

# HO'OLAULIMA I MOANALUA

WORKING TOGETHER FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS

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Moanalua Elementary kick started our "Return to Learn" in November when we began welcoming Kindergarten, first- and second-grade Surfriders back to in-person learning on campus.

October Parent-Teacher conferences are traditionally when parents receive their child's first quarter report card and have an opportunity to chat with teachers about their child's progress and strengthen home-&-school partnerships that support students' academic success.

Conferences this year pivoted to 100% virtual meetings. I hope you were still able to learn about the academic expectations for your child, his or her progress and that you, your child and your child's teacher have a plan to keep your child on track to meet their learning goals. The article, *5 Key Skills for Academic Success*, that starts on page 2 may help with getting and staying on track to meet those learning goals. I found it interesting that although the article was written years before the pandemic, much of the advice is applicable to our current learning environment.

Please continue to keep the lines of communication with teacher and the school open... check to be sure your child is current with assignments and read the notices, newsletters and memos sent to you via email. Our school website <[www.MoanaluaElementary.org](http://www.MoanaluaElementary.org)> is a great resource for up-to-date information.

Children learn by observing the adults in their lives. Please continue to demonstrate that you value education. Model by your actions and involvement -- let your child see you turn off the television and read, do quality work, use math, write letters, meet deadlines, volunteer, wait patiently, follow rules, be considerate of others, use kind words and show appreciation.



Stressful times - worrisome, uncomfortable, painful or heart wrenching times - can actually provide opportunities for our children to learn and practice some skills to

boost their resilience. Please check out the article on page 3 that explains what resilience is, its importance, why we need it and how we can get this ordinary magic in our lives.



Thanksgiving 2020 was nothing like our traditional Thanksgivings past that we've known and loved - gathering in large groups with family and friends spending time together and sharing meals, waiting in lines for Black Friday deals and braving the masses at the mall to get those super deals. And as the Coronavirus pandemic maintains its brutal grip throughout the world, we should be prepared for Christmas 2020 and New Year 2021 celebrations to also have a totally different look.

This though, may be the perfect time to take a breath, pause and see our glass as half-full instead of half-empty -- let's observe a season of gratitude and appreciation and let us take notice of what's good and important in our lives -- our health and our relationships.

Hats off to our dedicated and caring faculty and staff, PTO, and the Moanalua Lions Club, who continue to demonstrate their commitment to providing quality learning opportunities for all our students. The time, expertise and resources they share with us are gifts that truly keep on giving -- serving as examples of attributes and characteristics of successful community contributors -- values and skills such as positive communication, problem-solving, working together, being helpful, being appreciative, having respect for people and property, and compassion for others.



*gratitude family thanks*

When the Coronavirus first reared its ugly head a year ago, I doubt any of us could have envisioned the degree to which this microscopic virus would impact our lives. Sadly, it seems that science tells us that although a vaccine is near, we cannot afford to simply switch off the safety practices that are now part of our daily lives -- washing hands, masking up, and observing social distancing. Surfrider ohana, stay strong, be happy and stay well this holiday season so we can all safely return to one another in 2021!

- Susie





## Key Skills for Academic Success

*It's never too early or too late to help your child develop the skills for academic success. Learn how to build these skills and stay on track all year long.*

It takes a combination of skills - organization, time management, prioritization, concentration and motivation - to achieve academic success. Here are some tips to help get your child on the right track.

**TALK TO YOUR CHILD** to find out which of these skills your child has and which he can develop further. Ask him about his favorite subjects, classes he dreads and whether he's satisfied with his latest progress report.

**LISTEN FOR CLUES.** Incorporate your own observations with your child's self-assessment. Is your child overwhelmed by assignments. She may have trouble organizing time. Does your child have difficulty completing her work? She may get distracted too easily. Is your child simply not interested in school? She may need help getting motivated.

### IDENTIFY PROBLEM AREAS.

**1. ORGANIZATION** - Whether it's keeping track of research materials or remembering to bring lunch boxes [or water bottles], children need to be organized to succeed in school [or at in-home learning]<sup>1</sup>. For many students, academic

challenges are related more to a lack of organization than to a lack of intellectual ability.

