

Lesson 1—Learning: A Good Beginning

A number of years ago, the National Association for the Education of Young Children adopted the theme, “good beginnings never end,” as they promoted the values and needs for increased emphases on providing formal learning opportunities for pre-school children. The theme has an enduring significance. Those who continue to support the efforts nationally and locally, to have young children attend places of learning (schools, pre-schools, day care, etc.) that prominently promote and encourage such programs have increased in number and support has expanded. Such support and encouragement reflect a respect for learning, education, and knowledge, that, when recognized early as valuable and cultivated over time, encourages all to accept learning, knowledge and education as a necessary, recognized expectation for all students by everyone.



A good beginning for a resource designed to encourage parenting adults as first teachers and prepare them for success and effectiveness will give attention to learning as its leading message. Parents have personally experienced learning in the formal settings of the classroom and the school and, in some instances, institutions of higher education, and/or technical training or skill development sites. Most importantly, many received early instruction in their home or homes of family members or caregivers—intentionally directed toward helping them learn basic skills and behaviors important for their growth, development, and survival. Some concepts and learnings were redundant, with similar messages and instructions provided by those interacting with children and thus, reinforcing and securing valuable learnings.

Learning is an action word. Protocols used in *HomeWork* emphasize action as an ultimate end goal of instruction occurring in the home and reinforced and extended in other settings. Hence, parents and those in parenting roles will increase their ability to help their children value learning and encourage them to continue to learn. As a result of their training using the specific processes of Introspection, Retrospection, Roundabouts and Action (IRRA), they will become more proficient in this important focus area and each lesson in the book.

A Good Beginning—Focus on Learning

Definition: The act, process, or experience of gaining knowledge or skill. Understanding gained through schooling, study, experience, action adding to one’s store of facts and information.



Introspection

Personally Speaking

Commentary for Parents and Participants

Learning happens in many diverse ways. It occurs through dedicated, focused efforts. It happens in unexpected, unplanned ways. Learning and/or mastery of a skill or talent can generate pride. “I learned to ride a two-wheeler when I was seven years old!” may be a long-held sense of accomplishment. “I learned not to leave water running in the bathtub when I left the bathroom and the bathtub overflowed.” “I am still learning how to text, using contemporary symbols.”

Introspection: Parents’ insights, recollections, remembrances regarding learning

Directions for Participants

- I. Describe something you learned that you are proud of or pleased to know.
What did you learn?

How did you learn it?

- II. Describe a lesson learned through a challenging or difficult experience.
What did you learn?

How did you learn it?

- III. Describe something you learned recently.
What did you learn?

How did you learn it?

Worth Sharing: Time provided for participants to share their responses with others, as guided by the instructor. Options for sharing will include:

- paired
- small group
- total group
- gallery walk



Commentary for Parents and Participants

Learning is lifelong. It has history and legacy. Viewed retrospectively, learning offers insights and awareness gained by others that can be instructive and valuable. Recollections of the significance of learning—as expressed in quotations and sayings—give insight into the past and allows parents to learn from consideration of quotes, sayings, and thoughts of others.

RETROSPECTION: Learning

Quotation	Author
1. Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn .	Xun Kuang
2. The beautiful thing about learning is nobody can take it away from you.	B. B. King
3. In learning , you will teach, and in teaching you will learn .	Phil Collins
4. I think I started learning lessons about being a good person long before I ever knew what basketball was. And that starts in the home with parental influence.	Julius Erving
5. I am still learning .	Michelangelo
6. Learning how to learn is life's most important skill.	Tony Buzan
7. Education is learning what you didn't even know you didn't know.	Daniel J. Boorstein
8. I am forever learning and changing.	W. Edward Deming
9. I am always doing that which I cannot do, in order that I may learn how to do it.	Pablo Picasso
10. The trouble with learning from experience is that you never graduate.	Doug Larson
11. It's not the teaching, it's the learning .	Sly Stone
12. Develop a passion for learning . If you do, you will never cease to grow.	Anthony D'Angelo
13. Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.	John F. Kennedy
14. I learned the value of hard work by working hard.	Margaret Mead
15. Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere.	Chinese Proverb

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Directions for Participants

Read each quotation provided about learning. Choose three (3) and complete these questions in preparation for reflection and discussion.

a. Favorite quotation:

- What does it mean?

