

Newton Public Schools & Partners

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"It Takes a City  
to Raise a Child."

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## Parenting Tips: How to Establish Effective Rules

One effective way to encourage positive behavior in children is to have a clear set of rules. Experts say that when kids know what is expected of them, they are more likely to cooperate.



**Establish the five or six things that matter most to you and your family.** Do this in a "family meeting" on a week-end or some other relaxed time of the week.

**Keep the discussion positive.** If possible, tell your kids what you do expect. For example, instead of "don't leave your backpack by the front door," try instead phrasing it as "please put your backpack on

**Let your kids have a voice in the decisions and try to be flexible.** The specifics will vary from family to family, but try to keep the tone positive and be willing to compromise.

**Reinforce positive behaviors.** Simply put, catch your kids "doing something right."  
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## Newton Safe Schools/Healthy Students

Newton Public Schools & Partners

### Newton Awarded \$6 Million in Federal Funds

Newton Public Schools and its partners have been awarded a four-year \$6 million grant from the Federal Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS) Program. The project is designed to foster safe, respectful, and drug-free school environments and to promote pro-social skills and healthy childhood development for all Newton children. There are five major strands of the project: (1) Safe School Environments and Violence Prevention Activities, (2) Alcohol,

Tobacco, and Other Drug Prevention Activities, (3) Student Behavioral, Social, and Emotional Support, (4) Mental Health Services, and (5) Early Childhood Activities. In addition, the project will include parent outreach and communication, extensive parent training for more than 3,000 parents over the grant period, and comprehensive staff training, with more than 2,500 staff served over four years.



"The project builds on past successes we have made in district-community partnerships and is a testament to the strength of collaboration," said Dr. Jeffrey Young, Superintendent.

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Get involved with  
SS/HS—see page 11

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## Over 40 Free Parent Education Workshops to be Offered

As a parent, do you have a question about how to help your child express his/her feelings? How to know that your child is safe on the Internet and how to be aware of cyberbullying? How to respond to your teenager's testing of limits? Parents can be "students," too! SS/HS funding will provide 40+ free workshops per year on a range of issues facing parents of children from preschool through young adulthood.

**To hear about upcoming workshops or to register, contact Nancy Holczer at [nancy\\_holczer@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:nancy_holczer@newton.k12.ma.us) or call 617.559.9063.**



**SS/HS Parent Education and Outreach Specialist, Nancy Holczer**

### Sampling of Upcoming Workshops

- Adolescent Psychology - The Parent Version**, Wed. Jan. 21st, 7:30 to 9 P.M. F.A. Day Middle School Auditorium
- Internet Safety and Cyberbullying - The High School Version**, Thurs. Jan. 29th, 7:00 P.M. Newton North Film Lecture Hall
- Internet Safety and the Elementary School Child**, Tues. Feb. 10th, 7:30 to 9 P.M., location TBD
- When Our Buttons Get Pushed: And What We Can Do About It**, Wed. Feb. 11th, 7:30 to 9 P.M., Brown Middle School Library
- Navigating the Rocky Road of Adolescence**, a four session discussion group for parents at Warmlines, 225 Nevada St. Two options available beginning on Tues., Feb 24th or Wed., Feb 25th. 7 to 8:30 P.M. Pre-registration required: 617.559.9060.

### Parent Education and Outreach Specialist Selected

SS/HS has named Nancy Holczer as the Parent Education and Outreach Specialist. Holczer has been a social worker in the Newton Public Schools since 1982. During that time, she has consistently worked with K – 12 students and their parents. Most recognize her name associated with Newton's One to One Program (see article on page 9). Through SS/HS, the One to One Program has new opportunities for growth and development. For the past two years, Holczer was the clinical social worker for Turnaround, a program for at-risk teens at Newton South High School. Nancy holds a Masters Degree in Social Work from Boston University and majored in psychology at the University of Michigan. She and her husband, Geoff, raised two Newton North graduates and are active in the Newton community. Nancy has served as PTO president at Cabot School, PTO vice-president at Bigelow and Newton North, and Treasurer of the PTO Council. SS/HS is fortunate to have such an experienced and committed professional as a member of its team.



