

FAMILY!

A Publication of the NASAP Family Education Section

Spring 2008

Research Report

What Do the Kids Think?

by Amy Ellison, MA

When I began contemplating ideas for my doctoral dissertation, I knew I wanted to do research on the efficacy of parent education groups. As I started my literature review, I found that there were plenty of studies indicating the benefits of parent education groups per parent report. What I did not find was the child's perception of parent change upon completion of a parent education group.

This is a preliminary report on my efforts to accomplish new research goals.

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Teen Won't Wake Up On Time

Dear Addy...

Guest author is **Rob Guttenberg**, YMCA Director of Parenting Education & Family Counselor in Maryland. Rob's book, **The Parent As Cheerleader**, is obtainable online at robguttenberg.com or P.O. Box 311, Cabin John, MD 20828.

Dear Addy,

My 14-year old son hasn't been getting up for school on time. I have to go into his room several times to get him started on his way. How do I make sure he's up and ready to go when I have to leave in the morning? His teachers are telling me that he can't afford to miss any more classes. Please send the cavalry!

~A Desperate Dad

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Tips from 'Coping With Kids'

Victory Over Vacation

by Linda Albert, PhD

Section Member Linda Albert's book, **Coping With Kids** (originally published in 1982), arose from her syndicated advice column of the same name, and provides practical tips for parents wondering how to handle many issues. This excerpt deals with vacations. While many families are over-programmed even in summer, and in 1982, obviously the prevalence of video games, the Internet and MP3 players weren't factors, over-reliance on TV in this excerpt easily stands in for all sorts of pastimes parents are now facing. Here is part of Chapter 11, 'Victory Over Vacation.' (To purchase a copy of this engaging book, go to Amazon.com by way of the NASAP website.) Thanks, Linda, for permission to reprint.

"Yippee. School's out. No more teachers, no more books..." Whether it's two days for Thanksgiving, two weeks for Christmas or two months for summer, the kids are jumping with joy. Vacation time has finally, finally come again.



Look in any school building around three o'clock on the last day before vacation and you'll see the teachers looking as happy as the kids, even if they do appear somewhat exhausted.

Look at the parents waiting in the schoolyard or at home for their youngsters and you will find the only group of people who are not overjoyed that another vacation is about to begin. They wonder if they have the strength to get through yet another school vacation. Many parents

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Define the Adlerian point-of-view in 30 seconds

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Better yet, in-person at June conference in Hershey

FE Section Co-Chairs Report...

Dear Family Education Section Members,

With the annual convention only weeks away, I hope you've made your reservations and have started to pick out the sessions you want to attend. We're so fortunate to have such a rich schedule of offerings for family educators.

You won't want to miss the pre-conference workshops. They give you a chance to get into a topic in much greater depth. We have **Betty Lou Bettner's** *Essential Pieces of the Parenting Puzzle*, **Rob Guttenberg's** *Fantastic Adlerian Techniques for Change* and **Mary Jamin Maguire's** *Effective Discipline for Children with Emotional and/or Behavioral Challenges*.

Friday and Saturday offer a wide variety of sessions for family educators. **Jim Bitter** will talk about *Mistaken Notions of Adults with Children*. **Betty Lou Bettner** is doing a session on her wonderful new lifestyle book, *The Creative Force: How Children Create Their Personalities*. Our former co-chair, **Dina Emser**, will be presenting a session on *Coaching Kids to Success*. I had the pleasure of hearing **Diane Snyder's** presentation on *Encouraging the Autistic Child to Thrive* at the South Carolina Adlerian conference last September. If you work with families with a child on the autism spectrum, you'll want to attend her workshop. These are only a few of the offerings at the conference.

This year, our Family Education Section meeting will not conflict with any content sessions. It will be held on Friday from 4:50pm to 5:40pm. Take a look at the outline on page 7 for details!

Alyson Schäfer's term as Co-Chair of the Section ends at the meeting in June. Please be sure to participate in the election of her replacement. **Terry Lowe** has been nominated, and accepted the nomination. Her qualifications and experience appear on page 6. The nomination form is printed on page 7, for mailing in; or, attend the meeting to vote.