- Why is it a favorite?

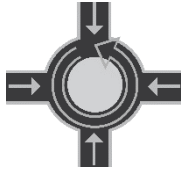
b. Quotation most difficult to understand:

- Explain why:

c. Quotation that should be shared with others:

- Explain why:

Worth Sharing: Provide time for participants to discuss their responses to Retrospection, including soliciting comments, questions, and conclusions.



The Roundabout

Parents moving from learning to listening, to sharing, to learning together.

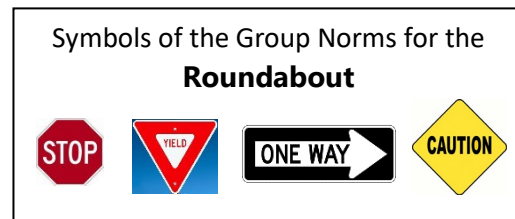
Commentary for Parents and Participants

Learning is a life-long experience and opportunity. It can take many forms. Through structured experiences, as well as informal and unplanned opportunities, authentic learning can occur. An enriching format for cultivating learning is one that provides settings to learn from others. Applying the Roundabout focus when considering learning as a group will help parenting adults cultivate their capacities for sharing with and learning from others.

Directions for participants

Review the symbols for the Group Norms.

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| STOP: | Pause, carefully consider this action as possible and necessary, based on reflection, input, comments from others and personal assessment. If appropriate, act accordingly. STOP , revise goal, purpose. |
| YIELD: | Listen, ask questions for clarity, understanding, be receptive to compromise. |
| ONE WAY: | Know, understand and be prepared to explain clearly what you mean and why. |
| CAUTION: | Be receptive to cautions, criticisms of others, listen carefully and learn from what is shared. Express individual “caveats,” concerns, questions to others as well. |
- Traffic Light:** **Red** – consider differing points of view, disagreement; **Yellow** – ask questions, seek clarity; **Green** – agreement; figuratively enter the “Roundabout”; proceed.



The symbols and accompanying questions, comments become the norms for the Roundabout group discussion of the term “Learning.”

The Group Discussion Process

1. Arrange participants in **circular seating**, allowing everyone to see each other. This will encourage full sharing and individual input.
2. Group members volunteer to serve in these roles:
 - *Group Leader*—Leads the discussion, using questions and information provided.
 - *Group Recorder*—Takes notes on the key points discussed.
 - *Group Monitor*—Keeps track of the time and reminds members of the process when necessary.
 - If more than one discussion group was formed for the Roundabout, the leaders will report for their group using notes from the recorders.



Each member of the group should have a set of the symbols—STOP, YIELD, ONE WAY, CAUTION—which will be a prominent element of the group discussion based on the focus area “Learning.”

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Implementation

Conduct group discussion. Describe specific situations related to Learning.

The focus: **Learning.** Share opinions using these guiding questions while observing the group norms.

a. Consider the question, “why is Learning important?”

- Share responses and reasons. Learning is important because _____.
- Agree on five responses.

b. Assess the Roundabout group discussion process.

- What were the most helpful: roles, symbols? Why?
- What were the least helpful: roles, symbols? Why?
- Individual comments, thoughts, feedback.

This discussion model helped me:

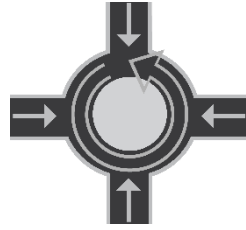
- ____ listen to others
- ____ learn from others
- ____ express my thoughts and ideas
- ____ contribute to important group discussions
- ____ other _____

c. Concluding steps.






- *Group Recorder*—Shares notes regarding situation and group comments, feedback.
- *Group Leader*—Solicits feedback and comments from the group.
- Each group identifies three most important “takeaways.”

