



Avona All Star PTA News

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HAPPY NEW YEAR

The Best Gift You Can Give Your Children

by **Stephanie Marston, M.F.T.**
Family therapist, author, and parent educator.

In the last 25 years of working with people in my therapy practice and as a parent educator, I've discovered that the single most important factor that determines whether children grow up to be happy and successful is their self-esteem. A child's self-esteem affects every area of her existence—from the friends she chooses to how well she does in school to what kind of job she pursues to even the person she chooses to marry. But what exactly is this elusive, intangible thing called self-esteem?

Defined simply, self-esteem is the sense of being *lovable* and *capable*. When these two qualities are in sync, a child has high self-esteem. Children first need to know that they are loved and accepted for who they are. Then, with this as a basis, their natural impulse is to take that love and learn to contribute it to the world in constructive ways. It's not hard to see that self-esteem is the best gift you can give your children.

As you work to give your children this marvelous gift, the most important thing to understand is this: Self-esteem evolves in kids primarily through the quality of our relationships with them. For the first several years of their lives, you are their major influence. Later on, teachers and friends come into the picture. But especially at the beginning, you're it, with a capital I.

When children experience a sense of satisfaction in each of the below areas, self-esteem results.

Four factors for high self-esteem

1. Belonging

Children are social beings and their most fundamental need is to feel connected. They develop a sense of security through feeling that they belong within a group. The most obvious group is, of course, the family. But as kids get older they need to belong to outside groups, such as clubs, groups of friends, athletic teams, music groups, and their school class. The primary way kids develop a sense of belonging is when they feel loved by someone who regards them as special. Moreover, they need to know that this someone will protect and guide them. Kids also require a sense of history. They need to have a sense of their roots and heritage. Have you ever noticed that kids are fascinated by stories about what they were like when they were babies and what they said and did as they grew? This sense of history and connectedness increases your children's feelings of security and safety and helps them build healthy connections in the world.

2. Uniqueness

More than 5 billion people now live on this planet, yet no two people have the same fingerprints. Kids, very early on, discover that they are different from you and others in their lives. However, parents tend to unconsciously thwart this discovery by focusing on the similarities between themselves and their kids, and ignoring and/or rejecting the differences. However, I can't stress enough the importance of recognizing, accepting, and appreciating these differences between yourself and your kids. For example, you may be athletic and expect that your child will take after you, when his or her ability lies in more artistic endeavors. It is essential that we recognize our children's talents and support and encourage them. After all, our job is to join our children in discovering who they are.

3. Power

A sense of personal power is essential for every human being. For our children to have a strong sense of their own power, they need to feel that they can influence their environment and have some control over their lives. In order to accomplish this, they require our help in learning how to use their skills and abilities to positively impact their circumstances. For example, give your children responsibilities such as setting the table, taking out the recyclables, or helping to cook dinner. It is empowering for children to feel that they can make meaningful contributions to their families. When we give them responsibility, it is a vote of confidence in their developing sense of competence. They also need to know that they can make good decisions and solve problems. By allowing our kids to make decisions for themselves and solve their own problems with our guidance, we help them develop a sense of independence and personal power.

4. Freedom of expression

Children must be able to say what they think, openly express their feelings, and ask for what they want and need if they are ever to develop an integrated sense of self. They must be able to think their own thoughts even if they differ from ours. Needless to say, although kids blossom in a home atmosphere in which they can ask for what they want, they must also recognize that they may not always get what they've asked for. But they should never be blamed for asking. Over the years, I've noticed that kids who are allowed to be emotionally honest develop a genuineness that more repressed children don't ever seem to acquire. Their words match their facial expressions. Their actions match their words, and they relate from a position of strength.

December

24-31 No School

January 2005

1-2 No School
3 School Re-Opens
10 School Board Meeting
7pm Admin Bldg
12 School Store
3rd, 4th, 5th Grades
14 Family Fun Night
Board Game Night
6-8pm
17 No School
20 **Open PTA Meeting**
7pm Library
BabySitting Available
26 School Store
1st and 2nd Grades

February

4 Spring Fundraiser
Begins
7 School Board Meeting
7pm Admin Bldg
8 Night Without Mom
Craft Night 6-8pm
17 Open PTA Meeting
7pm Library
21 No School
22 Spring Fundraiser Ends
Money Due

Future Family Fun Night

PTA needs donations of new or used board games. Family Game night is being held January 14th and we need your help. Chess, Checkers, Scrabble or any game you know that is fun to play. A box will be located in the lobby outside the office for drop off. We appreciate anything you can donate.