## Establishing Effective Rules (continued)

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When they are doing well following the rules you've established, tell them. "Thanks for bringing in your lunchbox to the kitchen! This is just like we were talking about over the weekend." Insert a special activity when things are going well. "Homework went so well tonight, we have time for a card game." Telling your kids with both your words and your actions that you are pleased and proud of them will make you all feel great.

**Be clear with your children about the consequences when rules aren't respected.** When a child ignores your clear instructions, sometimes it's necessary to withhold a privilege. For example, if you have limited the

amount of time your son spends watching television and he doesn't turn it off when asked, you may decide to take away television privileges for a day.

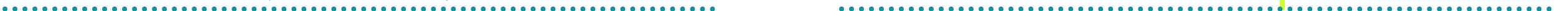
**Allow "natural consequences" to occur.** If, for example, you've already established that dirty clothing goes in the hamper, then when your daughter complains she has run out of clean pants, tell her you washed what was in the hamper.

You will need to continually evaluate whether the rules you've established are working effectively, but if you reflect on behaviors and discuss them with your children, you will find it well worth the effort.

## About the SS/HS Community Team

Four times a year, the SS/HS Community Team comes together to hear about the progress of the SS/HS project, provide input into project implementation, learn about community projects, network with other agencies and citizens, and collaborate in the spirit of Newton's commitment to ensuring healthy childhood development for all Newton children. In 2007, the SS/HS Community Team adopted the tagline, "It Takes a City to Raise a Child;" the SS/HS Community Team helps ensure we continue to knit the community fabric needed to raise healthy children. Upcoming meetings are Friday February 13 from noon to 2:00 P.M. and Tuesday June 9 from 2:00 to 4:00 P.M.

Everyone and anyone with an interest in Newton's Safe Schools/Healthy Students projects is welcome to attend quarterly community team meetings, serve on action committees, and receive regular updates via email. Call 617.559.9060 or email [ann\\_picariello@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:ann_picariello@newton.k12.ma.us) for more information.





## About Riverside Community Care

Riverside Community Care is a private, nonprofit human service organization that offers a variety of high-quality programs for individuals and families in Massachusetts. Riverside has had a long-standing relationship with the City of Newton and the Newton Public Schools, providing a wide range of services to local residents. Riverside's *Newton Youth Outreach* offers school-based counseling to adolescents in the middle and high schools, and *Riverside Outpatient Center in Newton* provides individual, couple, and family counseling, as well as psychopharmacology, to people of all ages, including pre-school-age and elementary-age children. Families can receive home-based counseling through two Riverside programs: *Alternative Youth Services* (free to Newton adolescents and their families with support from the City) and *Family Partnership* (for children and adolescents eligible for

services from the Department of Mental Health). The *Life Skills Center* is Riverside's local psychiatric day treatment program for adolescents whose emotional difficulties prevent them from attending school. Riverside's *Emergency Services* (800.529.5077), available 24 hours per day and seven days per week, provides psychiatric crisis intervention and assists families with the hospital admission process.

Now, through partnership with the SS/HS initiative, Riverside has been able to expand its services to Newton in exciting new directions. As a result of federal funding, Newton families who call the *Project Interface* helpline can receive direct consultation from a Riverside clinician who will help them find mental health providers who meet their needs, accept their insurance, and have openings for new cases. *Project*

*Interface*, a project run in collaboration with Warmlines and the Freedman Center at the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology, provides mental health resources, referrals, and consultation through its website ([www.projectinterface.org](http://www.projectinterface.org)) and helpline (617.332.3666 x411). Please see pages 4-5 for more information.

SS/HS funding has also allowed Riverside to expand its clinical team in Newton so that a greater number of youth here can be served. For more information on Riverside's services in Newton and the surrounding area, please visit [www.riversidecc.org](http://www.riversidecc.org) or call 617.969.4925.



**SS/HS funding allows Riverside to expand its services to Newton youth and families**



## Early Childhood Community Gathers to Hear about New Services

On Monday, November 10, close to 30 staff and administrators of the early childhood community came together to hear about new services available through the SS/HS project. SS/HS staff members Laura Perkins, LICSW, Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist, and Mary Gartland, LICSW, Early Childhood Behavioral Specialist, were introduced. They are available to provide consultation services to all early childhood programs in the city. Services could include classroom/small group observation, discussions with teachers and directors, mentoring teachers, modeling in-class/group work, modeling parent meetings, providing referrals to and consultation with other social service agencies, teacher training, parent education, and more, dependent on program needs.



