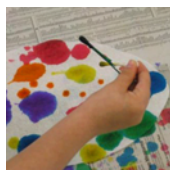
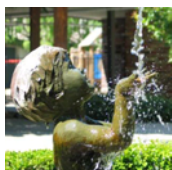
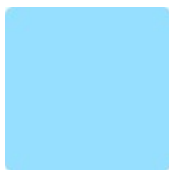
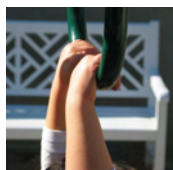
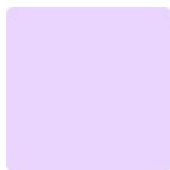




# Pearls for Parents

FRC Bi-weekly Newsletter  
February 12, 2010



## Parenting Pearl #1: *Something to ponder...*

### "What Boys Need"

In January we had the privilege of having Dr. Jerry Shapiro speak to our community. He suggested that to be able to help boys navigate through life, we must understand what they need. He talked about how most elementary schools tend to have feminized curriculums and lack male teachers. As a result, schools are not set up to accommodate the unique needs of boys or deal with boy energy. In general, boys learn by "doing" and hands-on experiences. Unfortunately, children are being pushed to read and write at an earlier age and are having to sit for long periods of time. Young boys may not benefit from early exposure to academics and are often falling behind and struggling in school. Instead of putting boys in an environment in which they are more likely to fail or feel weak, we need to set them up for success at an early age. Boy-friendly early education is crucial and he urged parents to be careful when placing boys in academically-driven preschools and elementary schools. He also recommended that fathers take an active role in the school system and help make changes toward creating positive learning experiences for boys.

Telling stories and reading books that affirm the values of masculinity without disrespecting or devaluing females is also important. Dr. Shapiro discussed the significance of strong male role models in a boy's life including fathers, uncles, grandfathers, teachers, coaches, pastors, etc. Men need to understand their essential role in leading the next generation into manhood. He stressed that the quantity of time fathers, and other men, spend with boys can be more critical than the quality of time. Boys need to be exposed to a strong community of males that value, admire, and guide them. When boys are able to establish meaningful relationships in which they do not feel judged, they are then able to experience acceptance and connection- essential feelings for any boy.

*(tip source: Dr. Jerry Shapiro's presentation, "What Boys Need")*

## Parenting Pearl #2: *Something to do...*

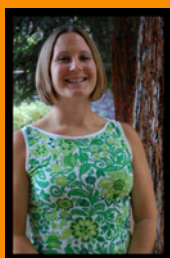
### Ideas for Helping Boys Thrive

- 1. Competition:** According to Michael Gurian, author of *The Wonder of Boys*, nurtured competition is crucial to male development and self-image. Boys need space and opportunities to compete and perform well. "Often, game and sports activities are good examples of boys coming together to grow and nurture through competition. Getting your son into the right competitive program gives him a structure in which to flourish." It is important to help boys find an arena in which they can compete so that they can express themselves in appropriate and healthy ways. *(tip source: *The Wonder of Boys* by Michael Gurian).*
- 2. Avoid Stereotypes:** Change the way you describe and think about boys. Instead find strengths in their character traits. Examples: Aggressive (strength: assertive), loud (strength: communicator), destructive (strength: builder), messy (strength: handle things), smelly (strength: easy-going), exhausting (strength: adventurous). *(tip source: Anna Welsch's presentation, "Loving and Nurturing Our Boys")*
- 3. Give Boys Important Work:** "An essential element of happy boyhood and happy manhood is the love of work. Through work the individual boy seeks that which sets him apart from others yet that through which he belongs with others. From toddlerhood, boys need important work. It focuses them. It builds self-confidence. It helps them belong. It helps them become husbands. Work is not something to protect boys from; it is something to lead boys toward. Sports can be work for athletic boys, computers can be work, newspaper routes, housecleaning, visits to a parents workplace, and schoolwork." Don't rob your sons of the experiences and confidence gained from working by doing everything for them. Parents have the privilege of giving important work to their sons and helping them find meaning in it. *(tip source: *The Wonder of Boys* by Michael Gurian)*
- 4. Sports:** "Not all boys like sports or are cut out for them, but between in-school and non-school sports, most boys are involved to some degree. Boys are wired, of course, to find structures in which to perfect the aggressive movement of objects through space. Parents, coaches, and role models are charged with the duty of providing male aggressiveness with structure, skill, and focus. Despite the negative possibilities inherent in sports activities, it remains nonetheless one of the most profound and potentially useful socializing forces in

