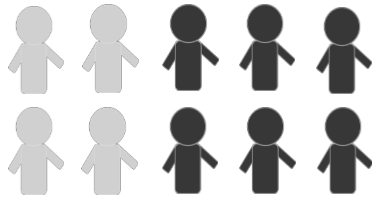


Raising a Thinking Child

*6 out of 10
parents
report their
children are
less likely
to hit or kick
other children*



Wisconsin's prosperity is rooted in the problem-solving skills and innovation of its people. Children who can think clearly are the base of a productive and responsible next generation of employees, parents, and community members.

Skills such as critical thinking, impulse control, problem-solving, and conflict resolution can be taught early in life by children's most influential teachers—their parents. Parenting programs that build these capacities in young children set the stage for preventing school problems, juvenile delinquency, and substance use.

Finding the best program for Wisconsin

UW-Madison Division of Extension Human Development & Relationship educators and specialists sought out the most effective “brain-building” programs from around the world for Wisconsin families to use with their young children. After careful review, *Raising a Thinking Child*, a scientifically tested program for parents of children ages 4-7, was chosen. *Raising a Thinking Child* trains parents to teach their children how—not what—to think.

UW-Madison Division of Extension worked directly with the program creator, Dr. Myrna Shure of Drexel University, to update and adapt *Raising a Thinking Child* specifically for Wisconsin families.

Results

Over the past 10 years, UW-Madison Division of Extension has brought the benefits of *Raising a Thinking Child* to Wisconsin families by:

- Conducting annual statewide trainings on how to teach the program to more than 150 family professionals, including staff members from family resource centers, Head Start, childcare centers, elementary schools, and public health and social service agencies
- Securing partners to promote and fund the program
- Translating the materials for use with Spanish-speaking families.

Over 100 families from counties and tribal nations across the state participate in *Raising a Thinking Child* each year.

UW-Madison Division of Extension Family Engagement & Relationship Program

By bringing *Raising a Thinking Child* to Wisconsin, UW-Madison Division of Extension's Family Engagement & Relationship Program is providing a resource that can serve as an asset to families and help children learn skills they can use throughout their lives.



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Family life is better

All parents are surveyed about their experiences with *Raising a Thinking Child* at the end of each 8-week class series. Overwhelmingly, parents praise *Raising a Thinking Child* and credit the class with bringing about substantial changes in themselves, their children, and family interactions. In fact, many parents found *Raising a Thinking Child* so useful they reported sharing what they learned with spouses, friends, and co-workers.

Here are some of the testimonials parents have shared about *Raising a Thinking Child*.

My family is happier. My son reacts much less with hitting and yelling and now responds much better with talking through problems.

My daughter has become more social and empathetic and has an easier time playing with her siblings.

There is much less yelling, arguing and fighting. I talk more with my children rather than just telling them what to do.

We communicate better with one another, spend more time on problem solving and spend more quality time together.

Lasting change in parents

Do the positive changes in parents and children last? Parents have been contacted six months after completing *Raising a Thinking Child* to assess the long-term impact of the program.

“Our 5-year-old seems more aware of other’s feelings. She seems to treat her sister like she would want to be treated.”

—Parent participant in *Raising a Thinking Child*

Over 75% of parents stated they still engaged in the following behaviors more often than they did before the class:

- Help their children pay attention to feelings
- Teach their children how to control their anger and frustration
- Guide their children to think about new solutions to problems
- Help their children identify consequences of their behaviors.

In addition, about 70% of parents said they continued to be better able to control their own anger and frustration with their children.

Lasting change in children

Six months after completing *Raising a Thinking Child*, more than half of parents reported increases in the following child behaviors:

- Shows concern for other children
- Helps other children
- Takes turns with other children.

More than 60% of parents reported reductions in the following child behaviors:

- Hits or kicks other children
- Threatens other children
- Calls other children mean names.

When children show many positive behaviors and few problem behaviors, they are much more likely to do well in school, both socially and academically. These skills are part of the foundation children need to succeed across their lifetimes.



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