### Tips to help your child get organized:

- Make a checklist of things your child needs to bring to and from school every day. Put a copy by the door at home and one in his backpack. Check with him each day to see if he's remembered the items on the list.
- Find out how your child keeps track of his classwork and homework and how he organizes his notebooks [or on-line folders]. Then work together to develop a system he will want to use.

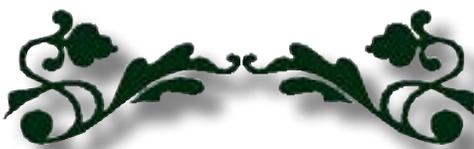
**2. TIME MANAGEMENT** - Learning to schedule enough time to complete an assignment may be difficult for your student. Even when students have a week to do a project, many won't start until the night before it's due. Learning to organize time into productive blocks takes practice and experience.

### Tips to help your child manage time:

- Track assignments on a monthly calendar. Work backward from the due date of larger assignments and break them into nightly tasks.
- Help your child record how much time she spends on

*continued on page 4 ==>>*

<sup>1</sup>Note: items in brackets [ ] are not part of the original article but have been inserted by the editor of Ho'olaulima i Moanalua to enhance contemporary relevance.



## Meditations for Parents Who Do Too Much

by Jonathan and Wendy Lazear

©1993 Fireside/Parside Books (Simon & Schuster)



*Two persons must believe in each other, and feel that it can be done and must be done; in that way they are enormously strong. They must keep each other's courage.*

*-- Vincent van Gogh*

These words can just as easily apply to parenthood as to a marriage. The relationship between you and your child can be like a marriage - a bond of strength and mutual faith. You lend your child your support and she, in turn, gives you her faith in your ability to lead her. your success is dependent on both of you together.

As a parent, you see yourself as the strong one, and your child as the dependent. Certainly this is true but it's also true that there are times when you can lean on your children, depend on their strength and courage. This isn't a sign of weakness or of immaturity. It's a sign of honesty - and, sometimes, a means of survival. You teach your child to stay afloat in rough waters - and he comes back to save you when you're drowning.



*I must remember that parenthood is a give-and-take relationship. If I do all the giving, I am denying my children the right to give back.*

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# Home & School Connecting for Success



## Stressful Times: an Opportunity to Teach Children Resilience

by Vanessa LoBue (<https://www.greatschools.org/gk/author/vanessalobue/>) Nov. 19, 2020

*Chronic stress in childhood can have lifelong effects. But the antidote may be teaching kids how to be resilient and cope with adversity.*

Between the global COVID-19 pandemic, the associated economic downturn and widespread protests over racism, it's difficult for everyone. Many people are struggling, consumed with anxiety and stress, finding ourselves unable to sleep or focus.

As a developmental psychologist and researcher, I have been particularly concerned about the impact of the pandemic on young people's mental health. Many have not physically been in school since March. They're isolated from friends and relatives. Some fear that they or loved ones will contract the virus; they may be hurt in racial violence or violence at home - or they might lose their home in a wildfire or flood. These are very real life stressors.

Decades of research have documented serious consequences from chronic stress in childhood. But psychologists have identified ways in which parents teach children how to cope with adversity - an idea commonly known as resilience.

Children cannot be protected from everything. Parents get divorced, children grow up in poverty. Friends or loved ones are injured, fall ill, or die. Kids can experience neglect, physical or emotional abuse, or bullying. Families immigrate, end up homeless, or live through natural disasters.

There can be long-term consequences: Hardship in childhood can physically alter the brain architecture of a developing child. It can impair cognitive and social-emotional development impacting learning, memory, decision-making, and more. School performance often suffers, ultimately limiting job and income opportunities.

So how do some kids thrive amidst serious challenges, while others are overwhelmed by them? Researchers in

my field are working to identify what helps children overcome obstacles and flourish when the odds are stacked against them.

It seems to come down to both support and resilience. Resilience is defined as the ability to spring back, rebound, or readily recover from adversity. It's a quality that allows people to be competent and accomplished despite tough circumstances. Some children from difficult backgrounds do well from a young age. Others bloom later, finding their paths once they reach adulthood.

