

5 THINGS WE LEARNED FROM ...

Is It a Big Problem or a Little Problem?

By Amy Egan, Amy Freedman, Judi Greenberg and Sharon Anderson (St. Martin's, \$14.95 paper)



It's common for parents to worry about their children's development. The authors—two therapists, a pathologist and a behavioral specialist—have extensive experience observing children in classroom settings and their homes.

1 Children have different learning styles. Tactile learners need to touch things, for example, while visual learners prefer to observe.

2 Play is children's work. "Play helps children to understand their world and encourages them to learn how to solve problems and develop creativity."

3 As children may spend as much waking time in school as they do at home, teachers' opinions should be respected. "Remember that they know your child in a different environment, where he may behave much differently than he does at home."

4 Tantrums or separation anxiety can be little things or indicative of larger problems. Parents should speak to medical experts if they suspect the latter.

5 "A planned playdate is a successful playdate. Talk to your child about what will happen when his friend arrives."

—Chris McNamara

The Good Teen

Rescuing Adolescence From the Myths of the Storm and Stress Years

By Richard M. Lerner (Crown, \$24.95)



There's no need for parents to dread adolescence, writes psychologist and youth expert Richard Lerner. All teenagers have the potential for healthy, successful development. Your job as a parent is to encourage your child's positive growth.

1 Stop embracing the stereotype of teens as irresponsible and full of shortcomings. How would you feel and act if everyone thought poorly of you?

2 Parents should encourage the "Five C's": competence, confidence, connection, character and caring.

3 Once the Five C's are present, a sixth will emerge: contribution. This is when a teen cares for herself and gives of herself at home and in the community.

4 To nurture competence (social, emotional, cognitive, academic and vocational), find something your child enjoys and support his interest, without taking it over. Your child needs just one or two interests he genuinely cares for.

5 Nurture confidence by urging your teen to build and expand on his skills. Challenge your own stereotypes about gender and abilities. Your beliefs have a profound effect on your child's performance and confidence levels.

—Anne E. Stein