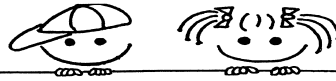




# Parenting Corner: *Parental Peer Pressure*



IUSD Early Childhood Learning Center  
Early Start • Head Start • Montessori International • School Readiness • Special Education Preschool  
(949) 936-5870



## Do You Have It?



### Comparitivitis

Hyper Parenting Disorder

Competitive Parent Syndrome



“You are worried about seeing him spend his early years in doing nothing. What! Is it nothing to be happy? Nothing to skip, play, and run around all day long? Never in his life will he be so busy again.”

~Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, 1762

## Sound Familiar?



“My Ethan started reading before his 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday!” “Jasmine crawled at four months.” “Dakota is taking violin lessons. And she’s only three!” “Chris has karate after school on Monday, piano on Tuesday and soccer all weekend!”

Read on ... this newsletter is for you!

## Avoid Comparing Siblings

Avoid making comparisons by simply identifying and describing a child’s particular behavior or personality without making reference to a sibling. Comparisons can build feelings of guilt and disloyalty between siblings and foster low self-esteem. Simply describe what you see, what you like or dislike, or what needs to be done.

**Instead of saying** “You always do your chores on time, unlike your sister who always forgets”, **say** “Wow! I appreciate that you did your chores!”

**Instead of saying** “Your shirt is filthy, why can’t you be neat like your brother?” **say** “Your shirt is very dirty, you’d look nicer in a clean shirt.”

**Instead of saying** “Why can’t you follow the rules like your brother?” **say** “I am disappointed that you didn’t go to bed on time when the babysitter was here.”

## What Type of Parent are You?

**Pushover Parent:** Your answer to everything your child says is “Yes, honey!” You’re afraid to upset your little darlings, and you struggle if you have to discipline your child. You strive to be more of a friend than a parent. Remember that you are the adult and a parent. It is your role to parent so that your children can develop fulfilling relationships with others in the future.

**Keeping-up-with-the-Joneses Parent:** Whatever your next store neighbor’s children have, you’ve got to buy one for your little ones...but bigger and better! Who doesn’t want to spoil their kids? Think about what you are teaching your children in regards to fulfillment through material wealth and what it could do to your child’s self esteem if he doesn’t get his way in the future.

**Sports Dream Parent:** You want your child to be the next football or basketball star, so you go to great lengths to get him/her enrolled in any sports classes. And maybe, education takes the back seat. Consider the possibility that your child gets injured; what does he/she have to fall back on? Remember that education is the foundation for opportunity and stability in the future.

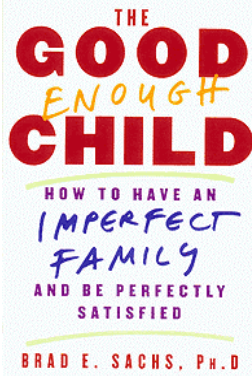
**Overachiever Parent:** Your child is busier than you. There are numerous activities such as music lessons, sports and extra school courses all week including the weekends. Don’t forget to enjoy your children and **let them be children**. Some after school activities are definitely worth the time for kids to develop their interests and keep away from boredom or trouble. Also, check yourself to see if you are living your dreams through your child...whose needs are you meeting?

**Bully/Chaotic Parent:** As parents, you lack respect for each other within the household as well as among other social groups. Your children witness disrespectful behavior and believe it is acceptable to bully people. Your home is chaotic and you may be challenged with power struggles. Reflect on what type of adult a child in this environment will become. It is likely that he/she will struggle with relationships and act out inappropriately.

**Overprotective Parent:** It’s your job as parents to protect your children, but beware of overdoing it to the point of smothering. It is important to build the quality of independence for you child. And as for the germs, it’s good to be cautious and maintain a high level of hygiene when you can, however, it is impossible to protect your children from every germ out there!

**Carefree Parent:** You are carefree parents and your children are allowed to do what they want. Perhaps your family is even on a first name basis, as opposed to “mom” and “dad.” Your children are your best friends and very independent. This may work well for some people and may be better suited for older children, however, younger children need guidance and discipline as a part of their emotional and social development.

**Overly Bragging Parent:** One of the criteria of being parents is the right to brag about your children. We all do it, some more than others. But when bragging becomes a competition (i.e. “My 1.5 year old daughter is potty trained already and your son is not potty trained yet and he’s how old?” “incredulous look”), take step back because parenting is not a competition. Each child is different and will have unique strengths and weaknesses. This understanding will promote healthy relationships between you and other parents.



# Story Time

## The Good Enough Child: How to Have an Imperfect Family and Be Perfectly Satisfied by Brad E. Sachs, Ph.D.:

This book "is about forgiving, even embracing, imperfection, for I believe the search for the ideal is the enemy of the achievable and the realizable," says Dr. Sachs. "Once we let go of the image of the perfect family and accept ourselves and each other for who we are, we will become the best and most loving parents a child could ask for. To do so requires that we say good-bye to the tantalizing dream, it but enables us to greet a delicious reality, the reality of family love, with its wonderfully complicated texture, its bright and shadowy moments, its healing and redemptive powers."

### TIPS TO REDUCE COMPETITIVE PARENTING

By Shelley Thacker Meinhardt

- ☆ Give yourself permission to relax. Take that developmental milestones chart off your refrigerator. Accept that there is no such thing as a perfect child or perfect parent. That is OK!
- ☆ Give your child permission to grow and learn at her own pace. Chances are excellent that, sooner or later, she'll master walking, talking, reading, using the potty, and a hundred other skills. It doesn't matter to her if some, or even all, of her playgroup pals get there first. Why let it matter to you?
- ☆ When faced with a competitive parent, refuse to get dragged into the game. Just say, "I'm confident that Lily will (crawl, drink from a cup, learn the alphabet) when she's ready. I'm following her lead and letting her take it at her own pace."
- ☆ Instead of competing with other parents, try offering them praise. Say, "I really admire how patient you are. I struggle with that." Or "You know, you're a really wonderful mom." Focus on the positive, be honest about your own self-doubts, and you'll cut down on competitiveness.
- ☆ If all the moms in your social group are competitive types who make you feel inadequate, maybe it's time to find some new mom-friends.

*Two of the best gifts you can give your child are unconditional love and acceptance. So let him be himself. Instead of comparing him to his peers, respect his unique ways of growing and knowing and learning. He'll be happier and more relaxed – and so will you!*

### Helpful Resources

Systematic Training for Effective Parenting Class\*

REACH Program\*

CUIDAR Parenting Series\*

<http://www.drphil.com/shows/show/198>

<http://www.nationalfamilynight.org>



\*Information available at IUSD School Readiness Program

For more information on the IUSD School Readiness Program visit:  
<http://www.iusd.org/eclc>

### AUTHORITY OF PARENTS

By Suzanne J. Gelb, Ph.D., J.D

A pivotal factor is for parents to be in their authority as they raise their children. This includes applying firm, fair, consistent discipline and being in charge and responsible for their children's behavior.

A problem arises when parents who are ignorant about child rearing base their choices on their concern about what others think of them. This often extends to seeking/listening to advice from those who are ignorant about parenting.

Sound parenting includes involving children in activities that they enjoy, and encouraging them to be the best they can in these pursuits. Sound parenting also involves applying discipline when a child is not especially enthusiastic about an activity that a parent considers to be necessary (e.g., doing homework before going out to play) and commending compliance with praise.

