

St. Patrick's Day

On March 17th we will celebrate St. Patrick's Day. How much do you know about the holiday?

The Shamrock, often associated with St. Patrick's Day, was a sacred plant in ancient Ireland. It symbolized the rebirth of spring. By the seventeenth century as the English began to seize Irish lands and make laws against the use of the Irish language, the shamrock emerged as the symbol of Irish nationalism. Many of the Irish people began wearing the shamrock as a symbol of pride in their heritage and their dislike of English rule.

Music has always held an important position in Irish culture. The Celts' culture was an oral culture. Religion, legend and history passed from one generation to the next using stories and songs. After the English conquered the Irish and forbid them to speak their own language, the Irish people turned to music to preserve their culture. Since the music often stirred emotions and joined the people together, music was outlawed. In fact, Queen Elizabeth I went so far as to order all artists and pipers to be arrested and hung. Today Irish bands are gaining popularity. They play instruments that have been used for centuries including the fiddle, the uilleann pipes an elaborate type of bagpipe, the tin whistle and the bodhran, a type of drum.

One can not talk about Irish history and culture without including the patron saint, St. Patrick. As the story goes, St.

Patrick stood on a hilltop and with only a wooden staff he banished all the snakes from Ireland. Actually, snakes never lived in Ireland. The story is a metaphor for erasing pagan ideology from Ireland. The island nation never played home to any snakes. Within two hundred years of St. Patrick's arrival in Ireland the nation became completely Christian.

Of all the Irish lore perhaps the most famous fellow is the leprechaun. Originally these little fellows were cranky souls that mended the other fairies' shoes. They used trickery to hide their treasures. The leprechaun that many children in America love is an invention of the 1959 Walt Disney film "Darby O'Gill and the Little People." This friendly leprechaun joins the ranks of other symbols of St. Patrick's Day and Ireland.

Parents, if you do decide to enjoy some alcohol on St. Patrick's Day please do so responsibly and consider the influence on your children.



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• **Word List:** - how many words can your child find from this list in the articles?

- Leprechaun
- Irish
- Snake
- Bodhran
- Family
- Violence
- Drugs
- Alcohol
- Time



Clear Messages by Debbie Luginbyhl

When disciplining your children, it is important to give messages they can easily understand. We have to be clear in our communication with them. Terms like disrespectful, naughty, and irresponsible, are not clear to most children. For children this can be confusing and frustrating.

A clear message when describing a “lousy attitude” might be “You walked away from me when I asked you to do something, and mumbled ‘Get off my back’”. Or a clear alternative to telling your child that he/she was good at the store would be “You sat nicely in the cart and helped me pick the groceries. That was nice.” This gives the child specific information. One of our goals as parents is to give our kids messages they can understand. We must remember that most children are concrete thinkers; they don’t grasp the full meaning of words that are abstract or vague.

Giving clear messages is one key to appropriate teaching. It is important to be specific when telling the child what needs to be done and how to do it. We as parents need to clearly let our children know when they have misbehaved. Parents need to teach their children how to think for themselves and to solve problems. This means parents must be specific; they have to focus on what their children are doing or saying, and accurately describe their children’s behavior.

A major factor in giving clear messages is the way you relay the message to your child. It is important to keep these things in mind.

1. Have your child look at you-this way you are sure your child is receiving the message directly.
2. Look at your child-giving him/her your full attention. It helps with learning to communicate better.
3. Use a voice tone that fits the situation- your voice should be firm when giving correction, friendly and enthusiastic when giving compliments
4. Do not have many distractions - turn off the television when explaining the task you need done.
5. Remember to try to be eye to eye with your child-avoid intimidating your child by standing over him or her.

The most important part of being specific when describing your child’s misbehavior is that they understand you dislike the behavior and not them personally. That is why you are taking the time to explain it to them clearly. Clear messages are crucial to our children so they can learn to comprehend the difference between good and bad behavior.



Spring Break Tips

We all know stories of wild spring break parties at beach resorts. But parents need to realize that teens that stay at home are also at increased risk for problem behavior. With more money to spend than teens have had in the past, unsupervised time as more parents are gone all day at work, and increasing peer pressure to have fun, these factors can whip up the perfect recipe for risky behaviors including the use of alcohol and other drugs. More teens use marijuana, cigarettes and alcohol for the first time during spring break and summer break than at any other time of the year. These are times with less supervision and more free time.

Parents need to set rules and consequences before spring break begins. Make sure your child knows that spring break does not mean a break in following the rules. Tell your child that you will not tolerate the use of alcohol or other drugs. Explain the consequences of such behavior. Talk with your teen and pre-teen about the dangers of drinking and drug use including alcohol poisoning and violence. Talk about sexual assaults that can happen with the use of these substances. Discuss different scenarios that your child could encounter. Know what your child is doing and with whom. Talk with other parents and form a network to coordinate rules and plans. Have daily check in times and get the cell phone numbers of all their friends. Help your teen plan activities for each day so they are not searching for something to do.

Parents need to plan for younger children also. Arrange adequate supervision for them. Let your children know how to reach you in an emergency and also another adult they can contact if they can not reach you. With a little planning spring break can be a good time for your child.

Family Fun

It is important that families bond together. Doing activities together can promote good family health. Here are some ideas for families to do together.

Eat dinner together at least several times a week. This has shown to have a very positive influence on children.

Have a family game night.

Keep family traditions and celebrations. Make these special times.

Read a book together as a family.

Do a project as a family.



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The Parents' Academy/Parents' Corner

The Parents' Academy and Parents' Corner is seeking sponsors. We would like to partner with organizations such as church groups or civic groups for upcoming programs.

If your group would like to schedule a presentation tailored to your needs, or sponsor a program please contact Debbie at 575-200-9962 or email to parentsacademy@co.eddy.nm.us to make arrangements.

If you would like to receive our monthly newsletter just send us an email and we will put you on our email list.