

## **Your Child's Future:**

### **How Changing Social Trends Are Impacting Your Children And What You Can Do About It**

When I was in Eighth Grade in 1969, my friend Bill got in trouble at school and was sent to the principal's office for a week. What was his crime? He threw a paper wad at the teacher! On Tuesday, April 20, 1999, two Columbine high school students, Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris, opened fire and killed 12 students and 1 teacher, injuring many others before ultimately committing suicide.

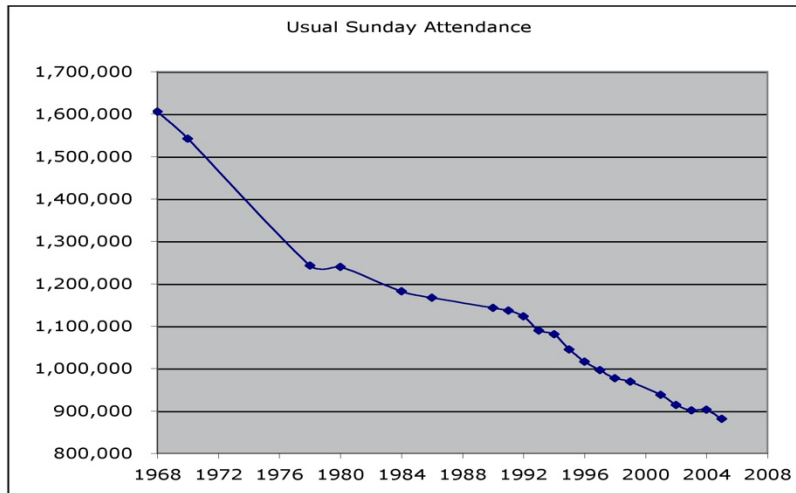
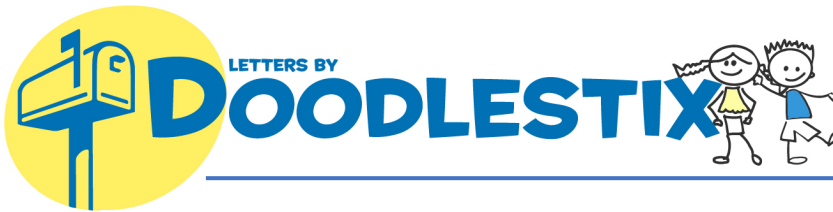
**What has changed?** Why are we constantly hearing reports of shootings at high schools, beatings of students by other students, and even grade school children becoming involved with drugs, gangs, and criminal activity? And what are the repercussions of these social trends for parents? Parents are increasingly being found both legally and financially responsible for the actions of their children, both in terms of financial fines and, in some cases, criminal prosecution. In one study, 60% of children characterized as "bullies" in grades 6-9, had at least one criminal conviction by age 24. <sup>(1)</sup>

### **Three Social Trends That Impact Children Today**

There are three primary social trends that combine to explain the changes we see in the behavior and actions of our children today. Your child is likely being directly affected by one or more of these trends.

#### **Trend #1: Declining participation in organized religious services**

In the past, a high number of parents regularly attended their church, synagogue, or mosque on a frequent basis and that religious institution provided ample moral training for children in basic values and ethics. As shown below, regular attendance at religious services has been steadily declining over the last several years. This deprives children of one previous source of training in character development and good behavior.



### **Trend #2: Lack of disciplinary support in public school systems**

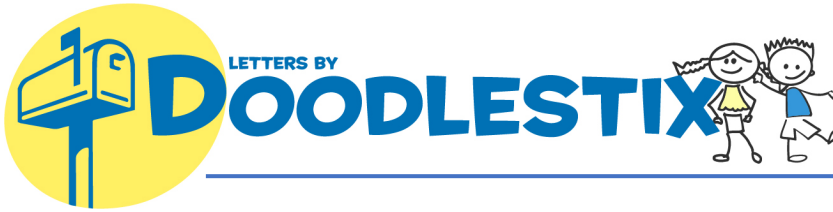
Back in the day, kids who misbehaved in school were disciplined immediately and significantly, often by physical means. This served as a deterrent to other children who might be tempted to engage in the same type of misconduct. It also discouraged repeat behavior on the part of the student involved. Rarely today do teachers impose any type of strict discipline in public schools. They may utilize “time-outs” or other non-physical forms of discipline, but these rarely have the same effect to deter repeat or copycat behavior. In fact, there is little respect at all in public schools for the authority of the teacher.

### **Trend #3: Parents are too busy to teach their children basic values**

While most parents do want their children to learn right from wrong and live in a responsible way, the sad fact is that too many parents do not have sufficient time or skill to accomplish this with their children in a meaningful way. Many are working one or more full time jobs to support their children and some as single parents. Between work responsibilities, taking care of basic needs such as food and chores, and helping children with academic homework from school, little time is left to spend with a child discussing their behavior and the basics of right and wrong. And some parents were never really taught this themselves and don’t know where to start.

### **So What Can You Do To Help Your Kids???**

This is where Doodlestix® comes in! Doodlestix is the nickname of another (fictitious) kid who can write your child pen-pal letters every 2-4 weeks and explain what he has learned recently about doing right versus doing wrong. The letters are written in a gender neutral fashion, so they are appropriate for both boys and girls and each letter discusses a different value or character trait such as honesty, responsibility, fairness, etc.



Kids seem to learn more from other kids anyway, so this is a perfect way to engage your child with teaching about good behavior from the perspective of another child! As a bonus, you get a Parent's Guide with each letter with some suggestions for things you can talk about with your child to reinforce the lesson they have learned. The letters serve as a reminder for you to take the time to spend a few minutes talking with your child on a regular basis about values and character.

We hope you will seriously consider giving Doodlestix a try and take us up on our offer for a free trial subscription.

Best wishes for raising healthy, happy, and successful children!

Dr. Richard Thompson, Founder and CEO, Doodlestix, Inc.

1. Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying At School: What We Know and What We Can Do*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.