prevention training each year beginning with the 2014/2015 school year. The required training will be included in the existing in-service training framework.

Suicidal thoughts and behavior in teens can lead to tragic consequences. Although suicide is the third leading cause of death among youth between 10 and 19 years of age, the good news is it is preventable. Youth who are contemplating suicide frequently give warning signs indicating their distress. Parents, teachers, and friends are usually in a position to pick up on these signs and take immediate steps to intervene.

It is of the utmost importance to never take these warning signs lightly or promise to keep them secret. When all adults and students in the school community are dedicated to making suicide prevention a priority, and take the appropriate actions, we can help youth before they engage in behavior with irreversible consequences.

Suicide Risk Factors

Certain characteristics are associated with an increased risk of suicide. These include:

- Behavioral health concerns such as, mental illness, including depression, conduct disorders, and substance abuse.
- Family stress/dysfunction.
- Environmental risks, including presence of a firearm in the home.
- Situational crises (i.e., traumatic death of a loved one, physical or sexual abuse, family violence, etc.).

Suicide Warning Signs

Many youth display observable behaviors of suicidal ideation. These include:

- Suicidal threats in the form of direct and indirect statements. (Direct: "I want to die" or "I am going to kill myself". Indirect: "The world would be better off without me" or "Nobody will miss me anyway").
- Suicide notes and plans. These are a very real sign of danger and should be taken seriously.
- Prior suicidal behavior/attempts. If a child or a teen has attempted suicide in the past, there is a greater likelihood that he or she will try again.
- Making final arrangements (e.g., making funeral arrangements, writing a will, giving away prized possessions).
- Preoccupation with death. These might appear in classroom drawings, journals, music they listen to, or homework.
- Changes in behavior, appearance, thoughts and/or feelings. Parents, teachers and friends are often the best observers of sudden changes in suicidal students. Changes can include withdrawing from friends and family, skipping school or classes, loss of involvement in activities that were once important, and avoiding friends.

It is also important to note that many of the teen suicide warning signs are also indications of depression.

What to Do

Youth who feel suicidal are not likely to seek help directly; however, parents, school personnel, and peers can recognize the warning signs and take immediate action to keep the youth safe. When a youth gives signs that they may be considering suicide, the following actions should be taken:

- Remain calm.
- Ask the person directly if he or she is thinking about suicide.
- Focus on your concern for their well-being and avoid being accusatory.
- Listen.
- Reassure them that there is help and they will not feel like this forever.
- Do not judge.
- Provide constant supervision. Do not leave the person alone.
- Remove means for self-harm.
- Get help: Peers should not agree to keep the suicidal thoughts a secret and instead should tell an adult, such as a parent, teacher, or school psychologist. Parents should seek help from school or community mental health resources as soon as possible. School staff should take the student to the designated school mental health professional or administrator.

The School Role in Suicide Prevention

Children and adolescents spend a significant part of their day in school under the supervision of various school personnel. Suicide and violence prevention should include all school staff so they can effectively build an environment where students feel safe sharing such information. School psychologists and other crisis team personnel, including the school counselor and school administrator, are trained to address and intervene with a student who is identified at risk for suicide. These individuals should conduct suicide risk assessment, warn/inform parents, provide recommendations and referrals to community services, and, when necessary, should provide follow up counseling and support at school.

Parental Notification and Participation

Parent notification is a vital part of suicide prevention. Parents need to be informed and actively involved in decisions regarding their child's welfare. Even if a child is assessed to be at low risk for suicidal behavior, parents are crucial members of a suicide risk assessment, as they often have information critical to making an appropriate assessment of risk, including mental health history, family dynamics, recent traumatic events, and previous suicidal behaviors. After a school notifies a parent of their child's risk for suicide and provides referral information, the responsibility falls upon the parent to seek mental health assistance for their child. Parents must:

- Continue to take threats seriously: Follow through is important even after the child calms down or informs the parent "they didn't mean it." Avoid assuming behavior is attention seeking.
- Access school supports: If parents are uncomfortable with following through on referrals, they can give the school psychologist permission to contact the referral agency, provide referral information, and follow up on the visit. The school can also assist in providing transportation to get the parent and child to the referral agency.
- Maintain communication with the school. After such an intervention, the school will also provide follow-up supports. Your communication will be crucial to ensuring that the school is the safest, most comfortable place for your child.

(Sources: www.nasponline.org; www.suicidology.org; www.apa.org; www.youthsuicideprevention.nebraska.edu)