

The Nia Group, Inc.

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Dear Parents,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak with you regarding financial literacy and our Mudpies to Mutual funds program. This discussion today is a brief synopsis of the issues effecting the financial empowerment of our children. Mudpies to Mutual funds is a three component financial literacy program designed to meet the financial needs and concerns of children and parents. As a parent, one of the best ways to invest in the future of your child is to begin the processes of teaching your child about financial responsibility. Here is what I'd like you to know:

Who are we?

Nia is a Kiswahili word meaning purpose, and today it is more relevant than ever that we define our purpose. Specifically our economic and financial purpose. It is our belief at the Nia Group that knowledge needed to become self sufficient and financially stable begin at a very young age. Through our Mudpies to Mutual funds program, the Nia Group will assist parents in implementing an exciting family orientated financial literacy program for parents and children. The Nia Group is a 501c(3) organizations dedicated to empowering our children and assisting you as a parent in teaching your child how to become an informed, self-sufficient, financially stable consumers

What is Mudpies to Mutual funds?

Mudpies to Mutual funds is a financial literacy program designed for grades K-6 which features a behavior modification component. The program has been structured to compliment current standards established by the State of Indiana's Department of Education. Mudpies to Mutual Funds is a fun; learn by doing, interactive program designed to meet the financial needs and concerns of students, parents and communities. Simply put, financial lessons learned today, are lessons for a better life tomorrow.

We encourage you to partner with us and make a sound investment in our future, your child.

Sincerely,

Joyce L. Miles
Executive Director

The Nia Group Inc. is a 501c(3) organization

ALL ABOUT MONEY

Have you ever tried to sit down and make a list of all the basic facts about life and money about which you would want your child to know before they turn 18? If not, there are probably at least two good reasons for your reluctance. First, most parents are too busy. Secondly, teaching kids about money is difficult when you lack the basic knowledge and skills of sound principals of money management. So, if you haven't made that list, don't feel guilty. Money is a complex subject and it is often more complicated to many minorities due to a lack of knowledge, poorer economic conditions, long observed family traditions, poor financial habits, lower incomes, and strong emotions. As a result, the economic status of our communities, and us as a people, appear to be very bleak. What do you want your child to learn about money? Responsibility? Sounds familiar, but what is this beast we call "responsibility is not something that grows on trees, allows us to pick the fruits of its harvest, and just hand it to our children. It would be nice, but lets' get "real" Let's take a look at responsibility: We've got responsibility for our chores, responsibility for lunch money, responsibility for homework, and the list could go on forever. Where do we start? The quest of Mudpies to Mutual funds is to cooperatively, with your help, instill the concept of sound money management practices and responsibility with money. Instilling the attitudes, habits, and skills our children need to know in order to economically advance in our society. Why should we start now?



CHILDREN AND CASH



Here's the "real" deal...kids between the ages of 8-12 shop on average 200 days per year, watch over 3,000 commercials per month and spend \$19.1 billion dollars annually. That's a lot of money. It has been suggested that most children will develop their financial habits by the time they are 8 years old. That being the case, it's never too early to start teaching our children good financial habits. No parent wants their child to be stricken with "affluenza" a term affectionately coined by Michele Singletary, a Washington Post columnist, as a child's inability to distinguish between needs and wants. What does all this mean to you as a parent? Kids spend a lot of money; a lot of theirs, and whole lot of yours. Frankly speaking, kids control the "Benjamin's" – and we'd better teach them to be good at it.

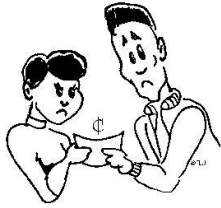
WHO'S TEACHING WHOM?

Surveys show that less than 40 percent of parents talk about money with their children. So where do our kids learn money management skills? Trial and error, the friend next door, or that person on the corner? Maybe. Do they learn about it in school? "Not." Margaret Welch, a certified financial planner in Washington D.C. puts it bluntly: "with few exceptions, children learn almost nothing in school about financial realities that are of great importance to the average person. If a parent doesn't do the job, it doesn't get done" (Talking \$\$\$ with kids). If parents don't talk straight about money and schools don't teach kids about money, a population of young children will enter adulthood with almost no basic dollars and cents on money management skills. In some communities, the result is already obvious: impoverish living environment, rampant consumer credit problems, bankruptcy, and missing the opportunity of life, self employment! Parents, educators and administrators, our mission are clear: We must teach our children the financial facts of life! So let's circumvent this vicious cycle of poverty, and give our children what they deserve.



