

**Family Living  
Focus**  
by  
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**Children Need Independence**  
As parents we claim we want to raise our children to be independent and self-confident.

Unfortunately, a guaranteed guidebook of how to accomplish this feat has not been written so each parent needs to develop his/her own plan for completing the task.

Several books are available suggesting a variety of tools that parents can use. Parents In a Pressure Cooker: A Guide to Responsible and Loving Parent/Child Relationships by Jane Bluestein and Lynn Collins includes a chapter on Independence and Problem-Solving. The authors suggest that parents often resist allowing children to make their decisions because it makes the parents feel as if they are not needed anymore.

Parents are still needed but their role will be different. Children need your acceptance. Parents need to encourage and support them as they begin to make decisions on their own.

Unfortunately, parents frequently use criticism as a way to motivate their children. An example of this behavior is telling your child that he or she will not succeed in school as a way to get homework finished. This strategy is generally ineffective as children internalize the message and believe they can't succeed so instead of working harder, they give up and quit trying.

It's better to allow your child to experience the consequences of their actions whether it is good or bad. In this example, if the child consistently neglects completing homework assignments, they may fail the class. As a parent we really want to intervene even if it means doing the homework for the child so the child will not experience this failure.

But dealing with the consequence of failure will become a more ef-

fective learning experience for the child than if we protect him from the consequences.

fective learning experience for the child than if we protect him from the consequences.

Sometimes children will approach you with a problem and you think you have to solve it for them. This may not be what your child really wants from you. Your child may just want you to listen while they talk themselves through the problem.

A poem "Could You Just Listen?" states "When I ask you to listen to me and you feel you have to do something to solve my problems, you have failed me, strange as that may seem."

Listening, without giving advice is difficult for us to do, after all, we have a lot of "life experiences" to draw from and we can quickly make an appropriate decision.

Occasionally parents need to get involved in the issue, but if we always jump in with help, we are not really helping. This method, like criticism, is not helpful to our children as they struggle to become independent.

Jane Bluestein in Parents Teens and Boundaries: How to Draw the Line, suggests that if your child has learned that acting helpless will result in someone taking control and solving the problem you can still help them learn to take responsibility. She says you need to refrain from jumping in and solving problems, instead gently and lovingly push the problem back to them to solve.

You might ask the child if there is something they want you to do but be careful not to handle the problem for the child.

Be sure to check back with your child, you might ask: "How

do you feel about what happened?" "What can you do to avoid this problem in the future?"

When parents offer encouragement and support instead of solving the problem for their children, children gain confidence and will be able to make responsible decisions when adults aren't directly supervising.

John Rosemond in Teen-Proofing gives parents suggestions on how to manage teenagers so they will take the responsibility of control over their own lives. He suggests that the teen years are akin to revisiting the "toddler" stage of child development. Parents of young children are advised to "child-proof" their homes by removing things that might harm the child. When we are dealing with teens it's impossible to "teen-proof" their environment in the same way we did when they were young. As parents we need to guide them to manage their own self-protection by learning to make responsible decisions.

Jane Bluestein concludes the chapter on "Raising Independent Children" by saying "Problem-solving is choice-making." Your children will get better at it the more they do it. And the more they problem-solve successfully, the more confident they feel, and the more independent they become. Protecting children means giving them tools to protect themselves and plenty of opportunities to test these tools with you there to support them when the tool they select doesn't work.



The entire family participates in making donuts at Reading Terminal Market's annual Pennsylvania Dutch Festival on Aug. 2, 3, and 4, from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. The festival features authentic Pennsylvania Dutch handmade quilts, brooms, woodcrafts, cakes, pies, donuts, ice cream, preserves and more. On Saturday, Aug. 4, the festivities include Amish buggy rides around the market and a petting zoo of live horses, sheep, goats, chickens, donkeys, and calves.

## Pennsylvania Dutch Fest

PHILADELPHIA — Have you ever wondered what it's like to ride in an Amish buggy? Or how the Pennsylvania Dutch make their delicious ice cream, donuts, and fudge? No need to wonder anymore. This summer Lancaster County comes to Center City with the Pennsylvania Dutch Festival at Reading Terminal Market.

On Aug. 2, 3 and 4, Reading Terminal Market, 12th and Arch Streets, celebrates the traditions, foods, and crafts of the Pennsylvania Dutch. The festival runs 8 a.m.-5 p.m. and features Penn-

sylvanian Dutch handmade crafts including quilts, cedar chests, wooden toys and clocks, brooms, braided rugs and more. If it's those delectable sweets you're after, look no further. A smorgasbord of Pennsylvania Dutch treats including homemade chicken pot pie, ice cream, donuts, fudge, funnel cakes, and pies will be available.

On Saturday, Aug. 4, the festivities move outdoors as live farm animals including horses, goats, sheep, chickens, donkeys, and calves fill Arch Street.



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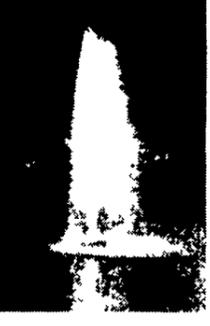
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