

ARE PARENTS **PARTNERS** OR *CIVILIZED* MOTHER BEARS?

Understanding and Working With
Parents in the School Setting

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PARENTS/PARTNERS

- IMPERFECT ALL ARE WE
- “No matter how much we love our children as parents and teachers, we will do an imperfect job of raising/teaching them.”

How to Deal with Difficult Parents

- Rather than allowing them to press your button, give them a REAL button to press!
- (Automated message from school’s answering machine)
- Story of the **reset** button

Are TEACHERS Expected to be Super Nannies?

- All of our children have the Lake Wobegon syndrome – they are super intelligent, most definitely above average, special and better than their peers.

The State of Parenting

- Alan Bloom in his book, *The Closing of the American Mind*, states: **Parents have lost the will and the ability to manage their homes, and at the same time are very critical of those who attempt to do for their children what they did not/cannot do for them.**
- Dobson: “Parents are trying to deprive their children of the very things that made them who they are.”

A Problem Solving Model

- What is the problem?
- Why is the problem?
- What are the solution options?
- What solutions must we implement

What is the Problem?

- Students...?
- Parents...?
- Teachers...?
- When public school administrators were asked what is their #1 challenge in school administration, their answer was: ___ e ___ s
- Story: Somebody is going to get a licking and it's not me.

Why is the Problem?

- The embrace of an increasing informality and excessive permissiveness in our post-modern culture, has left us with a generation of cynics who not only question authority, but disrespect it. School is the last place where rules rule
- ODD Children?
- GenMe: Narcissistic and pessimistic

What/Why is the Problem?

- **X Parent**
- Phil: Child is the heritage of the Lord – a gift to cherish
- Belief: Child is a plant – perfect at every stage
- Shows love: Nurturing relationship
- Regards others: Partners – a village
- Results: Courteous/obedient
- Self Esteem: lovable and capable

The Spectrum of Parental Attitudes

- U – Unwelcome (their presence is bad for their children) Mirror neurons**
- V – Vexing (Their presence disturbs the tone/effect of your atmosphere/therapy) Emotional contagion*
- W – Wizard (Know it all and know that they do)
- X;Y;Z

X Parent

- Management: cooperation, solve problems, deal with the facts, do the right thing
- Relationship to the school/teacher: How can I help?
- Strategy: Cooperative
- Nick name: Sugar mom/dad

Y Parent

- Phil: Child is a property to be managed
- Belief: Child never does anything right
- Shows love: Bribery through things
- Management: Excessive restrictiveness, manipulation
- Result: Rebellion, argumentative, hyperactivity, ODD

Y Parent

- Regard others: I know how to do it right and you don't
- Self esteem: I m not good enough and can't ever do anything right
- Attitude: If you are not doing it my way, it is not the right way
- Relationship with school/teacher: not doing enough for my child; it is your fault that...
- Strategy: Passive aggressive
- Nickname: Helicopter (hovers)

Z Parents

- Phil: Child is a pet to be cuddled/spoiled
- Belief: Child is always right, never lies, gets all A's
- Management: excessive permissiveness {{MIA}}
- Result: over stimulated, ADHD, irresponsible, blames others
- Self esteem: I am it – special; no one or nothing else matters (“Me and my friends”)

Z Parents

- Regard others: Threat to their child
- Attitude: I am right and so is my child and you are wrong
- Result: Over stimulated – ADD/HD – High definition
- Relationship to the school: critical/suspicious/adversarial
- Strategy: manipulative/dismissive
- Nickname: Fuse-less (Explodes without notice)

The Trigger!!!

- Teachers tend to lose it when a parent pulls the *trigger* – “My child never lies to me.”
- Rather than get defensive about the fact that they were just called a liar, teachers must counter with two questions: Has your child ever lied in all his/her life?
- Have you ever lied?
- Whatever they say, do NOT respond to their answer.

What is the Solution?

- Extreme make-over on the parents?
- Command all X & Z parents to become Y parents?
- Change the attitudes of parents, students, and teachers?
- “God grant me the courage to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.”

Doable Solutions

- Remember: “No matter how much we love...”
- Remember: “Redemptive forces work better in an atmosphere of appreciation and caring than in one of criticism and condemnation”
- Remember: “If we only knew the personal/private issues that each person we meet was dealing with, we would **heal** more than we **hurt** and **console** more than we **condemn**.”

The ABC Solution of Do's and Don'ts

- **A** – Affirmation (Never **A**rgue with a parent)
- **B** – Background (Know the background of each child/parent you are working with)
(Never **B**admouth a parent)
- **C** – Caring – Show by your actions that you care deeply for the well being of each child.
(Never **C**omplain to one parent about another)

Solution

Story: My wife knows her ABC...

- “If it is to be, it is up to me”
- The only person you can change is YOU!
- Be – A = Awesome* (survey results)
- Be – B = Be yourself - authentic and real
- Be – C = Cool (Be fun to be with)

Solution: What Do Parents Want?

- Safety of my child
 - Faculty caring and concern
 - Character education
 - Faculty expertise
 - Academic rigor
 - Communication
- Source: ISM, March 2009

Conclusion: Solution

- ??What do teachers want from parents??
- Cooperation, honesty, objectivity
- Non-enabling, Non-interference,
- And what else...?
- **CONCL: Mother bears and papa bears will.**
No amount of