Unfortunately, I need to extend condolences on behalf of our membership to Alyson and her family on the untimely loss of her dear father, Richard Knight. We deeply regret, too, that due to family circumstances, Alyson cannot attend the Harrisburg convention. She will be missed.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank Alyson for her contributions to the Section over the past few years. She has brought such enthusiasm, creativity and hard work to our meetings and our newsletter, and as one of our voices at the Council of Representatives. Her indomitable spirit makes everything seem possible. I'm sure we will all miss the level of involvement she's had with the Section. She's not going far, however. Her continuing contribution to the organization will be evident when the new NASAP website makes its debut. Thank you, Alyson, for all that you have done for the Family Education Section. ■

Warm wishes from your Co-Chair,
Patti Cancellier

Adlerian Wisdom

Great expectations often produce little results. First distinguish between 'great' expectations and 'realistic' expectations. Once a child has learned to tie his shoes, he is always expected to tie them. This is a realistic expectation based on a child's demonstrated ability. Great, or high, expectations are based primarily on the parents' desire for excellence in their children.... 'You could do better if you tried' [is] tantamount to 'You are not good enough the way you are.'
from **ABCs of Guiding the Child**

by Rudolf Dreikurs, MD and Margaret Goldman (1960)

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Vacations... continued from page 1

remember all too well previous vacations during which the kids wanted snacks and goodies all day long, left messes all over the house, complained of boredom, and demanded entertainment when they ran out of things to do. The TV set blared all day; kids fought with each other. They refused to do their normal chores because they were "on vacation," which to them meant time off from all responsibilities.

Perhaps these same parents are also remembering the difficulties they encountered the last time they took their kids on a vacation trip and are wondering how these difficulties can be avoided on this year's trip. They may even be hoping to find a way to make the coming trip educational as well as entertaining.

Reasonable Expectations

Parents can expect the kids' vacations from school to be pleasant times for the entire family, not just the kids. When released from daily pressures, the family should be able to relax and enjoy a change of daily routine.

Yes, the daily routine will change during vacations, but don't let routines disappear entirely or chaos will descend upon your home. It is reasonable to expect kids on vacation to follow routines regarding meals, chores, TV watching. Being on vacation is no excuse for not taking care of household responsibilities. In fact, additional routines and chores may have to be added during vacations because of the extra hours the kids are home and the different activities, such as swimming, they may engage in.

You can expect kids on vacation to provide most of their own entertainment. Nowhere in your parent's license does it say that

the job of being a parent includes entertaining kids who can't find anything to do. As children grow up, they should learn to fill their time constructively without constant help from Mom or Dad. A taste of boredom motivates a child to find interesting things to do on his own. Don't rob your child of this growth experience by assuming the responsibility for filling up his time during vacations.

Vacation times can also be the time for pleasant family trips. You can expect kids to behave well on trips if you carefully plan the day's schedule and activities to accommodate the kids' needs. With planning, these trips can benefit your child educationally as well.

Plan In Advance

Q – I need some help in coping with school vacations. When kids are home for a couple of weeks, we all seem to get on each other's nerves. The kids like to sit and watch TV for five or six hours a day, which I refuse to allow. When I shut off the tube, they complain that they have nothing to do. Then they start fighting with each other. If I try to relax by myself for a few minutes in the middle of the day, undoubtedly one of the kids will disturb me by tattling about a brother or a sister. How can I make vacation time pleasant for all of us?

A – Advance planning is the key to a pleasant vacation with your kids. While adults often prefer unstructured vacation days, kids are much better with routines and structure. There are four basic areas of family life that need advance planning: daily living routines, TV watching, parent-child activity times, and independent activity times.

The daily living routines include mealtimes, clean-ups, and household chores. During vacations, keep these routines as close to their

school-year schedule as possible, thereby avoiding the disorganization that occurs when living routines are interrupted.

Control TV watching by advance planning and scheduling what shows will be watched. Sit down as a family when the weekly schedule appears in the newspaper and choose the shows to be watched during the week. Post the schedule on or near the TV. Make some buttered popcorn and enjoy some of the specials with the kids. Encourage them to discuss shows with you afterward.

