

The following is a list of ideas that parents can use to break the cycle of lack of education/poverty/violence/trauma. Many of these things you may already be doing. If so, keep it up. You're doing a great job, and we promise you will see results.

What parents can do to break the cycle of being **UNDER-EDUCATED**

- Set an example by enrolling in a class of some sort- ANYTHING. It could be at a community center, a community college, an online class, something offered at your children's school. ANYTHING to show that you value education for yourself as much as them.
- Volunteer at your child's school: read to young students, go on field trips, help out at school activities.
- Connect with your child's school by talking to teachers, going to report card conferences, periodically showing up during the middle of the day to see how your child is doing.
- Show your child you value their education by: making sure they always have school supplies (NOT just in September), giving them a quiet place to do homework, shutting off the TV, asking how their day was, keeping a calendar for when projects are due.
- Do not tolerate any form of misbehavior in school. School is for learning, not horseplay.
- Give your child a snack and a little break when they get home from school before starting homework so they feel refreshed and ready to learn again.
- Have routines for homework, bedtime, morning. Make sure they get a good night's sleep and eat a good breakfast. Wake up with them in the morning to make sure they get to school on time.
- Send them to school EVERYDAY. Make doctor's appointments during holidays or late in the afternoon so they do not miss school. Every day they miss is a missed learning opportunity.
- Set an example for reading by reading in front of them. It can be anything, books, magazines, the newspaper, whatever you enjoy.
- Expose children to culture. Take them to museums, the theatre, historical landmarks.
- For younger children: take them to the library, have a reading group in your house, teach them crafts.

What parents can do to break the cycle of **POVERTY**

- Have a good work ethic that you display to your child and talk to your child about.
- Point out role models of hard workers in your family or community. Talk to your children about how that person became a success. Success takes lots of work. Children need to understand that.
- Encourage your children to work hard-- in school, in the summer, around the house.
- Teach good spending habits, pay bills first, put money away in a savings account.
- Prioritize your spending- kids don't need the latest sneakers, purses, another video game or a flat screen TV. Those things will not get them a good job in the future!
- Children should learn the value of a dollar-- it's ok to say "no" to something that you can't afford.
- Spoil them instead with love and attention! :-)
- Tie rewards into good behavior or good grades.
- Have a budget for groceries- much cheaper to buy food at a grocery store and cook yourself than to eat out at fast food restaurants or the corner store.
- Bring your children to any enrichment opportunities in the community that you can. Many are free, especially on certain days of the week.
- Take advantage of any learning opportunities for yourself. Free computer classes, writing classes through your child's school or community centers. Conferences like this one are a great idea!
- Also take advantage of any trainings that your job offers. Sometimes places of employment will pay for you to go to trainings related to your position. Don't be afraid to ask, many bosses will see that as you being motivated to do your best and it can lead to advancement.

What parents can do to break the cycle of VIOLENCE

- Teach your children to be good citizens in school and in their neighborhood.
- Display law abiding behavior yourself (don't speed, text while driving, etc)
- Kids are watching your behavior--they will do what you DO, not what you SAY.
- Use inappropriate situations that you witness (two adults screaming at each other in the grocery store) as learning experiences for your children. Explain how the people could have handled the situation in a less violent, more peaceful manner. Not everything is worth fighting over.
- Work on making your own home a peaceful place to be so that children know what it feels like to be peaceful.
- Watch your own tone with your children. You will notice that they mimic how you treat them in how they treat others.
- Monitor movies, video games, and music for violence. Small children especially should be protected from this type of media.
- Don't downplay violence that they experience or that you hear about. Downplaying violence makes it seem as if it's not a big deal when it is.
- Teach your children that they can walk away from a situation; they do not have to stand their ground to prove a point, show how tough they are, or save face.
- Hug and kiss your boys; teach them it's ok to cry.
- Know who your children's friends are and what they are doing in their free time.
- Get to know your children's friend's parents and what their households are like. You don't want all of your teaching to be for nothing because they end up learning the wrong thing at someone else's house.
- Monitor facebook, twitter, text messages for signs of violent conversations, threats, plans for fights, etc.
- Discourage bullying behavior of ANY kind, in school, on the playground, anywhere.
- Do not tell your child to handle problems with other children in school themselves (e.g. by fighting themselves or calling up an older brother or friend to fight for them); contact the school and work with the school to take care of the situation.
- Get to know the people in your neighborhood so that adults can look out for each other's children.

What parents can do to break the cycle of **TRAUMA**

- Listen to your children and their feelings.
- Give them a safe place to talk about how they are feeling and what they are thinking.
- Do not downplay their feelings, especially your sons' feelings. They are not "punks" for feeling sad or crying about something tragic that happened.
- Work with faith based organizations or rec centers in your community- set up afterschool programs, support groups, a safe place to "hang out".
- Communicate with your child's school if something has happened that would affect your child's behavior in school. Schools need to know if a family member has died, is very ill, if you become homeless or have other types of family emergencies. The school counselor can help your child and family deal with these types of issues.
- Become a mentor in your community; look after children who don't seem to have anyone else.
- Know where your kids are, what they are doing, who their friends are.
- Are they drinking, smoking-- hug and kiss them when they come home. It shows them you love them and it gives you an opportunity to "smell" them to see if they've been doing anything you don't want them doing.
- Look for signs of depression: staying home all of sudden, locking themselves in their rooms, not talking to friends, change in eating habits, drastic change in grades or behavior at school, cutting school.
- Keep an eye on facebook, twitter, instagram, etc. to see if there are any signs that your child is unhappy or thinking of hurting themselves.
- Make sure that you take care of yourselves! You should have supports as well as your children.
- Take parenting classes to help you be the best parent you can be.
- Work with your child's school to improve their discipline system. You don't want schools to traumatize your children with an out-of-date style of discipline. (Restorative Justice is a great system to use! Maybe your school will investigate using it)

