CREATING RESPECT AMONG STUDENTS THROUGH PARENTAL SUPPORT

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May 5, 2016

**SUMMARY**

Disrespect among students has increased in the past five years. Research shows educators and parents believe parents should be held accountable for their children’s actions. In doing so, we are telling parents their poor parenting skills have accounted for their student’s misbehavior. In the classroom, teachers are doing their best to teach students how to respect each other. As students leave the school and return home, however, the negative behaviors from the home are brought back to the surface. In order to fully change a child’s behavior, change needs to first happen in the home. This paper outlines a detailed plan to help parents learn the skills necessary to properly parent their children. In developing these positive habits, parents will begin to help transform their children into respectful, caring individuals.

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# **INTRODUCTION**

In the past five years, disrespect among children in schools has increased. In order to determine the cause of this problem, studies have been conducted; the main cause found was a lack of parental control over children. Both educators and parents agree that parental failure in disciplining children is the number one reason students have behavior problems in the classroom (Public Agenda, 2004). Parents in our society are failing, at alarming rates, to teach their children how to respect themselves or others. This has been a leading cause in the rise of disrespect in schools.

Teachers are battling this problem by educating students on appropriate behaviors. They teach respect in their classrooms, encourage students to use kind words, talk about the “Golden Rule,” but, at the end of the day, students return to their homes where the negative behaviors resurface. This white paper proposes a solution to the cause of disrespectfulness among students in the school setting by educating parents on how to appropriately discipline their children and change their negative behaviors.

# **BACKGROUND**

Parenting styles can vary greatly. Authoritarian parents strongly reprimand and use powerful measures to discipline children. Permissive parents are very loving and accepting of their children, however, they are also very relaxed in their parenting style. Uninvolved parents have a “combination of permissiveness and indifference or rejection in varying degrees” (Sailor, 2004) when interacting with their children. Finally, authoritative parents are “nurturing and set, discuss, and enforce developmentally appropriate limits” (Sailor, 2004).

Although each of these parenting styles are different, they have one thing in common: they all affect the children in the home. Children in authoritarian homes are often “anxious and insecure with peers and react hostilely if frustrated” (Sailor, 2004). Permissive homes develop children who are reckless, belligerent, and rarely take responsibility for their actions. Children from uninvolved homes are often neglected, which leads to low self-esteem and anger issues. Authoritative parents, however, “are the most successful in helping their children become autonomous, independent, self-controlled, self-confident, and cooperative…They also have internalized moral standards…” (Sailor, 2004).

Students who are growing up in a home with good parents are more successful in school. They maintain appropriate grades, show respect for their teachers, and are able to build lasting relationships with their peers. Students being raised in a home with poor parenting, however, typically struggle in school. They create conflict with their peers, achieve poor results on assignments, and have a hard time maintaining positive relationships with their teachers and peers.

As mentioned above, educators have been struggling with how to handle the disrespect in their classroom. According to a study by Public Agenda (2004), “a strong majority of teachers (69%) say finding ways to hold parents more accountable for kids’ behavior would be a very effective solution to the schools’ discipline problems” (p. 5). Holding parents accountable, however, is just the beginning of correcting the negative behavior of their children. Holding parents accountable is vital, but even beyond accountability, we need to assist parents in helping to change their way of thinking when it comes to parenting.

Many parents are ignorant on how to discipline and interact with their children. A large majority of these parents experienced similar parenting styles when growing up, which has caused them to emulate what they know: poor parenting techniques. The following section further explains a proposed solution in helping parents learn how to appropriately interact with and discipline their kids, which, in turn, changes the undesirable behaviors exhibited by their children.

# **SOLUTION**

How can we expect parents to be held accountable for their parenting styles when they are unaware of how to correctly raise a child? Can a parent change their style and help their child develop positive behaviors? How can the school help the parents’ transformation?

“One of the best-known examples of child-to-parent effects is an intervention geared toward children with conduct disorders and their parents. Half the children participated in a family program, which was effective in that the children displayed less aggression after the intervention. But the positive impact on the children was primarily due to changes in parenting behavior. That is, the parents in the intervention group stopped reacting negatively to their children’s aggressive behavior by learning other techniques for dealing with outbursts” (Brooks-Gunn & Markman-Pithers, 2005).

The above study proves a parent can change. How, however, does the school help with that transformation?

Schools are a vital part of any community, but in order to give students the best education possible, they need the support of the surrounding neighborhood and town. Local businesses, churches, and other organizations, have the potential to positively impact the education of students if they partner with the school district. These community partners have the resources needed to help develop parenting seminars, which will assist in the education of parents. These sessions will, in turn, potentially help modify parental behaviors. These new behaviors, when bestowed upon children will develop more positive manners, which will cause school performance to rise.

**CREATING THE VISION**

Prior to approaching community partners, a plan must be put into place to help sell the vision of the program. The first step in this process is to develop a team that will be in charge of organizing the event and recruiting volunteers. The members of this team must be like-minded, motivated, and passionate about the need for change.

After a team is developed, a vision statement must be written. A vision statement is a “one-sentence statement describing the clear and inspirational long-term change, resulting from your work” (Van Korlaar, 2013). Your statement should be “clear and simple...avoid elaborate language & buzz words… [and] easily explained by those involved” (Van Korlaar, 2013). Before composing your statement, consider these questions: What do we do here? (We transform parents) How will we do that? Why do they need it? “What would success look like?” (Van Korlaar, 2013).