CAUTION: MONKEY SEE, MONKEY DO.

Dr. James McNeal of Texas AM University conducted several years of research on the way children handle money and found the way children manage money is mostly determined or influenced by their parents behavior with money. Simply stating, if you talk the talk, you've got to walk the walk. Your child will watch what you do with money. Your habits with money are the example your child will follow.



It's no secret, you can say what you want, and your child will do what you do. We challenge you to take a moment to examine your own attitudes and habits about money by completing the Financial Facts of Life work sheet. Take a good look at your attitudes and behaviors with money. Are your attitudes and behaviors in check? Money is often the root to all evil. It is often the way we express love, anger, guilt, power, status, and self esteem.

Sometimes we even resort to utilizing it as a weapon: "I've worked hard all to put clothes on your back and food on the table." Or, how about his one, "I ain't got no money." We use it to retaliate. Many adults use money to create an image. We buy cars, a home—all symbols of success to show we're good enough, we can be like the Jones', but can't pay for what we purchase. The message of materialism comes across loud and clear. If you don't have time to check your financial behavior or talk to your child about money, make time. For the next 6 weeks, your child will be engage in our Mudpies to Mutual funds program and we encourage you to partner with us and engage your child in a healthy program of financial literacy.

HOW CHILDREN LEARN BEST.

Setting a good example is the creators' gift to a child, however, that alone is not enough. Parents must teach their children a variety of basic financial skills that will keep them alive and stay with them forever. The Nia group is here to assist.

With children under 12, it's not a matter of sitting down and talking about the family finances, it's about being involved. Children learn by doing, touching, counting, playing, and experimenting—getting a feel for the world around them.

That's why our Mudpies to Mutual Funds program strives to involve the parent, child, and educator in an unpressured, free-flowing environment where kids have fun and are involved hands on in learning activities they will remember. Mudpies to Mutual Funds is not a program designed to make parents into martyrs or slaves who restructure their lives in order to have their child become a participant. We do not expect the child to become the responsible individual we so desire overnight. Instead, we invite the parent to be an interactive partner in the learning process. We invite the parent to become knowledgeable in financial matters, be a volunteer, and make a future brighter.



LET ME BE ME.



Nothing is wrong with your child if they are six years old and have not mastered all the skills required of their age level, or can not comprehend all the activities our program Mudpies to Mutual Funds may have them participate in. Mudpies to Mutual Funds intent is to provide age appropriate activities that will be fun for the child, yet instilling sound money management practices. Not every activity conducted for a particular age group will be appropriate of your child, but encourage your child to observe and participate anyway. Children grow, develop and get ready for certain life task at different rates. As you begin to become involved with your child and Mudpies to Mutual Funds, you will find some activities that are obviously at challenge level for your child. Ideally, parents should start teaching their child about money when they turn three years old. If parents advocate the concepts of Mudpies to Mutual Funds and help their child accomplish the appropriate learning goals, the child will most likely become a responsible individual.

IT'S ALL THAT



Don't feel that it's necessary to engage your child in every activity as it is presented in the program, your child might need to reinforce some of the concepts he/she had been working on the week before, but do encourage your child to observe and participate. All children are naturally curious about what goes on around them. When your child asks questions or expresses interest in what you are doing with money, it's the natural time to discuss the concept of Mudpies to Mutual Funds, or do an activity that you've learned from the program. Most important, make learning fun. We can teach kids anything if they are having fun. So, become involved and look forward to happy memories of fun, sharing special conversation, and routine family events that turn into exciting learning experiences. Let learning by play become a way of life.

BE PREPARED: IT'S NO EASY TASK

Teaching your child about money is an ongoing effort. It starts the day you first help your child put a penny into the gumball machine and continues even beyond the day you help them move into their first home. It's up to you the parent to create a healthy learning environment for your child's financial education. So be prepared to listen rather than lecture. Be prepared to answer tough questions honestly. Be prepared for some good laughs, because above all else, learning about money together is an adventure you'll remember forever. Enclosed is an outline of our six week program. Join us!



**Tell Me, I forget,
Show Me, I Might Remember,
Involve me and I Understand.
(Chinese Proverb)**