Ann Masten, a pioneer in developmental psychology research, referred to resilience as "ordinary magic." Resilient kids don't have some superpower that helps them persevere while others flounder. It isn't a trait we're born with; it's something that can be fostered.

### ***The Key Factors that Help Kids Build Resilience***

The same executive function skills that create academic success seem to bestow critical coping strategies. With the capacity to focus, solve problems, and switch between tasks, children find ways to adapt and deal with obstacles in a healthy way.

Controlling behavior and emotions is also key. In a recent study, 8- to 17-year-olds who maintained emotional balance through adversity were less likely to suffer from depression or other emotional problems.

However, relationships seem to be the foundation that keep children grounded. Attachment relationships provide a lifelong sense of security and belonging. A parent's or care-giver's consistent support and protection is crucial for healthy development and the most important of these relationships. Other caring adults can help: friends, teachers, neighbors coaches, mentors or others.

Having steadfast support lends stability and helps kids build self-esteem, self-reliance, and strength.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg is an icon of resilience. She grew up in a Brooklyn working-class neighborhood and lost her mother - her main support figure - to cancer before graduating from high school. She persevered, graduated first in her class at Cornell University, and ultimately became one of only four women to serve on the Supreme Court. Another example is John Lewis, who was the son of sharecroppers in segregated Alabama, yet became a pioneer in the civil rights movement and served 33 years in Congress.

### ***How to encourage resilience at home***

There are many ways parents can help their children build resilience. Allowing children to talk - and really listening - shows caring and acceptance, validates their feelings, and helps them contextualize issues.

Sometimes, the answer is allowing kids some degree of autonomy. Trusting them to try things on their own - and even fail - can help them learn to solve problems or deal with anger, disappointment, or other uncomfortable emotions. "Calm breathing" techniques offer another tool that helps children control emotions.

It's important to note that many children face not just one but many hardships. Community-level interventions can help reduce risks while helping children build resilience. Strong programs can engage teachers, parents and community members to build a stable support system for local children.

Classes in social and emotional learning have been gaining traction in schools. This curriculum teaches children to understand and manage their feelings, develop empathy for others, make responsible decisions and solve problems.

Helping children build resilience is particularly critical now as we face turbulence in daily life. Parents, too, need to guard their mental health in order to provide kids with crucial support. Building resilience isn't just kid stuff.

homework each week so she can figure out how to divide this time into manageable chunks.

- Together, designate a time for nightly homework and help your child stick to this schedule.
- If evenings aren't enough, help your child find other times for schoolwork, such as early mornings, study halls or weekends.

**3. PRIORITIZATION** - Sometimes children fall behind in school and fail to hand in assignments simply because they don't know where to begin. Prioritizing tasks is a skill your children will need throughout life, so it's never too soon to get started.

**Tips to help your child prioritize:**

- Ask your child to write down all the things he needs to do, including non-school-related activities.
- Ask him to label each task from 1 to 3, with 1 being most important.
- Ask about each task, so that you know where his attention is focused.
- You may need to help your child change some of the labels to better prioritize for academic success. Then suggest he rewrite the list so all the 1's are at the top.
- Check in frequently to see how the list is evolving and your child is prioritizing new tasks.

**4. CONCENTRATION** - Whether your child is practicing her second-grade spelling words or studying for a trigonometry test, it's important that she works on schoolwork in an area with limited distractions and interruptions.

**Tips to help your child concentrate:**

- Turn off access to email and games [You Tube only as required for the task] when your child works on the computer.
- Declare the phone and TV off-limits during homework time.
- Find space that fits the assignment. If your child is working on a science project, she may need lots of space; if she's studying for a Spanish test, she will need a well-lit desk.
- Help your child concentrate during [schoolwork or] homework time by separating her from siblings.

**5. MOTIVATION** - Most children say they want to do well in school, yet many still fail to complete the level of work necessary to succeed academically. The reason is often motivation. Tapping into your child's interests is a great way to get him geared to do well in school.