After you have determined your end goal, use your thoughts to develop your simple vision statement. A sample statement may look like this: *Changing students and making school environments safer by transforming parents.* As you write, remember that a vision statement should evoke a desire to get involved in your project. It is solving a problem now and eradicating it in the future!

After your team has formed a clear vision statement, they must establish a plan for their proposed seminars. In Figure 1, you can see a sample plan, which includes suggested topics and a brief summary of each for your parenting events.

**FIGURE 1**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TOPIC** | **OVERVIEW** |
| Strong Fathers Build Strong Kids | * Why are dads important * The role of a father * Strategies for engaging with your child |
| Child Abuse Prevention | * How to recognize signs of child abuse * How to prevent child abuse * The difference between neglect and abuse |
| Tired & Overwhelmed | * Why single parenting is never a solo endeavor * Reasons you can have hope when all seems lost   (Single & Parenting, n.d.) |
| Conflict & Resolution | * The best way to interact with someone you’re in conflict with * Why to focus on changing yourself, instead of waiting for someone else to change * When to seek help from others in managing conflict   (Single & Parenting, n.d.) |
| Parenting Goals & Expectations | * Which parenting goals are important to set * How critical it is to understand your child’s unique needs * How to get your kids to obey   (Single & Parenting, n.d.) |
| Emotions & Stability | * What’s causing your anger and what you can do with it * How others can help you deal with your emotions   (Single & Parenting, n.d.) |

**SELLING THE VISION**

The next step in bringing this dream of reformed student behaviors into a reality is to bring in your community partners! Take your vision statement along with your plan for effective parent seminars and start meeting with influential members of the community. Figure 2 lists a handful of potential community partners and the resources they might provide for your project. Remember, these are simply a few of many prospective collaborators!

**FIGURE 2**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **COMMUNITY PARTNER** | **RESOURCES** |
| Local churches | * Advertisement * Expert speakers * Volunteers * Facilities |
| Local stores | * Giveaways * Advertisement |
| Chamber of Commerce | * Advertisement * Volunteers * The backing of your town! |
| Local colleges and universities | * Volunteers * Education and Psychology students who need experience helping in planning events |
| Health services | * Expert speakers * Advertisement |

After compiling a list of potential partners, contact each by phone to set up an initial interview with the manager, pastor, or person in charge. At this visit, bring with you the list of seminars you have planned out. Also bring a small informational page containing your vision, statistics from your school, and any other vital information, which might be necessary to your mission.

As you enter the meeting, introduce yourself, your title, and thank your host for meeting with you. Remember to present yourself humbly and respectfully at all times during the interview. As you pitch your vision, begin with the problem and how it is affecting schools and students. Place special emphasis on the importance of educating the parents to transform the child. At the end of your pitch, ask if they would like to partner with your team on this endeavor of changing the lives of the children in the community by completing a task needed. Before the interview make sure you are clear on what you will be asking the partner for. Organizations will be more likely to participate in the program if the task is easy and already thought through.

**NOW WHAT?**

Congratulations! You have just landed your first community partner! After creating a partnership with several more organizations, you are ready to start planning your first event! As you plan, make sure you follow these guidelines:

* Choose your topic
* Set a date
* Book your speaker
* Ask community partners to provide:
  + Volunteers
  + Snacks
  + Giveaways
* Advertise, advertise, advertise!

The key to a great event is not only how well it is executed, but how well it is advertised! Flyers should be made and sent home in backpacks. Ask local grocery stores to place a flyer in grocery bags. Ask local banks and other businesses if you can post a flyer in their building. Call local news and radio stations to promote the event. And, finally, personally invite people!

# **CONCLUSION**

Respect among students is a major concern for teachers and schools. In the past five years, disrespect among students has increased. This has caused educators to spend more time focusing on teaching manners, while other critical skills have been put on the back burner.

To help battle the disrespect among students, schools must begin to hold parents accountable for their children’s actions. Lack of good parenting techniques has developed a generation of students who are entitled, have low self-esteem, anger easily, and act out against peers and teachers. The parents are partially to blame for their children’s behaviors, but many of them are uneducated in what good parenting looks like.

In order to assist parents in becoming better role models for their children and to create safer home and school environments, a plan was proposed in this paper to help educate parents on positive parenting techniques. In this proposal, the school would develop a team of educators and volunteers who desire a change to happen. This group of people would develop a vision statement for the new program as well as topics for their future events.

After a plan is in place, team members will meet with influential community members to ask them to partner with the school to help make a positive change in the lives of the children of the community. These community partners will provide support, prizes, supplies, and expert speakers for the events. They will also help support the school in its endeavor to help bring about a constructive transformation.

The final process, after developing a vision statement, plan, and gaining community partners, is to plan the events. These events should be well advertised and promoted throughout the school and community. The goal for these events is to help change the perspectives of parenting in the community. Once parents begin to see the importance of positive parenting, they will have a new framework through which to see their parenting. This new mindset will begin to filter down into how they discipline and interact with their children. As a positive home transformation is happening, students will begin to respect their parents as well as others. This respect will begin to permeate throughout the school and a safer, brighter school will be made!

**“It takes a village to raise a child.”**

**-African Proverb**

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