

## PARENT SECTION

If you are; realistic about the world we are living in, approachable, calm when faced with a stressful situation, not your child's best friend, able to recognize your limits as a parent, authoritative, informed... What Are You?

According to the noted Harvard researcher and child psychologist Catherine Steiner-Adair, you are an effective parent. We recently spent the afternoon with Dr. Steiner-Adair discussing her research and our thoughts on the challenges that parents face today. That same evening, along with camp parents, she shared some very helpful tips on how to encourage good communication, effective relationships and basically keep us all from going crazy as our children enter their teen years! She stressed the importance of parents accepting the fact that our children are growing up in this current world not the one of our youth. We must acknowledge that this is THEIR world and we must join them in the journey. They are dealing with issues today that we didn't have to deal with as children and our job is to remain the voice of reason...calm, supportive and consistent in our parenting.

Dr. Steiner-Adair shared what she called the four ineffective parenting styles, "scary parents", "crazy parents", "best friends", or "clueless parents" that we must all guard against. Instead, she urges us to be parents with a calm, informed, and powerful approach. It is important as parents that we realize the limits of our power as our children get older and acknowledge this to our children. Our hope is that they will make smart choices. But when they don't make good choices, we are always emphasizing that we love them and are here for them, encouraging them to share with us so we can help coach and guide them. Dr. Steiner-Adair provided very helpful advice on how to keep relationships with our children healthy as they move into the adolescent years. Don't overreact to issues or "over-function" (meaning don't do things for your children that they should be doing) and TALK, TALK, TALK with your children.

1. Have one or two things both you and your children enjoy doing and schedule time to do them. It is important that during this activity you don't lecture or use the time to bring up school, behavioral problems or any heavy conversation. It can be as simple as watching TV together. Be sure to keep the conversation light but useful. Use the shows scenarios to highlight your family's values.
2. Eat a meal together. We always hear the importance of families eating dinner together, but it can be any meal. The important thing is that everyone is sitting down together. This is not the time for discipline or "dissing". The key is respecting each others rights to a different opinion. This is a great time to include them in your world as problem solvers, allowing them to give you advice. By letting them know you depend on them for help too you are demonstrating that parents are not perfect or omnipotent and they don't have to be either.
3. Create a place where your children feel emotionally safe. Children should feel that they are allowed to have issues that hurt, upset or make them mad. Parents should not become more emotional about these issues than the child. They need to know they can express their emotions around you and YOU can handle it when they are in bad shape. Do not talk about or problem-solve their issue in front of siblings or another person, turn off cell phones and don't allow interruptions. Let your child know they are the most important thing at that moment. It is better to ask your child how they reacted than what they felt. If you keep asking questions, eventually they will offer how they felt and you will get all the true details. In the end, always include yourself-"How can we fix this?" This reminds your child that as a team, you can deal with the issue.

Sounds easy doesn't it? No one knows better than a parent the desire to hold your children close and protect them from danger all the while knowing the great importance in letting them fly, possibly fall and learn from their challenges. Take a deep breath and try to relax. Enjoy your children today. They sure do grow fast.

\*For more from Dr. Steiner-Adair, you can see her website at: [www.catherinesteineradair.com](http://www.catherinesteineradair.com) and/or read her latest publication: **"Full of Ourselves: A Wellness Program Advancing Girl Power, Health and Leadership"**.



### Website Insights

Things you might not know to find on the Southwoods Website.

- New Super Senior and S'mores pages.
- Monthly News and Pic Updates on the SW Desk.
- Many videos added throughout the Camp Tour pages, in addition to plenty of great pics.
- Your camper can give a fuzzy to other campers on the Lineup page.

### Parent Survey 2007

The Southwoods Parent Survey is available online! We request that you fill out this quick online survey for each child you had at camp. It is a very helpful tool for us in our efforts to meet the needs of both our campers and you our camp parents. We appreciate your time and assistance.

Goto the SW Desk page on the Southwoods website Today!  
[www.southwoods.com.desk.aspx](http://www.southwoods.com.desk.aspx)