**Tips to help motivate your child:**

- Link school lessons to your child's life. If he's learning percentages, ask him to figure out the price of a discounted item next time you shop.
- Link your child's interests to academics. If he's passionate about music, give him books about musicians and show how music and foreign languages are connected.
- Encourage your child to share his expertise. Regularly ask him about what he's learning in school.



# M.E.S. News & Notes

## December

10: PTO Board Meeting

16: **schedule change: dismissal at 2:05 p.m.**

17: *Holiday Drive-By on Mahiole St. 3 - 5:00 p.m.*

18: last day of Semester 1/Quarter 2

**schedule change: dismissal at 12:00 noon**

**21: Winter Break/Intersession begins**

## January

4: Teachers' work day: no school for students

**TBD: Students return to in-person learning**

14: PTO Board Meeting - virtual

15: Teachers' PD day: no school for students

**18: Martin Luther King Jr. Day - school closed**

## February

12: Lunar New Year - Year of the Ox

**15: President's Day Holiday**





# 4 BAD HABITS EVERY PARENT NEEDS TO BREAK



*Sometimes getting better behavior from your kids is as simple as cleaning up your own act*

By Cynthia Hanson originally published in the September 2012 issue of Parents magazine.

**Although this article was written a few years ago, the advice is still quite contemporary - it's a classic!**

One recent Saturday morning, we were on the highway driving to my son's swimming championship when we hit a lane closure apparently caused by construction. A line of stopped cars stretched for as far as the eye could see. And Eric, 8, went ballistic. "Why did you go this way?" he wailed from the backseat, widening his eyes and waving his hands. "We'll be late for warm-up. I need to warm up. If I don't warm up before my first event, I'm doomed. Doomed!"

I assured Eric that we'd left home early in case there was traffic, and I promised him that we'd arrive at the pool well before warm-up. But Eric didn't believe me, and he ranted and raved for the ten long minutes that we sat on the expressway. "He sounds just like you," my husband said, smiling slyly. "You should hear yourself sometimes."

Ouch! The truth hurts. I am an Olympic-caliber fit-pitcher when life hands me the slightest snafu. But is having what I've always considered a lovably short fuse actually detrimental to our children? "Behaviors like overreacting have a boomerang effect: What we throw out to our kids will come right back at us," says Parents advisor Michele Borba, Ed.D., an educational psychologist in Palm Springs, California.

Obviously, the key is to clean up your own act so you can set a good example for your kids. But knowing where to begin isn't always evident -- after all, a habit, by definition, is something you do without thinking about it. If you can break these bad boys, you're on your way to a new and improved family life.

## 1. You see life as a 24/7 crisis, so freaking out is the most logical response.

When your 7-year-old leaves his sneakers at basketball practice, you roll your eyes and sigh, "There you go again -- always forgetting things!" And when your puppy has another accident in the kitchen, you burst into tears.

**HOW IT AFFECTS YOUR KIDS:** In some situations, going ballistic or having a meltdown is a normal reaction -- and you'd be spin-doctoring (see #2) if you didn't! But if you sweat all the small stuff -- things that you can't control and that don't matter in the big picture -- your child won't know how to react to life's ups, downs, and in-betweens, cautions Scott Haltzman, M.D., a psychiatrist and author of *The Secrets of Happy Families: Eight Keys to Building a Lifetime of Connection and Contentment*.

It's hard for him to figure out what's appropriate versus what's over the top when you constantly raise your voice and exaggerate by using phrases such as "you never" or "you always." So your child may say, "You're so unfair! You're the worst mom in the world!" because you don't let him eat ice cream before bedtime. The other big negative is that when something really is wrong, kids may block you out because it sounds like your everyday communication," warns Dr. Haltzman. If "The dam is breaking

in Lehigh County, and we have to evacuate" comes out with the same intensity as "You didn't pick up your Legos," kids may not snap into immediate action when you really need it.

**KICK THE HABIT:** When something goes wrong, mentally assign it a number on a scale of one to ten, with one being an incident that has no bearing on the quality of your life (your 6-year-old misplaced his sweatshirt) and ten as an emergency (your toddler's finger was slammed in the car door). Now, vow not to go Drama Mama for any mishap that's less than an eight. "At first you may feel like everything is a 20, but over time you'll begin to see that there are differences between these events," Dr. Haltzman says.