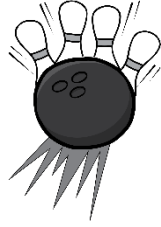
Worth Sharing

How can the importance of Learning be explained and shared with children and adults?



Group Norms for Roundabout

	<p>STOP: Pause, carefully consider this action as possible and necessary, based on reflection, input, comments from others and personal assessment. If appropriate, act accordingly. STOP, revise goal, purpose.</p>
	<p>YIELD: Listen, ask questions for clarity, understanding, be receptive to compromise.</p>
	<p>ONE WAY: Know, understand and be prepared to explain clearly what you mean and why.</p>
	<p>CAUTION: Be receptive to cautions, criticisms of others, listen carefully and learn from what is shared. Express individual “caveats,” concerns, questions to others as well.</p>
<p>Symbolic traffic light and the Roundabout</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red: Expresses a disagreement, differing point of view, a question or related need regarding the focus, thus, potentially stopping the conversation. • Yellow: Expresses caution, asks a question about the focus, seeks clarity and additional information. • Green: Expresses agreement, acceptance of points of view. Figuratively enter the roundabout.



Action

Doing, Making, Creating

Commentary for Parents and Participants

According to Aristotle, "For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them." A practical application of this concept involves having parenting adults complete activities and do things that will support and confirm the importance of the focus on learning, considered introspectively and retrospectively and through the related Roundabout. Subsequently, parents will be better prepared for sharing with their children through instruction, guidance, demonstration, and by modeling through Action and Activities Completed Together (A.C.T).

Action Items: Learning

Directions for Participants

1. Complete a trainer-led review of the Introspection and Retrospection processes.
2. Develop, create, and write a personal quote, motto or statement on Learning. Be prepared to share its significance and meaning.

Example: *"Listen to learn and learn to listen."* —Margarett Shipley

You are better able to understand thoughts and ideas when you pay attention to what is being presented. Develop the skill, habit of paying attention; knowing how to pay attention is important and useful.

3. Create a visual presentation, depiction of your personal quote (e.g., banner, poster, collage, sentence strip, vision board).
4. Present your visual to the group; describe and explain it.

Worth Sharing: Choose a special space to display your quotation, motto at home. Choose a wall, window, door, cabinet that is visible and can be readily seen. Display your quotation, motto and talk about its meaning with your children and others.

Activities
Completed
Together

A.C.T. offers a formal opportunity for parents and children to work together, applying what parents have studied during their lessons in each area of focus. Ultimately, A.C.T., when completed, provides concrete experiences for shared learning in the home.

Definition of Learning: The act, process, or experience of gaining knowledge, understanding, information or skill through schooling, study, experience, action, adding to one’s store of facts, knowledge and/or information.

A.C.T. Activity: Learning About Learning...Together

Directions for participants

1. Review the definitions of learning with your child/children.
2. Identify and share examples of learning that are recognized and understood.

Examples:

- You learned to tie your shoe laces
 - You learned to pack your lunch
 - You learned to use the Internet
 - Other examples
3. Ask children to name things they have learned (2–3 examples).
 4. Discuss one new thing that you – parents and children – would like to learn together.

Examples

Elementary/Children	Secondary/Children
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for a library card • Ride a bicycle • Grow a plant • Put a puzzle together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paint a room • Follow a recipe • Create a website • Complete a crossword puzzle

5. Decide on your learning together experience, activity. Briefly describe the experience, activity. Discuss what is needed to accomplish it, using/completing this chart.

What? Experience, Activity	Who? Parent(s), Child(ren), Others	When? Time Required	How? Steps, Action needed to complete

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6. Concluding Experience — Congratulations!

Share your accomplishment with others (family, friends) in at least one way:

- Take photographs during the experience/activity at its completion.
- Present, demonstrate successful completion of the experience, activity for others.
- Write a short story or explanation describing highlights of the experience, activity completed successfully together. Note: This may include comments about successes, needs, advice to others planning a learning experience, activity together.