During vacations, plan special parent-child activities that require more time than you usually have available during the school year. These activities might center around a new hobby that all ages in the family can enjoy, such as bread baking or making candles. Perhaps your family would enjoy a music hour together each night, the content of which can be chosen by each family member in turn. A wide variety of records can be borrowed from most local libraries. Another fun family activity is reading plays together, with each person in the family taking different parts. Again, most libraries have books and magazines of plays written for kids. Let your kids know the time of day these activities will occur so they won't constantly nag you to do them.

To plan independent activity times for your kids, gather the family together and list all the activities kids can do on their own. Post this list in a prominent spot. Tell the kids that when they have nothing to do, they can consult the list to find an activity that appeals to them instead of coming to you.

With these advance plans to guide you, enjoy the vacation! ■

Coping With Kids by Dr. Linda Albert
1992 edition, Alkorn House

Research: Kids...continued from page 1

The Focus

I found only three studies which looked at “what the child thought” about his or her parents before and/or after the groups. Therefore, I decided that if parents are trying to help their children by taking these classes, why not assess what the child truly thinks upon their parent’s completion of the groups. *Do the children believe that their parent’s skills have improved?*

Group Composition

The sample for this study consisted of 56 parents and 50 children, most of whom were involved in a juvenile probation system of a medium sized Midwestern county. There were 33 total parents in the experimental group and 23 parents in the control group. For the child group, there were 29 in the experimental group and 21 in the control group. Ninety-four percent (53) of the parents were “court ordered” to attend parenting classes. Ninety-six percent of the children were involved in the juvenile system. The children ranged in age from 12 years old to 18 years old with a mean age of 15.1.

Tools Used

The children and parents were asked to fill out questionnaires before and after the parent education groups. The children reported on themselves, their parent’s discipline style, and their relationship with their parents. The parents reported on their child’s behavior. The groups were **Positive Discipline** groups, 8 weeks long and lasted approximately 1.5 hours each night.

Parents Resist

While observing these groups, I began to notice some interesting

behavior from the parents. This was a difficult population to work with because most of the parents were “court ordered” to attend the groups. In the first two weeks, there was a significant amount of resistance. These parents definitely did not want to be at the groups and did not like the idea of someone “telling” them how to be a parent (obviously unaware that Adlerian parenting groups do not operate in this manner). The parents were angry that they had to attend because they “didn’t do anything wrong”—their children

... it is apparent that despite initial resistance, both parents and children benefited from the Adlerian groups.

did! I had many parents tell me that they’ve “raised four children and did not need a parenting class” or “I don’t need someone to tell me how to raise my kids.” The parents were also very reluctant to try new ideas; they were very closed minded. Needless to say, the first two weeks were spent more on trying to form a relationship with the parents while reminding them that we weren’t going to tell them how to be a parent, just provide them with some tools that may help them in the future.

It was a tough crowd to sway, but eventually the parents seemed to let go of their preconceived notions about parenting groups and chose a couple of tools and techniques to apply with their children at home.

Preliminary Evaluation

While the last bit of data has finally been collected, the results have not yet been configured. What I do know, however, is what was verbally reported on a final

evaluation sheet.

Of the 33 parents in the experimental group, all but one (96%) reported that the groups were helpful. In addition, of the 29 children involved in the experimental group, 22 of them (75.8%) reported that they believed the groups were helpful.

The feedback received from the parents and children was AMAZING! Several parents reported that the **Positive Discipline** group was like no other parenting group they had ever taken. They also stated that they originally HATED the idea of attending the groups and were now going to miss coming every week. More

importantly, they were thrilled with some of the changes they had made in their homes and the responses they had received from their children.

The children reported that they felt more respected and loved by their parents. They also said that their parents listened to them more frequently and yelled much less. In addition, they reported that they now felt like they could talk to their parents more openly.

As I mentioned, the data analysis has not been calculated, but regardless of statistical significance, it is apparent that despite initial resistance, both parents and children benefited from the Adlerian groups. ■

Amy Ellison is entering her final, internship year as a PsyD student at the Adler School of Professional Psychology in Chicago. This research was conducted in her home state of Indiana.

