

WHAT TEACHERS NEED FROM PARENTS

Conversations with local educators over the past two years have revealed trends in child rearing over the last 10-15 years.

Some teachers said they feel we have become very skilled at “accommodating” children to such an extent that the basic social skills important to learn are not as prevalent as they once were.

For example, Marci Ceciliot, a teacher at Granite Bay Montessori, has experienced significant challenges because she said many children are not taught basic virtues at home. Virtues such as kindness, honor, courage, gratitude, generosity and tolerance enable kids to listen, share, take turns and develop tolerance for events and people not going their way.

According to Ceciliot, kids don’t have the communication skills to express their feelings and (so they can) lash out biting or hitting instead. Ceciliot stresses that children who lack self-control and the ability to interact with others in a civil way have a harder time learning and can be disruptive to the rest of the class.

According to Olympus Jr. High School Principal Kelly Graham, “many kids are by and large not coming to school ready to learn. While this is not an indictment of parents, the reality is that the student population is being raised by Nintendo, Bart Simpson, and MTV.”

Graham said he has observed that for the most part, due to hectic lifestyles and busy schedules, many parents have been forced to abdicate teaching “right from wrong” to the education system.

Mike McGuire, principal of Granite Bay High School, said there is higher-level “accommodation” concerns dealing with fear of failure. According to McGuire, the most important thing parents can do for their children in high school is to detect and discourage fear of failure.

“It is important that we do not try to arrange every ‘success’ for our high school students,” McGuire said. “It sends

PARENT FACTOR
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the signal to our kids that failure is to be feared, which can be very limiting.”

Many educators have adapted their teaching strategies to accommodate these changes in the “emerging typical student.” Ceciliot and Graham, for example, each implemented a curriculum to teach learning behavior such as virtues and self-discipline training.

So given the challenges and concerns of educators today, how can parents support the efforts of educators?

Introduce yourself to your child’s teacher and establish a relationship.

At home, avoid tolerance of non-compliance (i.e., multiple warnings and repeated requests for basic tasks).

Establish an expectation with your child and his/her teacher that disruptive behavior in the classroom is not acceptable.

When the child is in dispute with the teacher, be willing to see the problem from the teacher’s point of view as well.

Do not criticize the teacher in front of your child – even if you do not agree with the teacher and how things work out. Openly criticizing the teacher gives the child the signal that (s)he does not have to respect the instructor and/or the classroom.

Try not to “rescue” your child from the consequences of not doing work or submitting it on time.

Limit television, iPods, and non-academic computer access until all homework is complete.

Try to avoid over scheduling – so that your child has time to complete all homework the night before.

– Joanna Jullien is the Editor of *Banana Moments: Help for Parenting in the 21st century*. She can be reached at www.bananamoments.com.



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