boys' lives. It gives boys a place to find themselves. His physicality is honored, his ability to compete is challenged, his sense of self has the potential to grow, he feels part of a large group, and he has a role within the organizational system." (*tip source: [The Wonder of Boys](#) by Michael Gurian*)

**5. Communication:** In his talk, Dr. Shapiro talked about the different ways men and women communicate. When communicating with boys, the same techniques can be used. For instance, while women are more likely to prefer talking face-to-face, men prefer talking shoulder-to-shoulder. When you want to connect with your son, consider taking a walk, playing a game or a sport (shooting hoops or passing the soccer ball), doing a project together, or chatting in the car. Males of all ages tend to relate more comfortably when working side-by-side. (*tip source: Dr. Shapiro's presentation, "What Boys Need"*)

## Staff Spotlight



**Jill Hixson**

4's and Innovative Teacher

**I've been working at the Children's Center for:**  
7 years-not consecutive!

### My Fun Fact:

Last summer I hiked to the top of the highest mountain in the lower 48 states

**My Favorite Children's Book:**  
*The Giving Tree*  
by Shel Silverstein



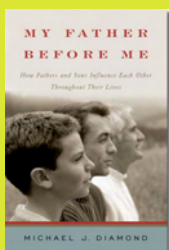
## Dates to Remember

**Feb 15-19, 2010**  
School closed

**Feb 22, 2010**  
School resumes

## Reading Corner

### Dr. Jerry Shapiro's recommended book list on parenting boys:



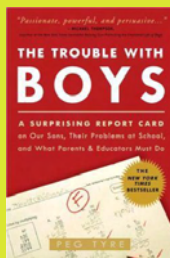
**My Father Before Me**  
by Michael Diamond



**The War Against BOYS**  
by Christina Sommers



**Real Boys**  
by William Pollack



**The Trouble with BOYS**  
by Peg Tyre

### **Books on boys in the FRC library:**

[Boys Will Be Boys](#) by Myriam Miedzian  
[Lost Boys](#) by James Garbarino  
[Bringing Up Boys](#) by James Dobson  
[Raising Cain](#) by Dan Kindlon & Michael Thompson

For a complete list of books in the FRC library [click here](#).

## Websites to Check Out

[PBS Parent's Guide to Raising Boys](#)  
A great website with practical strategies for school

**Wednesday Feb 24, 2010**

"Raising Confident Girls" with

Marean Simone

7pm in Creekside

[Registration](#)

[Online School Calendar](#)

and home

[www.raisingboysworld.com](http://www.raisingboysworld.com)

groups, forums, and articles on raising boys

[www.mothersraisingboys.com](http://www.mothersraisingboys.com)

A mother's blog on how to raise sons into fantastic men

[10 Ways Parents Can Help Their Sons](#)

An article from Bay Area Parent

## Words to Inspire

"There comes a time in every rightly constructed boy's life that he has a raging desire to go somewhere and dig for hidden treasure."

*-Mark Twain*



This email was sent to you by:

***The Family Resource Center***

Children's Center Preschool at Los Altos United Methodist Church  
655 Magdalena Ave, Los Altos, CA 94024 [www.childrenscenterpreschool.org](http://www.childrenscenterpreschool.org)

**[Archives](#): link to past newsletters**