Commentary: Long-Range Parenting

by Cheryl L. Erwin, MA, MFT

When Shakespeare said, “All the world’s a stage,” he might have been talking about parenting. From the time a child is born, life for parents can feel something like a roller coaster ride, careening from one phase to another. You want your child to sleep through the night, to crawl, to walk. Sometimes you just want her to stop crying! You can hardly wait until she’s toilet trained, until she can feed and dress herself, and then until she goes off to school. There are regular crises along the way. Your child throws tantrums, misbehaves, and generally acts like a normal kid. You have to deal with all these problems, and you do the best you can. But somewhere along the line, parents wake up and realize that before much longer, their children will be out of the house and gone. Where did the years go? Did they do their job well enough?

I’m convinced that many of the mistakes well-meaning, loving parents make come from this “crisis” mentality—the belief so many parents have that every misbehavior, every stage, every attitude must be dealt with right this minute. And certainly when your beloved child is refusing to do her homework or whining for a new something-or-other, you want to change her behavior—immediately! The problem with parenting from a crisis mentality, though, is that it leads parents to do whatever works for the moment. And often the things that seem to work right now do not have the desired long-range results.

For instance, take punishment and rewards. Punishments like grounding, spanking, and taking away privileges certainly seem to work: after all, in most cases, a child stops misbehaving, at least for the moment. Same thing with rewards: offer a treat (I won’t call them bribes) and children will generally behave themselves—for the moment. But this short-term parenting doesn’t consider what children are learning, thinking, feeling, and deciding to do in the future—the long-range results that create either character and competency—or future problems.

In his sobering book, **Punished by Rewards**, educational researcher Alfie Kohn details the research—and there are reams of it—showing that over the long term, neither punishment nor rewards work to create better behavior, more motivated kids, or better self-esteem. Punishment usually breeds either resistance or sneakiness; rewards often teach kids to be manipulative. So why do parents and teachers insist on using these methods? Because we’re stuck in the short-term: in the here and now, these methods seem to work. More than that, parents usually feel strong and in control when they’re laying down the law. And for an awful lot of adults, all that matters is solving the immediate problem as quickly as possible.

Several months ago, a parenting expert appeared on NBC’s *Today Show* to offer advice about stopping a child’s tantrums. The expert suggested that when kids have a tantrum, parents videotape it and send it to someone the child loves and respects so they’ll feel ashamed. If tantrums continue, the expert says, take one of a child’s favorite CDs or DVDs and destroy it. Wow. Sure, a tantrum might stop for the moment. But what are these actions creating for the future? How would you react if your boss taped your worst moments and shared them with others, or shredded something

concludes on back page

What’s Your ‘Elevator Speech’?

How Do You Tell What Is Meant by “Adlerian” In Just A Few Moments?

suggested by Alyson Schäfer

Not long ago, Alyson wrote that her church had embarked on an exercise to be able to encapsulate what they stood for, to be able to explain to an inquirer the essence of Unitarian Universalism in the time it takes to ride in an elevator.

We face a similar challenge: how to get across to someone what Adlerian based parenting is.

Have you developed your own *elevator speech*? If so, please share it with our membership on the listserv!

If you haven’t created one yet, one of Alyson’s church members gave the following helpful tips on how to begin to formulate a quick, accurate answer to *What Is ‘Adlerian’?*

DO...

- make it short (maximum 30 seconds)
- include a “hook”
- write it and rewrite it
- practice delivering it
- project your passion, smile and maintain eye contact with the listener
- develop different versions for different situations

DON’T...

- let it sound like “canned” text
- ramble (maximum 30 seconds)
- use terminology people won’t understand
- leave the listener mentally asking “So what?” or thinking “I have no idea what that meant”
- rush your delivery
- start it with the words “Well, we’re not...”

So, how will *you* explain what is meant by “Adlerian”? ■

Dear Addy...continued from page 1

Dear Desperate Dad,

Rather than wondering how you can make sure that your son is ready on time, I suggest instead you concern yourself with what steps you are willing to follow through with if and when he chooses not to take on this responsibility of getting off to school on time.

Discuss this with your son and solicit his ideas as to what he thinks should happen to ensure a successful start to the morning. Be clear about what is not negotiable—that is, staying home from school—while identifying with him choices that he can select. Examples can include going to bed earlier or putting his alarm clock far enough away so that he can't push the snooze button.