SS/HS Early Childhood Resource and Training Specialist, Beverly Mobilia, will be the triage person to assist programs in having one of the early childhood specialists provide services to early childhood programs. Beverly, who is also the Coordinator of Community Partnerships for Children (see page 6), can be reached at [beverly\\_mobilia@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:beverly_mobilia@newton.k12.ma.us) or by calling 617.559.6065.

## Early Childhood Programs to Adopt Second Step Curriculum

SS/HS is pleased to announce the availability of an exciting training opportunity for child care programs. The Second Step violence prevention curriculum was developed by the internationally known nonprofit *Committee for Children*, and it is available at no cost to any interested Newton early childhood program. This evidence-based curriculum has several years of documented success and teaches vital social skills such as empathy, emotion management, problem solving, and cooperation. The program uses hands on, activity based lessons to captivate young learners. Three SS/HS staff became certified Second Step trainers in September 2008 and are eager to begin working with interested early childhood programs. If you are a parent or program staff member interested in learning more about the curriculum, you can read about Second Step on the Committee for Children website ([www.cfchildren.org](http://www.cfchildren.org)). You can also contact Early Childhood Resource and Training Specialist, Beverly Mobilia, at [beverly\\_mobilia@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:beverly_mobilia@newton.k12.ma.us) or by calling 617.559.6065.

"We are looking forward to providing free training and curriculum kits to at least 10 early childhood programs per year." - Beverly Mobilia, SS/HS Early Childhood Resource and Training Specialist





## Newton Awarded \$6 Million in Federal Funds Project

*continued from page 1*

The Safe Schools/Healthy Students project was planned over a yearlong period by a 50-plus-member team that included representatives of Newton Public Schools, City of Newton Department of Health and Human Services, Community Partnerships for Children, the Freedman Center at the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology, John M. Barry Boys and Girls Club, Massachusetts Regional Department of Mental Health, Middlesex Partnerships for Youth, Newton Afterschool Association, Newton Child Care Commission, Newton Community Service Center, Newton Police Department, Newton PTO Council, Newton Wellesley Hospital, Riverside Community Care, Social Science Research and Evaluation, and the West Suburban

YMCA. Private schools, parents, students, and others were also involved in the planning team.

The Federal Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative is the result of a unique collaboration among the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice and was created in response to rising concerns about youth violence and school safety. Using programs and services that have a proven track record of success, as well as strategies for both prevention and intervention, the Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative helps reduce the risk factors that come between children of all ages and their ability to learn—and to stay safe and healthy. For more information on the Federal Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, visit <http://www.sshs.samhsa.gov>.

The project includes establishing a teen center in the south end of Newton, free consultation to early childhood programs, new counseling services at the middle schools, and much more.

## INTERFACE

A central goal of the SS/HS initiative is to improve the referral process for mental health services for Newton families. Through this initiative, SS/HS has established partnerships with a number of local community mental health agencies to meet this goal. One such partnership is with Project INTERFACE.

Project INTERFACE ([www.projectinterface.org](http://www.projectinterface.org)) works to improve the integration of mental health services within school systems and the greater community. Begun as a federally funded project of the Newton Public Schools, INTERFACE is now operated by the Freedman Center at the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology. Project INTERFACE aims to break down the “silos” that exist within community agencies or systems that often hinder access to mental health services, and has expanded into several surrounding communities.



## One to One Program Provides Mentors to Newton Kids

Through SS/HS, Newton’s One to One Program will provide support and mentoring for up to 120 Newton children per year. Young children are matched each November with high school volunteers for the academic year after being referred by parents, teachers and professionals in the community. The high school mentors, from both Newton North and Newton South, receive academic credit for their participation in the program. In addition to classroom assignments and participation in group supervision and training with the

Mentoring Coordinator, the volunteers, of course, most importantly visit with their “little brother” or “little sister” for two to three hours each week from November through May. “Whether shooting hoops, learning a cool card trick, bowling or doing homework together, each mentor’s goal is to form a quality, consistent relationship with the child they are paired with,” Nancy Holczer, SS/HS Mentoring Coordinator states.

