

## Institute for Parental Leadership

Effective Parenting Saves Children and Builds Communities

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When looking at the social pathologies of many of our youth, we often look at empirical data like grade point averages, high school dropout rates, anti-social behavior, police incident reports, gang activity, teenage pregnancy, and others. Our practice has been to then initiate programs and activities that will hopefully address these concerns...i.e. after school tutoring and manhood training programs, sex education and mentoring initiatives, intense counseling and more. Many, if not most, of these practices fail because they do not begin to touch on the primary cause of the problem. A week is 168 hours in it and most of these traditional programs have access to these children only 10-12 hours per week. A young child spends far more time at home with their parents than at any other place. **Many families are dysfunctional. In far too many instances, active, effective, and consistent parental leadership is absent.**

Parents should and must be the mentors, coaches, police, and leaders of their child's self esteem. By themselves, teachers, churches and the judicial system can't do it.

Virtually, all parents would say that they love their children while at the same time stand idle when their children fail to make decisions or behave in ways that would lead to positive and productive lifestyles. Or, they watch as though helpless when their children don't execute plans leading to fruitful results. The consequences of this dysfunction lead to isolation, frustration, social and emotional pain, economic hardship and desperation, and a perpetuation of the same for succeeding generations.

How the Institute for Parental Leadership works

The institute would be a learning environment where parents of young children (children 7 and under) would come and learn skills in the following areas (this is not a complete course list):

- **Parental engagement** in the total life of a child...sharing techniques and paradigms of effective engagement skills so that parents see successful models from many parts of society, e.g. corporate leaders, professionals, artists, etc. Parents will interview successful African American people and hear their stories. They will learn what it takes to be successful and hence help prepare their own children for success.
- **Cultural Life** would address basics in cultural events across a wide range of activities, plays, concerts, lectures on topics of interests, etc.
- **The excitement of knowing** would focus on why knowledge is essential as one matures through the stages of development towards success. It would focus on the consequences

of not knowing certain bits of information and how that reality alone could potentially place social, economic and political barriers in the path of a child.

- **The joy of watching children grow** would focus on the importance of parents keeping an eye (i.e. paying close attention) on their children from birth through high school and beyond. The course would focus on topics of how best to be engaged in a child's life when teaching values, morality, life choices, and direction in life for both child and parent.
- **How to fight for your child** would focus on the need to be vigilant in effectively protecting the child from harmful external social and political forces.
- **How to love yourself** ( the idea here is that if you don't love yourself, you can't love other well, including children). The course would include discussions on the value of maintaining a consistent exercise and nutrition regimen, hygiene, appropriate dress, rest habits, lifestyle choices that promote joy and happiness verses choices that will cause harm and distress.
- **Measuring a child's success** would teach parents how to instill in their children a strong sense of self-esteem, self-confidence, and a strong spiritual presence, the core of one's being.
- **Helping a child develop dreams and the reason why it's important to work hard to make them a reality** would focus on the idea that nothing worthwhile comes easy. One has to work hard for success and to remember that when obstacles/challenges come into one's live, one has to find a way around them, over them, or under them, but permit them to stop the pursuit of dreams and aspirations.

The Institute for Parental Leadership would create opportunity for bringing together critical institutions to address, what is arguably the most important issue of this generation, namely, the saving of the African American family and those children born into poverty. It would match local church missional purpose with a workable plan to effectively address the threats to the survival of African American youth. The Institute of for Parental Leadership would train local clergy and their designees on techniques of effective parenting. The plan would finally address in a deliberate way the often omitted part of the equation, the parent. If we don't have parents equipped with the necessary skill sets to raise, protect, train, and promote their own children, then all efforts mounted to save our youth will fall woefully short.

Frederick Douglas noted: "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."