Make sure you remain firm and kind as you explain that you will no longer be interfering with his job by reminding him to get up. You might want to assist your son in his learning process by offering to come to his bedroom with cold water that you would be willing to pour on him. (Do this only if you both agree that this would be a good solution to try!)

Inform your son's teachers that you are working hard on helping your son get to school on time by turning the job over to him. Encourage them to follow through with their consequences for tardiness in a timely way. Set up a meeting with your son and his school counselor to clarify what the consequences for lateness will be on the part of the school.

All this will set up an optimum environment for your son to learn to make his own decisions. The real success here is not whether your son actually gets to school on time, but how committed you are to following through in a firm and friendly fashion, letting him experience the consequences of his choices. Stay on course. If you find yourself discouraged, seek the support of other parents who have been through this same difficulty.

Participate in a parent education group, or seek family counseling to work on the goal of seeing your son taking on his own responsibilities.

Good Luck! ■

~Addy

Have a response to this advice? Members, write to the listserv, or email the editor!

Nominee for Family Education Section Co-Chair

Meet Terry Lowe

Terry Lowe, BSW, RSW, CCFE

Terry is the director of clinical and community programs at Catholic Family Services in Saskatoon. She is a counsellor and group facilitator. Terry is a Certified Canadian Family Educator. She has facilitated well over 300 parent education and various other groups over the past 24 years. Terry has been a presenter at two NASAP conferences held in Vancouver, as well as numerous other conferences and workshops.

Terry has developed a number of parent education manuals and courses. She was co-author of the original *Respectful, Responsible Parenting: A*

continues next column

Terry Lowe...concludes

Facilitator's Guide. More recently she has developed a ten-week course and manual called *Reaching Out... When Teens Are Out-Of-Control: A Facilitator's Guide to Working With Their Parents.*

Terry has also developed a two-day training course and accompanying booklet for professionals who work with parents of out-of-control teens. As well, she has developed the parent component of a group called *Raising Boys... Building Heroes.* In the past, Terry has developed numerous other parent education classes that she has facilitated. Terry also facilitates the three-day Parent Education Facilitator Training for the Saskatoon Adlerian Society.

Terry has been involved with the Saskatoon Adlerian Society for over 20 years and served on their board of directors for over 10 years. She is presently an active member of their Continuing Education Committee. Over the years, Terry has also been active in community committees involved in parent education such as SPEC (Saskatoon Parent Education Committee) and SPY (Support of Parents of Youth).

Terry lives in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. She has been married to Howard for 29 years. They have two grown children (26 and 23 years old), a daughter-in-law and a two-year old grandson. They are expecting their second grandchild in September and are thoroughly enjoying being grandparents.

Terry is nominated to replace Co-Chair Alyson Schäfer, whose term expires as of the Hershey meeting.

Contact info: thlowe@sasktel.net ■

**Overdue Introduction
FES Secretary-Treasurer**

Amy Ellison

FAMILY! was remiss in not reporting in our Fall issue that **Amy Ellison** was elected at the Vancouver Annual Meeting to take **Patti Cancellier's** place as Secretary-Treasurer of the Section when Patti stepped up to fill out **Dina Emser's** remaining term as Co-Chair. Phew! (We hope you followed that....) *See why you have to attend the conferences? This is OLD news!*

Amy is a welcome fresh face at the leadership table. She's completing five years of doctoral graduate work at the Chicago Adler School as a member of the Fort Wayne cohort of Dr. **John Newbauer**.

Originally from Cincinnati, Amy is a full time student and works full time in her own parent consulting business. She earned a Master's degree from Ball State and is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor in Indiana. Primarily working with developmentally disabled clients, Amy also sees children and families. A Positive Discipline Associate in Training (PDAIT), she is also in the process of obtaining certification in clinical hypnosis. In addition, Amy volunteers by serving on a Human Rights Committee which reviews behavior support plans of developmentally disabled individuals to ensure beneficial treatment. She plans to marry her high school sweetheart, Adam, in July of 2009.