The positive impact on the chil-

dren is obvious but what the teens get from mentoring is equally impressive. “The teens often report that being a mentor has been the most rewarding experience they have had in high school,” reports Holczer.

Please contact Holczer at 617.559.9063 or [nancy\\_holczer@newton.k12.ma.us](mailto:nancy_holczer@newton.k12.ma.us) for more information.



## Kids’ Viewpoint: Mentoring

“For me, the One to One Program is so much more than just a class or something that will look good on my transcript. Many years ago, I was in this program as a little sister. I know how much older siblings mean to young kids. I have three older brothers myself, but having a mentor there for me is something I will never forget. I know there are high expectations of me as a Big Sister and I am ready to have the responsibility. I want to make an impact on the child I get paired with. This program has given lots to me and I am thrilled that it is now my turn to give something back.”

“I want to make a lasting impression on someone so they have a good role model to look up to for many years to come, not just this school year.”

“I am very excited to be a big brother. I am the youngest in my family and only have sisters. I have always wanted to be a role model for someone younger and since I always wished I had an older brother, I want to give that to someone else who wants the same.”





## SS/HS Finds a Home

As of September, 2008, the Safe Schools/Healthy Students staff has been happily settled into the second floor of Newton Community Service Center (NCSC) at 492 Waltham Street in West Newton. Currently, there are thirteen team members, with several additional positions in the hiring process. Newton Community Partnerships for Children, previously located in the Annex Building at 100 Walnut Street is also located in this space. Says Susan Linn, SS/HS Project Director, "Newton Community Service Center is a significant partner in the SS/HS project. We are thrilled to be neighbors with NCSC, making it even easier to work together as a community-oriented team."



The NCSC building is home to SS/HS

## Susan Linn Named SS/HS Project Director

Susan Linn has been named the Project Director of the Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative. For the past five years, Linn has been the Grants Coordinator for the Newton Public Schools. As such, Linn was responsible for leading the team that designed the SS/HS project and grant application. Under her leadership, grant funding to the school district increased by 53%.

"Susan is extremely adept at bringing together large and diverse constituencies to accomplish common goals." - Margie Daniels, Executive Director, Middlesex Partnerships for Youth

Prior to working in Newton, Susan was the Grant Writer for the City of Fall River, and previously, the Associate Director of Development for Father Joe's Villages, a comprehensive social service agency with sites across the southwest. Susan holds a Masters Degree in Social Work Administration from San Diego State University, where she was valedictorian of her class, as well as a Bachelor of Science in Child Development and Family Studies from Cornell University.



SS/HS Director  
Susan Linn  
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"I am grateful to be selected to lead this dynamic collaborative of dedicated and committed nonprofit agencies and other stakeholders. We have the opportunity to make significant improvements in how our systems serve the children of Newton. I look forward to helping all of our dedicated partners and staff work together to capitalize on that opportunity," said Linn.



## Project INTERFACE

One important component of Project INTERFACE is its impressive website on mental health issues impacting children and families, along with event listings and free resources. Another key feature is its extensive database of licensed individual and group practitioners. This database is available to mental health professionals such as psychologists, social workers, counselors, and school nurses within Newton and other member school systems.

Through the SS/HS initiative, a Project INTERFACE Helpline is staffed by a full-time Access Coordinator, who provides resource and referral services for parents and providers. A family member or provider can call this Helpline at 617.332.3666 x411, Monday through Friday during business hours.

## Is My Child Using Drugs or Alcohol?

Adolescence is known for its emotional ups and downs. But if you are seeing a pattern of changes over time and across a number of areas (emotional, social, academic, physical), it may be time to consider, "Could my child be using drugs or alcohol?"

