

# ENDORSEMENTS

We thank Christina Regan for her outstanding work with children for over 25 years and we are pleased to pass along her experience to share with our Pure Fun Parents!

*“Every parent wants their child to be successful in school. How do you do that? What attributes should you encourage, notice and applaud? Remember applause to kids is like candy-- the reward is the more you give it, the more they want it. Which allows you to reward the behavior you hope to encourage by noticing them, and modeling it yourself. From the heart of a veteran teacher for over twenty-five years, I offer these ten attributes that I consider important for success in public schools.”*

**Respect.** Teach your child respect for themselves, others, and property. Speak kindly to themselves and about themselves-- for disrespect for others seems to begin with disrespect for yourself. This also means he/she doesn't take things without asking, doesn't destroy or deface her possessions, nor others, nor the schools or the neighbor next door.

**Compassion.** A difficult trait to encourage in young kids because most of them are so egocentric-- driven to think about themselves first. Demonstration and modeling along with discussions about other people's needs, spoken with compassion by adults, helps out. So does mowing the elderly lady's yard when she can't, collecting food for the food drive, caring properly for a kid's pets, taking water to the workers outside, give a dollar in donations, volunteering to help others. Praise sincerely but honestly when you see your kid give more to others than themselves, think more about his/her brother/sister than themselves, bring gifts to others because they care. Sometimes when kids see the life people have to live in other less fortunate places, this may help them to be more compassionate and generous.

**Honesty.** Brutal and cruel comments guised as honesty are not honesty-it is cruelty. Honesty means truthfulness about yourself. Kids lie. It is in most of their natures because they fear punishment. By creating natural consequences, we can encourage honesty in kids. Natural consequences make sense to most kids, even if they don't like it. Defacing grandma's wall with crayons means washing and cleaning the wall, not spanking or grounding. Lying about your grades means dad or mom calls the teachers for a faxed copy of grades. An adult having a screaming or shouting rage about a lying incident does not make the kid want to be more honest.

**Eagerness to learn.** I am so saddened by some kids coming to school all ready tired of school and learning. When a kid is drilled every day and his/her day is packed with academia/sports/classes and has no fun or free play, they do not desire to learn. So let

your child have plenty of free social play and plenty of time alone with no required activities. Time alone thinking settles the mind and allows a child the freedom to develop interests to alleviate boredom. Remember eliminating boredom is not a parent's job. Who eliminates boredom for an adult but the adult! Your child uses their mind to explore new venues when they have some freedom.

**Friendly and sociable.** Your child learns to be a friend by interacting freely with others from a young age. Frequent interaction helps and teaching them what a friend is and does by discussions at home is always a good idea. Encouraging your kid to bring home friends and just letting them play-with supervision, of course, helps them learn to work out problems in a healthy manner. Parents should intervene when you observe signs of bullying in any form, or violence instead of problem-solving. Parental suggestions are helpful only after kids can't solve it themselves. A lonely child is a troubling sign and a loner could be a dangerous one. So this is an important attribute for healthy social living whether in or out of school.

**Helpful.** If your kid likes to help others and himself he/she is on the path to being a healthy member of any group. Teach him/her to ask before helping. "May I help you?" is a wonderful phrase for any child to learn.

**Have intrinsic values and motivations.** A desire to complete a task independently just for the satisfaction of doing it is a huge step to intrinsic motivation. So is helping out with chores at home just because he/she is part of a family. Do not use material rewards for

almost everything. Personal achievement should be enough most of the time.

**Having caring adults**- whether parents, single parents, divorced parents, grandparents, foster parents, adoptive parents--someone who cares for this person, their life, dreams and desires. A kid knows you care when you really listen, show up at important events, and watch out for them carefully.

**Responsible.** No child should be burdened with a daily workhouse grind as in years of old, but a few important responsibilities at home make a stronger more responsible kid and helps kids from being too spoiled. It is important that every kid has to help out at home-not for an allowance but because that's what good families do. Feeding the dog, walking the dog, parking his/her bike in the garage safely, making his/her bed, or cleaning the table are all reasonable chores that really help out at home and teach responsibility. When your kid goes to school, he/she will understand homework, assignments, reports, and tests are his/her responsibility as is learning.

**Goal-oriented.** Few people enjoy the kid that is driven to be the best, beat everyone else, or win at all costs. But everyone respects the kid that works diligently towards accomplishment.

That may mean reading one level better than a month ago, or spelling 8/10 words right instead of 5/10 on the spelling test. Life is usually better with a goal in mind and I think it

helps kids understand life is full of possibilities and potential.

I hope these suggested attributes might help you think and define more carefully what you would like to see in your child. Maybe you are surprised that I didn't add more academic qualities like- makes good grades, scores high on tests. But the core attributes and values I mention are what every successful kid needs to perform to his/her best in school and they are what every great teacher loves to see.

**Christina J. Riggan**

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