Welcome, Amy! ■



FES Annual Meeting Friday, June 27

NASAP 2008 - Harrisburg, PA June 26-29, 2008
"Alfred Adler and Milton Hershey: Building Families and Communities"

Proposed Agenda

In the Friday afternoon time slot of 4:50pm to 5:40pm, with no competition from program presentations, Sections will gather for their Annual Meetings to conduct business and learn from one another.

Among the formalities of Minutes, Treasurer's Report, Old Business, and New Business, we will be finalizing the election of our new Co-Chair. Because only one person was nominated, it's a safe prediction that we will be installing **Terry Lowe** as our new Co-Chair. But please be sure you participate by mailing in the form or attending to vote in person!

Reports will be given on:

Membership, budget, website, newsletter and listserv activity.

NASAP's new website will have particular importance to members of the Family Education Section, because it is expected to attract parents looking for new ways to handle the challenges of parenting.

We also hope to have time to brainstorm on approaches to parent education, and general idea-sharing and Q+A's from individuals.

Resource Exchange:

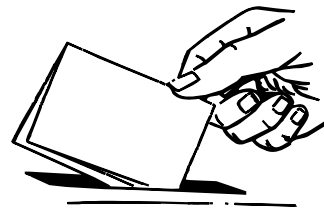
Each year, members are encouraged to bring 40 of "somethings" to share.

Fun-Fun-Fun

Wine and Cheese gathering follows the meeting!
 It runs from 5:45pm-6:30pm.

Before We Move On to Hershey...

An overdue thank you to **Dina Emser** for doing such a terrific job as Co-Chair in 2006-07. Thanks, Dina; we're grateful for your past volunteer service to the Section, and look forward to your future participation.



VOTE

Official Ballot for Family Education Section Officer Election

Office of Co-Chair, 3 year term commencing at NASAP 2008 Convention June 27.

Vote for one: Terry Lowe

Member Signature: _____

If you cannot vote in person on June 27, please sign, clip & mail this form to NASAP, 614 Old W Chocolate Av, Hershey PA 17033; or fax to 717-533-8616 before June 15!

Long-Range...continued from page 5
that really mattered to you in order to teach you a lesson? Would you become more cooperative and enthusiastic about getting along? Or would you be looking for ways to get back at your boss—or looking for a new job?

What parents (and teachers) need is a shift in perception. Think for a moment about the qualities you admire in others. What qualities, attitudes and skills do you want your children to have when they are adults? Now think about the homework that didn't get done, the dog that didn't get fed or the tantrum occurring in the toy aisle at Wal-Mart on a busy Saturday afternoon. Long-range parenting means choosing to act in ways that encourage the qualities you want

in your children. That's a far different proposition than just getting compliance right now. The next time your child misbehaves, try asking yourself, "What do I want my child to learn as a result of this moment?" If the answers include responsibility, good judgment, self-reliance or honesty, short-term methods aren't likely to work.

It might help to remember that the word "discipline" simply means "to teach." It actually has nothing to do with punishment. Effective discipline is respectful, because children are people, too, and shame and humiliation only breed resistance and rebellion. Effective discipline is effective long-term; it focuses on solutions to problems, not just blame. And effective discipline teaches valuable social

and life skills. Discipline is about setting reasonable limits, teaching skills, and following through with both kindness and firmness, time after time after time. Children who are disciplined with kindness and firmness develop integrity and good character.

Who will your child be when she finally leaves your home? Wise parents raise their children for a lifetime of learning, loving, and growing. ■

*Author Cheryl Erwin is a marriage and family therapist in private practice in Reno, Nevada, the co-author with Jane Nelsen of several books in the bestselling **Positive Discipline** series, and the author of **The Everything Parent's Guide to Raising Boys**. Cheryl also has a weekly commentary on parenting and family life on her local public radio station.*

The mission of the **North American Society of Adlerian Psychology** is to promote growth and understanding of Adlerian (Individual) Psychology, the work of Alfred Adler, and effective approaches to living based on his philosophy. NASAP membership includes educators, psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors, parents, business people, community organizations and other interested people. The **Family Education Section** applies Adlerian principles to the home. Members are professionals and nonprofessionals dedicated to understanding and improving family relationships between children and adults, with couples, and among individuals.

**See you at
NASAP 2008
in Hershey PA
June 26-29**

(Kiss Kiss)



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