Family Reading Resource Guide

All listings may be found at local libraries, booksellers and online. Search for titles by the ISBN (International Standard Book Number), which are universal and unique to the title. You can also search for both the title and author(s).

The Value of Learning: The Story of Marie Curie. Authors: Ann Donegan Johnson and Steve Pileggi (Illustrator). A brief biography emphasizing the importance of learning in the life of the scientist who was awarded the Nobel prize for her work in chemistry. 63 pages. **ISBN 978-0916392185**

Motivated Minds: Raising Children to Love Learning. Authors: Deborah Stipek Ph.D. and Kathy Seal. A practical guide to ensuring your child's success in school. Through extensive research, combined with ongoing classroom implementation of their ideas, Deborah Stipek, Dean of the School of Education at Stanford, and Kathy Seal have created a program that will encourage motivation and a love of learning in children from toddlerhood through elementary school. Stipek and Seal help parents create an enriching environment for their children at home that will mesh with the school experience and become a positive, effective climate for learning. **ISBN 978-0805063950**

Motivating Students to Learn. Authors: Kathryn R. Wentzel and Jere E. Brophy. Written specifically for teachers, *Motivating Students to Learn* offers a wealth of research-based principles on the subject of student motivation for use by classroom teachers. The fourth edition discusses specific classroom strategies by tying these principles to the realities of contemporary schools, curriculum goals, and classroom dynamics. This edition features new material on the roles that classroom goal setting, developing students' interest, and teacher-student and peer relationships play in student motivation. It has been reorganized to address six key questions that combine to explain why students may or may not be motivated to learn. **ISBN 978-0415893527**

Chicken Soup for the Soul: Teens Talk Middle School: 101 Stories of Life, Love, and Learning for Younger Teens. Authors: Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen. The stories in this book cover topics important to the 12 to 14-year-old age range, including regrets and lessons learned, discovering the opposite sex, cliques and popularity, and new privileges and responsibilities such as jobs, cell phones, and grades. **ISBN 978-1935096269**

Eager to Learn: Helping Children Become Motivated and Love Learning. Author: Raymond J. Wlodkowski. This book provides parents and teachers with proven techniques that encourage motivation, help instill a lasting love of learning, and make acquiring knowledge an enjoyable experience. This practical guide tackles the hard questions. How do children develop problem-solving skills? How do parents reduce anxiety over tests and grades? How do families overcome TV, boredom, and homework ills? How do we forge better parent-teacher relationships? The authors show that by encouraging and supporting children in learning, parents and teachers cultivate in them a precious gift that lasts a lifetime. **ISBN 978-1555423674**

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The Learning Habit: A Groundbreaking Approach to Homework and Parenting that Helps Our Children Succeed in School and Life. Authors: Stephanie Donaldson-Pressman, Rebecca Jackson, Dr. Robert Pressman. 2014. A groundbreaking approach to building learning habits for life, based on a major new study revealing what works – and what doesn't. Life is different for kids today. This important and parent-friendly book presents new solutions based on the largest study of family routines ever conducted. *The Learning Habit* offers a blueprint for navigating the maze of homework, media use, and the everyday stress that families with school-age children face; turning those "stress times" into opportunities to develop the eight critical skills kids will need to succeed in college and in the highly competitive job market of tomorrow. **ISBN 978-0399167119**

Steamboat School. Author: Deborah Hopkinson. Illus. by Ron Husband. Based on true events, Ron Husband's uplifting illustrations bring to life Deborah Hopkinson's tale of a resourceful, determined teacher; his bright, inquisitive students; and their refusal to accept discrimination based on the color of their skin. **ISBN 978-1423121961**

Brown v. Board of Education: A Fight for Simple Justice. Author: Susan Goldman Rubin. Award-winning author Susan Goldman Rubin tells the stories behind the ruling and the people responsible for it. She brings readers up to date with a country still grappling with a public school system not yet fully desegregated. Timeline, source notes and index are included. **ISBN 13: 9780823436460**