

Better Parenting: Thoughts on Swearing and Bad Language

By Cline/Fay Institute, Inc.
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It hits us like a ton of bricks sometimes. That sweet and innocent child we are raising walks in the door one day spewing forth a string of expletives that knock us off our feet.

Sometimes kids use bad language because they want to be like their school friends. Sometimes they use it merely to test or enjoy our reaction.

In many cases it is a mere rite of passage, a phase children go through. They hear older kids swearing and, wanting to be like them, they develop a new vocabulary.

We could respond with demands, "You are not going to talk like that in this house, so clean up that mouth!" Or we could wash their mouths out with soap. But then they would have to exert their independence, and that won't be fun for us.

Solving the problem is a matter of taking small steps. The first step is to discuss where such language is acceptable and second is to discuss whether it is really needed at all.

Step One

"You seem to kind of like that word, don't you? You know, some kids like those words because when they use them their parents' mouths drop open. But the people who really know how to use those words are the kind of people who know where and when to use them. I'm curious about how much you know

about that? Would you guess—how about when Grandma's here for dinner? Would that be a real good time to use those words? Or in your classroom? I'll be able to know how grown up you are by how well you can figure that out."

One place where they learn they cannot use these words is around us. When the bad language comes out, we say, "Is this the right place for that language?" And, we repeat that question as many times as possible until we get the results we want.

Step Two

The time to discuss this problem is when both our child and we as the adult are being pleasant. One approach is to address the child's sense of worth: "You know, son, a lot of people who use that sort of language are people with a very limited vocabulary. They don't know many words, so they pull out those boring old swear words and use them instead. They're really easy words. You know, I can sort of understand people using them."

"So, if there's ever a day when you feel dim-witted and you come out with some of these words, I'll try to understand that it's a time when you're feeling really crummy about your ability to use the English language."

Then we could drop the issue. The language our kids will use in the long run will be the language they want to use. Hot anger on our part will possibly delay their realization that swearing is inappropriate.

In my private practice I often took in some pretty tough talking kids. I just smiled and told them that that kind of language will give them muscles and make them strong. Some looked at me

like I was nuts.

I asked them, "Are you interested in what will happen if you cuss in my house?" If they said no I would just say, "How sad for you." If they said yes, "I said, well, for every cuss word you will do twenty-five pushups." Then I would say, "Please give me a cuss word so we can practice the pushups and you can see how it works." Their response was usually, "No way."

Sometimes a kid would say "I don't care, I won't do them." I said, "That's okay, you will figure it out." Then when it happened and they refused to do the pushups I took the TV, video game, and basketball to my friend's house. He did not get dessert, soda or treats or outings until the pushups were done.

One 16 year old kid I got had 1,800 pushups. He had to drop off his basketball team and lose many privileges until he made a contract to do 200 pushups a day. When he worked up

to that amount he became very strong and played baseball very well in the spring after they were done. It took quite a while. In addition to cleaning up his language it built his self-esteem to complete this challenge. He felt good about his accomplishment.

In closing I will add this: say what you mean and mean what you say. Do not cut back the pushups or give them a deal because it will take too long. This is not productive in the long run.

The tougher the kid the tougher the consequences. I had a couple of tough kids that their probation officer said will never do them. The kids have to know in their hearts and mind that you care about them for this to work. And you have to have the humor, time and patience to make it work.

If there is a subject or a skill you would like to develop as you are raising your children feel free to e-mail me and I will be glad to help if I can. soniaspackman@msn.com

FIRST Robotics *continued from page 14*

a device that allows it to operate autonomously as well as communicate with an operator during the student driving portion of the challenge.

At the league final competition Redshirts made it all the way to the quarterfinals and just missed making it to the finals. Redshirts finished in 7th place for the season out of 18 teams in their league. Squirrel?! finished their season in 10th place. Neither team qualified to advance to state.

This is Vernonia's second year competing in FTC. "All of the team members from last year have commented about how much more they understand the tasks, the stages of building a robot, and the various techniques we use to accomplish the tasks," says Ely.

Beyond robot building, Vernonia's FTC teams have been fortunate to be awarded two 3D printers over the years. The team also uses computer aided design software to create parts and models for the robots (or sometimes just for the fun of it). This is just one of the aspects of the program beyond robot building. With science and technology being the focus of the program, that allows kids to follow their interests with all the tools readily available in the school.

"FIRST brings with it great scholarship opportunities at the state and national level along with student internships at many companies in the Portland metro area," says Ely. "Our goal is to build a sustainable robotics program at Vernonia that students of all ages can take part in."

It's never too early for students to discover STEM and STEM concepts. There are programs available through FIRST for students ages 6-9 and 4th - 8th grades as well. Unfortunately, these two programs are not currently available in our area. These programs could be a reality for our younger students if there are mentors and volunteers willing to start and run these programs for the younger students. All the information you need can be found at www.firstinspires.org.

FIRST LEGO League Jr is designed to introduce STEM concepts to kids ages 6-9 while exciting them through a brand they know and love – LEGO®.

FIRST LEGO League teams (up to 10 members, grades 4th-8th) research a real-world problem such as food safety, recycling, energy, etc., and are challenged to develop a solution, while being guided by two or more adult coaches. They also must design, build, and program a robot using LEGO MINDSTORMS®, and then compete on a table-top playing field.

All of these programs allow for tomorrow's innovators to practice imaginative thinking and teamwork. FIRST Robotics is the "hardest fun, you'll ever have!"

For more information about the FRC Team please contact, Camrin Eyrrick, by email at eurichclan@gmail.com.

For more information about the FTC Teams please contact, Susan Ely, by email at coolcowz1@yahoo.com.

VHS Winter Sports *continued from page 12*

bit different with teams wrestling in head to head competitions, which was difficult for the Logger's small squad that was only able to put wrestlers out in seven weight classes.

Vernonia defeated Heppner 34-29 in their opening round with Williams at 126, Hensen at 145, and Harbour at 152 all recording victories along with several forfeit wins. The Loggers lost to Myrtle Point 48-29, with Williams, Hensen and Harbour once again

notching wins. Against the mighty Culver team, the Loggers fell 71-12 with Williams getting the only win for the Loggers that wasn't a forfeit. Vernonia battled to a tough 31-30 loss to Neah-Kah-Nie in the 5th round with Amanda Rose Sicard getting a win at 120, along with Nick Bennett at 138. In their final matchup of the tournament the Loggers fell to Elgin 41-36 with all the Loggers points coming on forfeits.

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