

# Alpine County Choose Civility Campaign

(An initiative of the Chi8ld Abuse Prevention Council and County Superintendent of Schools)



July Focus:

## *Respect Other People's Time*

There is something to be said about the importance of time. Given enough of it, we can accomplish great things. We often say we need more time at school to teach all the important things we must teach. Many people lament they don't have time to exercise, to make a menu and grocery list, to spend time in quality ways with their children. We don't seem to have enough time to call or write to distant relatives, to stop in to help an elderly neighbor or to read for pleasure. So it follows that we shouldn't waste this precious time; ours or anyone else's.

Ben Franklin spoke about the importance of time when he said, "Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time; for that's the stuff life is made of." Our time is valuable and once it's gone, it's gone. Dr. PM Forni, author of Choosing Civility: The Twenty-five Rules of Considerate Conduct asks that we respect other people's time as being as valuable as our own. Simply put, when we show up on time, we show others that we value them and their time. Unfortunately, the opposite is also true. When we show up late, we confirm to others that we don't value and respect them or their time. Of course, emergencies and delays happen, but overall, when we respect other people's time, we show up at the agreed upon time.

Here are some tips from Dr. Forni on respecting other people's time"

- Be punctual. Arrange your schedule so that you are at least 5-10 minutes early to take into account unforeseen circumstance.
- If you are going to be more than 5 minutes late, call.
- Cancel plans only in case of emergency. If you know several days ahead of time that an appointment is not going to be convenient, call to reschedule.
- When you call someone on the phone, check to make sure it is a good time for the other person to talk. If not, suggest some other times that may work for you.
- Keep both phone and in person conversations short. Others appreciate brevity.
- Answer your phone when you are able. Use voice mail/answering machines only if you are already engaged with someone else or not home.

- Be fully present for the person you are with. Minimize interruptions, and don't take call waiting or cell phone calls unless it is absolutely necessary.
- Wait for your turn in line. Look at your waiting time as a brief vacation from the hustle and bustle of your day.
- Answer e-mails and return phone calls. Don't waste others' time by having to contact you a second or third time to get a response.
- Meet deadlines and turn things in early or on time.
- Don't cut short a scheduled meeting unless all of the business at hand has been completed. Let people know that you are available for them as planned.

Schools teach students early on the importance of being on time. Students who are late are marked tardy. Too many tardies can interfere with learning and affect a student's grades. Teaching students the importance of being punctual is an important lesson that they will need to carry over with them when they enter the workforce.

Ideas to use with children to help them learn to respect other people's time:

- Explicitly teach children to take turns and wait their turn in line.
- Be careful when saying to a child, "Just a minute." Adults sometimes interfere with a child learning the meaning of time when asking them to wait a minute actually turns into several minutes or longer.
- Use a family calendar to keep track of important events, appointments and activities. Show children how to plan for upcoming calendared events.
- Use real-life examples to teach children about respecting each other's time such as thinking aloud when you need to prepare to get someplace on time: "If we need to get to our appointment by 10:00 we need to start now to eat breakfast, clean up, feed the dog and water the plants. If we're done by 9:30, we can leave and be on time."
- Model using wait-time effectively. Have things to do while you wait so you aren't wasting time.

Children's books to use for teaching the importance of respecting time:

Smart Ways to Spend Your Time: The Constructive Use of Time Assets by Pamela Espeland and Elizabeth Verdick, Free Spirit Publishing. This is great for preteens and teenagers.

Interrupting Chicken by David Ezra Stein is a wonderfully funny picture book for preschool through grade 2 that teaches waiting turns among other good manners.

Time's Up (Beacon Street Girls #12) by Annie Bryant, Aladdin Books. This book is good for pre-teen girls and addresses managing your own time so you don't put others in a difficult position.