The Milestones That Matter Most

Family Living – Christine Gross-Loh, Ph.D. *Pathways #43*, page 66



Talking Points

- Our expectations of our children's milestones are influenced and shaped by culture.
- Babies from parts of Africa, the Caribbean or India reach motor milestones earlier than babies in Western cultures because they spend so much time on the backs of their mothers and are constantly being jostled around.
- ❖ Babies in some indigenous cultures skip the crawling stage entirely because they're rarely put down.
- ❖ Toddlers in Vietnam don't go through what we know as potty training because they have been more or less diaper-free all of their lives.
- ❖ Believe it or not, in other cultures babies aren't expected to sleep through the night on their own, there is no such thing as the "terrible twos" and it's not an expectation of parents to have conflicts with their teens.
- What about in America? We are encouraged to talk, talk to our babies and our kids. Why?
 We tend to associate verbal prowess with intelligence.
- Christine Gross-Loh, Ph.D. believes that "The problem in America is that, while we excel at raising spectacularly verbal kids, we have lost sight of other values that we need to foster in our children" (67): Thinking about others, "hanging up their own jackets" and caring for their siblings.
- Christine mentions that "In one study, when Japanese and American fourth and fifth grade children were asked why they shouldn't hit, gossip or fight with other kids, 92% of the American kids answered 'because they'd get caught or get in trouble.' Ninety% of the Japanese kids asked the same question responded, 'because it would be hurtful to someone else.'"
- How does our culture cultivate these types of behaviors?
- When children watch people working together sharing comes more easily than to children in more individualistic, competitive cultures.

Pathways Connect: Talking Points & Resource Guide

When we ask our kids to care for one another, it shouldn't be seen as burdensome, it unleashes their potential to be nurturing and socially responsible people. When our children have chores to complete on top of their homework, it shouldn't be seen as burdensome, it helps them cultivate skills that make them self-reliant and responsible.

Resources

Full references for each article are available at http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html