



*6 out of 10
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to hit or kick
other children*

Raising a Thinking Child

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 skills in young children set the stage for preventing school problems, juvenile delinquency, and substance use.

Finding the best program for Wisconsin

UW-Madison Extension 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 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 15 years, UW-Madison Extension has brought the benefits of Raising a Thinking Child to Wisconsin families by:

- Training more than 150 human service professionals, including staff members from family resource centers, Head Start, childcare centers, elementary schools, and public health and social service agencies, to teach the program
- Providing morning and afternoon in-person classes and evening online classes
- 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.

Raising a Thinking Child is an asset to families and helps children learn skills they can use throughout their lives.

fyi.extension.wisc.edu/rtcprogram/



Family life is better

All parents are surveyed about their experiences with Raising a Thinking Child at the end of each 6- or 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.

What parents say

"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 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 were better at controlling their own anger and frustration when interacting with their children.

Lasting change in children

Six months after completing Raising a Thinking Child, more than 50% 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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