## Show Your Emotions

### 2. You're a spin doctor, and life's all unicorns and rainbows.

Your fender bender will set you back \$500 in repairs, and your best friend is moving to California. No wonder you feel like throwing a pity party. But when your 5-year-old asks what's wrong, you smile and say, "Nothing, honey! Everything's fine!"

**HOW IT AFFECTS YOUR KIDS:** It's one thing to be positive, but it's a mistake to conceal your true emotions. Your child needs to learn that it's okay to feel sad, angry, or frustrated. And the truth is that no matter how much you think you're hiding, children come equipped with highly sensitive radar. "Kids pick up what's left unsaid," explains Charlotte Reznick, Ph.D., a psychologist and author of *The Power of Your Child's Imagination: How to Transform Stress and Anxiety Into Joy and Success*. "If you don't share your emotions appropriately, you'll teach your kids to lie about their feelings," says Dr. Reznick. "Plus, your child could think that she's the reason you're upset and end up feeling bad about herself."

**KICK THE HABIT:** It all starts with you being a little cranky -- or sad, or frustrated, or confused, or scared -- and letting that emotion show. "Children need a role model for talking about their feelings," says Dr. Haltzman. Put a label on your emotion, explain the reason for it in a way she'll understand, and relate it to something she's experienced. You might say, "I'm getting a new boss, and I don't know how we'll get along. Remember how you were nervous about meeting your new teacher? Well, that's how I feel now." Or, "I'm feeling sad about Grandma being sick. It's okay to be sad -- even mommies get sad sometimes. But I know the doctors are taking good care of her."

Give more details to 7- and 8-year-olds than to younger kids because they can understand more and separate other people's problems from their own, says Dr. Reznick. Let kids ask questions, so you can allay their concerns and they can hear the truth about what's happening, rather than fantasize about the worst.

==>> 4 Bad Habits... continued on page 6

==>> 4 *Bad Habits...* continued from page 5

### 3. You're always posing requests as questions.

You want your 4-year-old to tidy up, so you ask, "Can you put your toys away?" and follow with, "Now, okay?"

**HOW IT AFFECTS YOUR KIDS:** When you give a direction as a question or tack "okay?" onto the end, your child hears a request -- and assumes that he has the option of not doing it. "You relinquish your authority and drag out the process of getting your child to do what you need him to do," says Fran Walfish, Psy.D., child psychotherapist and author of *The Self-Aware Parent: Resolving Conflict and Building a Better Bond With Your Child*. When your child ignores your "request," you'll repeat yourself and lose your patience. Then no one's happy.

**KICK THE HABIT:** Clarity is key when you expect immediate follow-through. And it starts with putting a period at the end of your sentence: "Get dressed for the park, please." Or, "Turn off the TV, now." That's it. "If your child doesn't immediately listen, say the following one time only: 'Show Mommy how you can turn off the TV, or Mommy will help you,'" advises Dr. Walfish. "Wait for a silent count of two, then take the remote." Of course, giving clear directions still requires practice and persistence. But being clear will regain control and stop you from losing your temper; meanwhile, your child learns who's boss and how to follow directions.

#### *Stay Positive*

### 4. You're a critic, not a coach.

You scrutinize your child's every mistake. When her report card is filled with A's and B's, you point to the C she got in spelling and say, "What happened?" When she makes her bed but leaves some sheets dangling over the mattress, you say, "Why can't you make the bed properly?"

**HOW IT AFFECTS YOUR KIDS:** If your critiques outweigh your kudos, your child may either ignore you or get defensive, and in either case will miss out on anything constructive you have to say. Worse, nitpicking also can erode her self-confidence -- to the point where she could stop trying to achieve because she's afraid she'll fail and disappoint you. Or maybe she'll become a perfectionist, thinking that anything less will cost her your love. "If you constantly give negative feedback or fixate on your child's weaknesses instead of her strengths, she may believe that she can't succeed," says Cathy Cassani Adams, a child and family psychotherapist and the author of *The Self-Aware Parent: 19 Lessons for Growing With Your Children*.

