

PARENTING ARTICLE

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> LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

Step back from helicopter parenting to let kids grow

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A parent's first priority is to protect their kids from harm. No parent wants to see their child experience disappointment, failure or pain. As a result, parents sometimes become a helicopter mom or dad and hover over their child's every move. Kids need involved and active parents in order for them to successfully mature. However, if parents constantly hover and prevent them from failing at every turn, kids never have the opportunity to learn from their mistakes.

Each time a child fails, he learns valuable lessons about how life works and how to solve problems and make better decisions moving forward. So it's important to find the balance between supporting your child and protecting him or her from real danger. Check out these tips to avoid becoming a helicopter parent.

Teach kids to be responsible for their own actions

Helicopter parents often take parenting to unhealthy levels, which can lead to parents taking responsibility for their child's actions.

For instance, if a child forgets his homework, the parent will take it to the school so the child doesn't face consequences.

This can foster an attitude of not needing to be responsible, which can hurt a child later in life.

Resist your impulse and focus on the bigger lesson of helping your child take responsibility.

Set boundaries to foster good self-esteem

When kids have the freedom to make mistakes, they learn how to do things on their own. Parents that provide support and encouragement create kids with good self-esteem, that take pride in doing things themselves and who take responsibility for their own actions.

Allow natural consequences for actions

Hovering parents can make changes in their parenting style by allowing their children to experience natural consequences. For instance, if your child forgets to get a permission slip signed for a field trip, rather than jump through hoops to get the teacher to make an exception, let your child sit at school and do school work. The natural consequence will teach him the importance of meeting a deadline.

Let kids experience failure

Allowing kids to feel uncomfortable will help them change their behaviours to realize different outcomes. Rather than handle the situation yourself, coach your child with ways to handle a dispute with siblings. Or, if your child's grade drops due to forgetting to turn in an assignment, guide him or her to

set up a better organizational system instead of complaining to the teacher.

Put processes in place to help your child succeed

Set up a routine for them to follow, like putting homework in backpacks and setting them by the door you exit each morning. Have a standard place and time to do homework each night. Lay out clothes the night before, so kids have everything to get ready for school at their fingertips. Invest in giving them skills to be more independent.

Prepare kids for your absence

Kids need to have support and encouragement from parents, but it can embarrass them if mom is always there. Kids develop a reputation with other students and possibly their teacher if mom is always trying to fix things that may not even be a problem. Kids need to learn that other adults can be responsible for them and keep them safe when mom and dad aren't around.

Raise confident kids by giving them the freedom to make mistakes while they are at home. Allow them the freedom to fall down while you can be there put them back on the right path. You'll both be glad you did.

* Read this great parenting article. Its concise and very informative. *