Avona Previously Read Book Store

Don't forget, Mr Wright is looking for decent, pre-read books which would be suitable for K – 5th grade, including picture, chapter, fiction, nonfiction and biographies.

This is a new program to encourage reading at no cost to you or your child. So over the holiday week, if have a book your child isn't reading anymore, have them bring it to school and donate it to our new program.

We will keep you updated as to when this great new program will start. Just remember we will need at least 500 books to get it started.





Message from the PTA President

Happy Holidays Faculty, Parents, Students,

Thank you everyone for your tremendous efforts thus far this year! Avona students, families and faculty have been working hard to make sure that this year keeps going strong. The success' for this year so far include the Juggling for Success Program, PBS F.A.M.I.L.I.E.S Program and the Book Bingo to name a few.

The format of our PTA meetings have changed and we received lots of positive feedback. All meetings will continue in this manner having a guest speaker presentation. In January, Mr. Bartosh, the WASD Assistant Superintendent, will speak on the PSSA tests. Following in February, our WebMaster, Bill Smyth, will discuss computer tips and how to remove and protect your PC from viruses, SpyWare and pop-up ads. In March, Mr. Wagner, the WASD Superintendent, will present the goals of the district for higher achievement.

Going forward, we will continue to strive for more family involved activities. We will keep you current with what is happening at Avona and with PTA through future newsletters, flyers and our website at <http://www.wilsonareasd.org/pta/Avona>. If you have any comments or suggestions for us, we want to hear from you! Please send a note in with your child addressed to the PTA or e-mail us at AvonaPTA@Yahoo.com.

To quote a verse from my favorite Christmas song,
My Christmas Card to You by the Partridge Family (Yes, I just dated myself.),

To you and all your family, your neighbors and your friends, may all your days be happy with a joy that never ends. May peace and love surround you at Christmas time and all the whole year through!

Cathy Smyth
President

PTA will no longer be collecting Christmas Card Fronts

In recents months the outpouring of support for the children of St Jude's Ranch through the Recycled Card Program has been overwhelming! They have received over one million parcels of card fronts and it is more than they can now use. The children are buried in cards, so St Jude's Ranch for Children will no longer accept used card fronts. If you would like to order packages of recycled greeting cards, please call 1-800-492-3562.



The Principal's Christmas Wish List

- 1) Every student reads or is read to for 15 minutes each day.
- 2) Every student plays a math game at least twice a week.
- 3) Every student does at least two nice things for others every day.
- 4) Every child keeps asking "Why" until they understand, even when it exasperates the best teacher or parent.
- 5) Every student explores their curiosity in our nations past to help direct its future.
- 6) Every child gets at least 8 hours of sleep and a balanced breakfast before coming to school.
- 7) Every student performs to the best of their ability.
- 8) Every student treats others like they want to be treated.
- 9) Every student watches TV less and actively plays more.
- 10) Every student feels safe and knows that someone loves them.
- 11) Every teacher makes every decision on what is best for each child, even when it is neither popular nor easy.
- 12) Every parent makes every decision on what is best for their child, even when it is neither popular with their child nor easy.
- 13) Every decision I make will put the interest of each child first, even when it is not popular or easy.

May each and every Avona Elementary family have a wonderful Christmas season and may 2005 be filled with joy and happiness.

Chocolate Peanut Butter Fudge

By: Cathy Smyth, Hospitality Committee

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 cups granulated sugar
- 1 (12 ounce) can evaporated milk
- 1 bag (12ounce) semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 (7 ounce) jar marshmallow fluff
- 1 cup peanut butter

DIRECTIONS:

- Grease a 9x13 inch baking dish.
- In a medium saucepan over medium heat, combine sugar and evaporated milk. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly, boil for 10 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in chocolate chips, marshmallow crème and peanut butter until well incorporated and melted. Spread in prepared pan. Let cool before cutting into squares.

