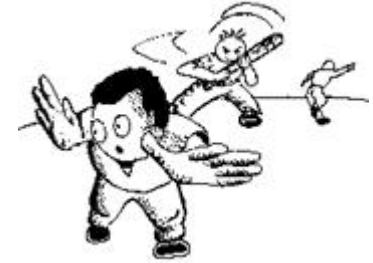




Parent Assignment #1: Grade 4

Unfortunately peer pressure is a part of almost all children's lives. While parents can't protect their children from experiencing peer pressure, there are steps you can take to minimize its effects. One of these steps is to monitor your child's friends. Children choose bad companions for a number of reasons including attention (even negative attention), the excitement, because they think the person is 'cool', or because they suffer from low self-esteem and/or little self-confidence.



What Parents Can Do

- * **Develop a close relationship with your children.** Children who have close relationships with their parents are more likely to identify with and work to please their parents, and much more likely to come to their parents when they are in trouble or are having problems.
- * **Help children understand peer pressure.** Children will be better prepared to stand up to peer pressure and the suggestions of bad companions if they have an understanding of the process. Parents should make sure their children know that peer pressure is something that all children, and even adults, experience at one time or another. Parents can also explain that it is normal for children to want to fit in and go along with their peers, and thus give in to peer pressure. When children have an understanding of the process and the feelings involved with peer pressure, they are much less likely to give in to it.
- * **Plan regular and frequent family activities.** Parents should look for activities that the whole family can participate in, such as picnics, hikes in the woods, sports, etc. Parents who spend regularly scheduled time with their children participating in fun activities will have the opportunity to develop close relationships with their children.
- * **Encourage friendships with positive role models.** Parents should encourage their children to develop and maintain friendships with children who have positive qualities. Parents can also encourage their children to join groups or activities (e.g., scouting, sports, leadership groups) which involve interacting with positive role models.
- * **Get to know your children's friends and their parents.** Parents should make an effort to spend time with their children's friends to get to know them. They should also make an attempt to get to know their children's friends' parents. When parents do this, they are able to see whether their children's friends are positive influences, and whether friends' families have values similar to their own.
- * **Know where your children are and what they are doing.** When children are at home, parents should supervise their activities. When children are not at home, parents should make an effort to know where their children are, who they are with, and what they are doing.
- * **Don't criticize your children's friends.** When children have friends who are a bad influence, it is not a good idea for parents to criticize these friends. In many cases, children will become defensive and will continue to see such friends out of a sense of loyalty or to rebel against their parents. Instead of criticizing

bad companions, however, parents can and should discuss specific behaviors and/or actions. For example, a parent can say, "It seems like every time Julie is over here to play, you break a house rule."

* **Encourage a wide variety of friends.** Parents should encourage their children to have many different friends. This will expose children to other children who have many different interests and ideas. This will help promote individuality, and will make it less likely for children to give in to peer pressure from any one group.

* **Teach assertiveness.** Parents should teach their children how to stand up for what they believe in. Parents can do this by using role-playing. Role-playing involves practicing different responses to various situations. This gives children a chance to practice saying no to their peers. Parents can also teach their children how to problem solve when they are faced with peer pressure, perhaps by suggesting alternative activities, or by explaining why they refuse to participate in a certain activity.

* **Seek help.** If a child is consistently giving in to peer pressure, or chronically getting into trouble with bad companions, a mental health professional should be consulted.

Source: www.parenting-ed.org

Assignment

Ask your child to review the day's lesson, and handouts with you. Discuss their feelings about the lesson, and any issues that may have come up for them that day in school.

Choose one or more of the following:

1. Turn to the back of the *Who Knew? The Peer Pressure Issue* and ask your child to interview you.

Answer the following questions:

- * What were some things you were pressured about when you were your child's age?
- * What did you do to handle the pressure?
- * Who did you talk to when you were being pressured?
- * What are some things you think I can do to resist peer pressure?

2. **Set goals for everyone.** Together, write out a list of goals that each family member wants to meet for the week, month and year. Then have each family member check off goals that he/she has met.

3. **Set aside some fun time.** Make a point to spend some time doing something that each family member is good at. For example, if someone is a good chess player, have that person teach others how to play, and then have a tournament.

4. **Be on the lookout!** Watch a movie or TV show. Try to identify how people are pressured to do things they don't want to do. Talk about how the people handled the pressure.

5. Open *Who Knew? The Peer Pressure Issue* to the center pages. Play the game **Take a moment!** Use the playing pieces in the booklet (you need to cut them out) or other playing pieces. Using a penny, flip heads to move 1 space, tails to go forward 2 spaces. Following the directions on the board until one player has reached the finish space.



Livingston Youth and Community Services

Parent Assignment #1: Grade 4 Peer Pressure

Student's Name: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Which assignment did you choose, and why? _____

Was this lesson helpful? Yes/ No

Please explain _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Raffle Entry

Parent Assignment #1: Grade 4 Peer Pressure

Student's Name: _____ Parent's Name: _____

School: _____ Grade 4

Please complete this sheet and return to LYCS, PO Box 822, Livingston, NJ 07039,
Fax: 973-992-9318, email: lycs@livingston.org, or leave at reception in school