**KICK THE HABIT:** You should always give your kid more praise than put-downs. That doesn't mean you need to avoid mentioning mistakes -- just that, first, you should acknowledge your child's achievement: "Wow, look at all the A's and B's. That's great!" Then, gently offer assistance in the area where she fell short: "Spelling's a tough subject. I'd like to help you study for your next test."

In general, resist the urge to point out every error, and instead try to mention the good things she does on a daily basis, Adams advises. You might say, "Thanks for bringing your dishes over. That helps me clean up after dinner" instead of "Why did you leave the ketchup on the table?" Another benefit of upping the kudos: Your child will be more willing to take a critique seriously because she knows that you see what she does right.

## This Year, My Parenting Resolution Is To Do Less

By Rachel Bertsche

My last resolution list was really a to-do list in disguise: Frame photos, clean out car, KonMari entire house, promote new book. Overall, I did okay last year. I cleaned out the car, though it was blanketed in toddler toys again a month later. I KonMari'd my clothes and books, though halfway through the "papers" category—step 3 of 5—my husband and I got distracted and put the project on hold (where it still waits). I've been promoting my book—it's out now!—though I probably should have started earlier. I never did get to the picture frames, though.

Of course, this list of "resolutions" didn't include all the other tasks I wrote on my daily, weekly, and monthly to-do lists. There was planning my son's birthday party, ordering city parking permits, making a timeline for my daughter's kindergarten class project, and ordering corner protectors for the kitchen island (this after Maggie ran directly into the edge and got a gash under her eye).

The point is, as my to-dos built up, my "resolutions" quickly just became another bulleted item on my list. And in order to keep up with it, my insistence on multitasking grew. I became accustomed to secretly checking my work email while playing the match game with my 6 year old, or ordering a pair of sneakers for my son while we're supposed to be eating dinner (pause for detour to Zappos, because writing about the sneakers has reminded me that, yet again, he has outgrown his shoes). It's not unusual, but it's not mother-of-the-year parenting either. I'm not doing my children any favors by fragmenting my attention—my daughter may not be able to multiply yet, but she can tell when her mom is only half paying attention to her. That's why this year, my resolution is to do less.

Research shows that what kids want is not more time with their parents, but less-stressed parents. We live in a self-improvement culture—the collective agreement is that resolutions should be tied to being "better" in some way, to finally "getting something done." But I know from writing the aforementioned book, *The Kids Are in Bed: Finding Time for Yourself in the Chaos of Parenting*, that parents these days take on so much that the to-dos spill over into what could, and should, be closely guarded free time.

Researchers call this "contaminated time"—those moments when you're lying on a massage table thinking about how you forgot to fill out the documents for your will, or when you're reading a novel but zone out for three paragraphs because it occurs to you that you haven't filled out a permission slip. In an original nationwide survey conducted for *The Kids Are in Bed*, 71% of parents said their free time didn't feel free at all, because they were still thinking of everything they should be doing. That's no way to live.

The problem with parents taking on so much, other than the fact that it's exhausting and no fun, is that it's bad for our kids. This based on science—research shows that what kids want is not more time with their parents, but less-stressed parents—and anecdotal evidence too.

A big part of the problem is guilt. We live in an age of intensive parenting, where overextended mothers and fathers are told that the more time they spend with their kids, the better off those kids will be. But science just doesn't support it. Studies show the amount of time spent with kids doesn't translate to higher well-being or more successful outcomes for those kids. And yet, as my favorite statistic about parenting reveals, working moms today spend as much time with their kids, or more, than mothers in the 1960s did. We are doing enough! I want to carve out 20 minutes to an hour most days to unwind and enjoy myself, so I can give my kids a parent who isn't so high-strung. But I'm not pressuring myself to unclutter an entire household or cook for four every night. I'm not going to chaperone the school sock-hop or take on the role of classroom mom, and—an even bigger accomplishment—I'm not going to let myself feel guilty about those things either. I don't need another job. And you don't either. Raising kids is work enough.

Of course, I wouldn't mind finally tackling those photo frames.