### Possible signs of drug or alcohol abuse:

- Trouble in school, skipping school
- Sudden drop in grades or academic performance
- Decreased engagement in activities your child previously enjoyed
- Change in attention to personal hygiene and change in dress style
- Change in relationships with parents, teachers, siblings and friends and/or change in peer group
- Mood shifts, withdrawal, isolation, or inappropriate giddiness or laughter
- Lack of overall motivation and energy
- Increased secrecy
- Physical symptoms such as unbalanced gait, breath smells of alcohol, dilated/constricted pupils or bloodshot eyes
- Finding drug paraphernalia, unexplained empty bottles

Changes in behavior can be explained by many other factors such as depression or anxiety, or teens may turn to drugs or alcohol to treat the symptoms of these psychological disorders. After talking to your teen, if symptoms persist, concerned parents should seek professional intervention. An evaluation by an expert in drug and alcohol treatment may be facilitated by your school psychologist/guidance counselor, family physician or by contacting the INTER-

FACE helpline at 617.332.3666 x411.





## What is Community Partnerships for Children?

Newton Community Partnerships for Children (CPC) is a program funded by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care and is administered by the Newton Public Schools. CPC is dedicated to increasing the affordability and accessibility of quality preschool programs for children ages two years nine months to five years.

CPC offers (a) child care scholarships for income-eligible families, (b) a resource lending library for parents and early childhood professionals, and (c) professional development opportunities for early childhood teachers.

CPC is a key partner in the SS/HS project, and it is located

within the SS/HS offices. To learn more, call CPC Coordinator Beverly Mobilia at 617.559.6065 or email Beverly\_mobilia@newton.k12.ma.us.



“Programs begin enrolling up to a year in advance, so start your search early.”

## Identifying High Quality Child Care

Our children's healthy development depends on safe and positive experiences during their early years. If you are a parent who works outside the home during these first few years, choosing good child care is one of the most important decisions you will make for your child.

Often, programs begin enrolling up to a year in advance, so start your search early. You might want to visit several different programs, either child care centers or family child care homes, before you decide which one is best for your family. Here are some key indicators of high quality care to inform your search and guide your interviews as you meet with program directors:

**Caregiver Qualifications:** As a general rule, caregivers with degrees and/or special training in working with children will be better able to help

your child learn.

**Staff Turnover:** Having continuity of consistent caregivers is a key factor affecting quality. Ask how long staff have been at the program.

**Adult to Child Ratio:** This will vary depending on the age of your child, but ask how many adults there are per class.

**Group Size:** Research indicates that this is as important as adult to child ratio. The lower the class size, the better.

**Accreditation:** While all programs are required to meet Massachusetts Department of Education and Care regulations and standards, some choose to adhere to voluntary standards beyond local regulations (e.g., National Association for the Education of Young Children accreditation).

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## Parenting Tips: Cyber-Bullying

Newton parents, like parents around the country, are voicing concerns about the rise of cyber-bullying among youth, which is sometimes referred to as electronic bullying or online social cruelty. The federal Human Resources and Services Administration offers the following tips for parents: (1) Keep your home computer(s) in easily viewable places, such as a family room or kitchen. (2) Talk regularly with your child about the online activities he or she is involved in. Talk specifically about cyber-bullying and encourage your child to tell you immediately if he or she is the victim of cyber-bullying or other troublesome online behavior. Encourage your child to tell you if he or

she is aware of others who may be the victims of such behavior. Explain that cyber-bullying is harmful and unacceptable behavior. Outline your expectations for responsible online behavior and make it clear that there will be consequences for inappropriate behavior. (3) Although adults must respect the privacy of youth, concerns for your child's safety may sometimes override these privacy concerns. Tell your child that you may review his or her online communications if you think there is reason for concern. (4) Consider installing parental control filtering software and/or tracking programs, but don't rely solely on these tools.

### Child Care, continued

*continued from page 6*  
Local resources that can be helpful in identifying quality child care include the Newton Child Care Commission and Warm-lines Parent Resource Center. The MA Department of Early Education and Care, National

Association for the Education of Young Children, National Association of Family Child Care, and the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies are additional resources.

## Keyless Access to be Installed in School Buildings

In an effort to improve school security and better track visitors who enter and leave our school buildings, keyless access systems will be implemented in all Newton elementary and middle schools by the end of 2009 as part of the SS/HS initiative.



Electronic access control makes it easier to manage access while also improving security and safety in several important ways. For example, in an emergency, exit devices provide a safe way out of all doors. However, re-entrance is controlled by card access.

Currently, the NPS Operations Department is reviewing proposals from potential vendors and creating a timeline for rolling out these facility improvements.

