

NEWS BREAK

Article: **U.S. surgeon general: Parents need to give themselves a break**

Section: **MAIN, A14**

Sunday's News Break selects an article from **Sunday, September 15, 2024** of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some teachers might use this as a take-home assignment and others might read and answer the questions in a small group or larger, class discussion.

****Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for your students.***

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Objectives:

Students will learn about increased stress on parents with contributing factors such as social media, technology and economic pressures. They'll learn about intensive parenting and whether that creates more stress in the home. They'll discuss what role society should play in supporting parents and whether creating a culture of busy-ness with sports and extracurricular activities are beneficial for kids and parents, or not.

Pre-Reading Discussion:



- What do you think the article will be about, using this picture?
- Are there any clues? What can you infer?

Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted words mean using *context clues*? A **context clue** is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the identities and meanings of unknown words.

“In his recent advisory on parents’ mental health, the U.S. surgeon general, Dr. Vivek M. Murthy, said out loud what many parents might have only **furtively** admitted: Parenting today is too hard and stressful.”

Furtively Guess:

Furtively Definition:

Discussion Questions (small/large groups), Journal Prompts or Essay Questions:

Class Discussion Questions:

- What surprised (or stood out to) you in the article?
- At first, I thought _____, but now I think _____?
- What things did you already know from prior experience?
- How would you describe your parent’s style of parenting? Do you see any similarities that were depicted in this article?
- What would you define as the perfect parenting balance?

- Do you think too much pressure is being placed on kids and parents? Why or why not?

Comprehension Questions:

1. Why has parental stress risen to the level of a rare surgeon general's warning about an urgent public health issue — putting it in the same category as cigarettes and AIDS?
2. These pressures, researchers say, are driven in part by fears about the modern-day economy — that if parents don't equip their children with every possible advantage, their children could fail to achieve what?
3. Describe the parenting style known as intensive parenting.
4. Parents spend greater shares of their money on their children than parents did a generation ago, especially for extracurricular activities like _____ or _____.
5. The surgeon general called out an intense culture of comparison, exacerbated by the _____.
6. While many Americans experience _____, parents are more likely than nonparents to say that they do and that no one understands the extent of their stress.
7. "In the U.S., it's this sense of _____: You chose to have kids, so go raise them," said Milkie, who works at the University of Toronto. "Parents need the village, but people are not as available as they were."
8. But the surgeon general's alert shifts the focus to parents' well-being — which it said in turn affects children's _____.
9. Parents should make time for themselves, he said, to do activities that bring them _____ or improve their health, without feeling guilt that they're spending time away from their children.
10. Talking more openly about the demands of parenting could eventually change _____ about whether all this time and money is needed for children to succeed.

Diving Deeper-Journal, Essay Prompts & Discussion Questions:

- What factors are contributing to the increased stress on parents? How have social media, technology, and economic pressures impacted parenting?
- What is "intensive parenting"? How does it differ from parenting styles in the past?
- How do you think social media and technology have influenced the way parents interact with their children? Are these influences positive or negative?
- Have you ever felt pressure to be a "perfect" child? How did you handle that pressure?

- What role should society play in supporting parents? How can government policies, schools, and communities help reduce parental stress?
- Do you think the emphasis on academic achievement and extracurricular activities is beneficial for children? Why or why not?
- How can we create a culture that values mental health and well-being for both children and parents? What steps can individuals take to reduce stress and prioritize self-care?
- How does the concept of "intensive parenting" relate to the broader societal issues of work-life balance and gender roles?
- What are the potential long-term consequences of the current parenting culture on children's mental health and development?
- How can parents balance the desire to provide their children with opportunities with the need to prioritize their own well-being, as well?

News Break is posted to the Web on Tuesday. Please share this NIE News Break program with other teachers. To sign-up for the print replica for your class, please [register online](#) or call 206/652-6290 or toll-free 1-888/775-2655.

Copyright © 2024 The Seattle Times Company