

Parent interview with the mother of three school aged children

Education



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BUSTER**

Sarah is 10 and in the fifth grade, Brennan is eight and in the second grade and Alexander is almost five and in kindergarten. Meighan and her husband, Mitch live in a middle-class neighborhood, close to the school their children attend and have been married for 12 years this year. Meighan and Mitch found out they were pregnant with Sarah after about a year of marriage, and though. How you raise your child speaks volumes on who they become in the future, so having the best foundation possible is very important. The best teachers, then, are those who listen to the parents and keep them involved in the learning process. Working together we can avoid a lot of problem situations that could arise. h it was a surprise, it was a pleasant one. Meighan had worked with children all of her adult life and had been dreaming of the day when she'd become a mother herself, so she felt comfortable with the role of parent from day one. Both Meighan and Mitch read the 'required' books that a lot of young parents read, from 'What to Expect When You're Expecting" to the numerous pamphlets and handouts from their OB/GYN. They took a parenting class through their local health unit that taught the proper breathing techniques, as well as what to expect through labor and delivery and after the baby arrived. Settling into life with a new baby wasn't that difficult for the Stevens'. Their personal life didn't change that much from having the baby around all the time, they had support from both families and the transition to parenthood was a smooth one. Parenting isn't always easy though, and there were some stressful times. Meighan says that she had a lot of problems trying to breastfeed, at the time there was a lot of pressure to breastfeed (from the many books, pamphlets and even the nurses in the hospital who seemed to push it) over

bottle feed and Meighan felt like a failure when she couldn't live up to the expectations. Thankfully, after a visit from a health unit nurse, who suggested that formula was not the enemy, Meighan relaxed and supplemented with formula. She felt less of a failure when subsequent doctor visits showed Sarah was thriving. By the time the boys were born, Meighan felt more secure about her role as a mom and knew that she could make her own decisions, after all, she did it once, and she could do it again. Meighan and Mitch have been through the first three stages of parenting with all of their children and are now working through stage 4: The Interpretive Stage. From talking to the Stevens' I have learned that they are authoritative parents. They want the best for their children and their children know the rules, but they are not afraid to push their limits or bring home a bad mark, they know that they are loved no matter what and that their parents will do anything they can to help them reach their goals. Meighan's dreams for her children are that they be happy above anything else. They are being taught to follow their dreams and to show integrity in their work, and are learning to do their best in anything they try. The school system that all of the children are in is full of opportunities for the parents to be involved in the education process. The teachers are loving, caring, and truly want what is best for their young charges. Parental involvement is key, and there are plenty of opportunities to volunteer, either in the classroom or with the school council, and the kids are involved in so many things that they present throughout the year for the parents. The staff ensures that there are ample opportunities to see your child on stage, they will present concerts at different times during the day and once in the evening as well so as many people as possible can

attend, regardless of work schedules. Assemblies are once a month and open to anyone who wishes to attend, and they thank their parent volunteers annually with a Volunteer Luncheon, put on by the teachers themselves. Meighan has been very involved with the school since day one and finds that it's a great opportunity to actually see what is going on within the classroom. Children can act differently in different situations, so seeing them and how they react around the teacher and their friends is a great way to see how they're developing as people, outside the confines of home. The school utilizes agenda books and what they call note totes for the younger children in which to keep communication flowing from home to school and vice versa. The schools also have several parent-teacher conferences throughout the year, and a simple phone call can get you a meeting with the teacher at any time you need it. The school is very open and keeping the communications going is a great way to nip problems in the bud.