

25 Things Every Principal Should Know About Early childhood

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CA-K

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Goals

You will learn

- 1. things you didn't learn in college.**
- 2. topics and concepts that have been politically incorrect to talk about.**
- 3. how to identify the critical issues facing today's educators.**
- 4. ways to strengthen your voice of advocacy for young children.**
- 5. societal trends, family factors, and school policies and practices that produce unintended consequences that will impact your school.**

A.

Extraordinary Principals know What Trends Impact Education

**Emerging trends that impact schools include,
but are not limited to**

- 1. evolving societal factors and dramatic changes to today's families.**
- 2. the health and well-being of today's students.**
- 3. the changing nature of today's parenting.**
- 4. the 2014 NCLB proficiency deadline.**
- 5. the adoption of Common Core State Standards.**
- 6. principal/teacher pay for performance based on student test scores.**
- 7. the Whole Child Movement.**
- 8. the increased number of students with special needs.**
- 9. the increased number of students who are poor, near poor, and *new poor*.**
- 10. the impending test score drop (implementation dip).**
- 11. decreased school funding.**
- 12. addiction to technology! B.**

What's Worth Fighting For: Things Every Principal Needs to Know

Too many schools...

- 1. have eliminated developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) in favor of a national testing culture.**
- 2. have reduced or eliminated recess.**
- 3. have eliminated naptime from the traditional school routine.**
- 4. have eliminated and/or reduced playtime from the curriculum.**
- 5. are spending an inordinate amount of time and resources testing young children.**

What's Worth Fighting For: Things Every Principal Needs to Know

Too many schools...

- 6. have increased the curriculum volume substantially.**
- 7. have escalated the curriculum, e.g., the first grade curriculum has been shoved down into kindergarten, the second grade curriculum has been shoved down into first grade, etc.**
- 8. have adopted some standards that may be developmentally inappropriate for the assigned program/grade level.**

Things Principals Need to Know About The Impact of Chronological Age At School Entrance

- 1. A child's chronological age at school entrance can be a strong predictor of school success (see slides 3A-B).**
- 2. The youngest children in class are 60% more likely to be diagnosed as ADHD.**
- 3. Finland starts children in kindergarten at age six!**

Chronological Age Effect

Principals need to know that the chronologically youngest children in any grade are far more likely than older children in that grade to

- fail a grade.
- drop out of school.
- be referred for special services and special education.
- be diagnosed as learning disabled.
- be sent to the principal's office for discipline problems.
- receive various types of counseling services.
- receive lower grades than their ability scores would indicate as reasonable.
- lag behind their peers in athletic ability.
- not be chosen for leadership roles by peers or adults.

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3A.

- participate in remedial programs such as Title I.
- receive speech therapy.
- lag behind in social development.
- rank lower in their graduating class.
- commit suicide.
- be followers rather than leaders.
- be less attentive in class.
- earn lower grades.
- score lower on achievement tests.

Caveat: None of these consequences associated with a late birth date are absolutes. There are always exceptions.

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3B.

Things Principals Need to Know About The Gender Effect

- 1. Boys mature at a different rate than girls.**
- 2. School are structured based on how girls learn best (see slide 4A).**
- 3. More boys than girls experience academic difficulty.**
- 4. Many more boys than girls experience discipline problems.**
- 5. Many more boys than girls have learning difficulties/disabilities.**

Schools are designed to be more left-hemisphere friendly.

Schools are structured environments

___ **with time periods and ringing bells.**

___ **that rely primarily on verbal processing.**

___ **that limit access to free space.**

___ **that limit movement. “*multiswitching.*”**

___ **that require lots of ~~multitasking.~~**

Schools are designed to be more **girl friendly.**

Adapted from Strategies for Teaching Boys & Girls
by Michael Gurian, Kathy Stevens, and Kelley King

4A supports slide 4 #2.

Things Principals Need to Know About Children's Health and Well-Being

- 1. There are many more children who are overindulged and have an entitlement mindset (see slides A-J).**
- 2. More students seem to be “*raising*” themselves.**
- 3. There is a dramatic increase in the number of babies who are born premature/low birth weight (see slide 5K).**
- 4. More students have been/are being traumatized by life's circumstances.**
- 5. Many more students are experiencing poor mental health.**

See slides
5L-P

What Is an Entitlement Mindset?

Someone with an entitlement mindset may have the impression they are somehow owed things, have the feeling or belief they are entitled to certain unearned rights, and believe they should have access to people and places for special consideration.

This attitude of being self-absorbed tends to foster expectations of somehow being different and therefore should be afforded privileges, and preferential treatment.

The unintended consequences associated with an entitlement mindset is of great concern to both teachers and parents.

Understanding The Root Causes of Overindulgence and Entitlement

The reasons some parents may cave in to their children's wants include, but are **NOT** limited to

- ___ 1. being overworked, overwhelmed, and overstressed.**
- ___ 2. having to work long hours and/or multiple jobs.**
- ___ 3. being a single mother with little if any support.**
- ___ 4. wanting to be friends with their children.**
- ___ 6. finding it easier to be in denial than to argue with their children.**
- ___ 7. wanting to live through their child.**

The Age of Overindulgence:

Understanding The Harmful Effects Of Too Much

Actions that create spoiled behaviors may include but are not limited to

1. Buying or giving children whatever they want...whenever they want it!

Worn down parents cave in to the “nag factor!”

2. Absence of family rules and boundaries.

3. Doing things for children that they could easily do for themselves.

Many overstressed, overworked, and overwhelmed parents have little tolerance for a pouting, whining, and crying child.

Overindulged Children

Distorted beliefs of indulgent parents may include

- 1. being too trusting.**
- 2. thinking that children should be constantly happy.**
- 3. wanting to correct the mistakes and/or missteps made by their own parents.**
- 4. having their identity closely linked to their children.**

Some parents try to “live” through their children!

Overindulged Children

Distorted beliefs of indulgent parents may include

- 5. administering “*sting-free*” discipline and/or no discipline.**
- 6. providing unconditional love. This is often a code word for allowing children to do whatever they want.**
- 7. shielding children from their actions.**
- 8. overlooking their children’s transgressions.**

An Assumption of Entitlement: Exploring How We Got to This Point

#1

Many well-intentioned parents...

- ___ want their children to have material things PLUS opportunities they didn't have.
- ___ don't want their kids to "*suffer.*"
- ___ don't want their kids to cry.
- ___ find it easier to say yes, than NO!
- ___ haven't set clear boundaries.
- ___ don't understand and/or think about the need to set limits.
- ___ want to be "*friends*" their kids.
- ___ haven't defined and/or articulated their family values.

Children have been inadvertently exposed to adult knowledge before their time.

Media Assault on Our Young People:

A Generation That's “old” Before Their Time

Young people are being exposed to adult themes and ways before they are ready to comprehend the meaning of it.

Sources of exposure may include, but are not limited to

- ___ unsupervised television programs.**
- ___ television commercials.**
- ___ the internet/social media.**
- ___ magazine ads/store displays.**
- ___ adult decorum.**

These exposures tend to create an “I want it all now,” mindset.

Supports 5F.

Over-Programmed Kids: A National Epidemic

Children who are over-programmed may...

__ have no downtime/reflection time.

[__ have little free playtime.

[__ be deprived of figuring out things for themselves.

__ be overtired from being out late on school nights.

__ have little if any time for family chores.

__ consume too much fast food on the fly!

__ have reduced face-to-face family time.

***“Helicopter”* Parents**

- ___ Parents engaged in excessive parenting may do their child’s homework.
- ___ take their child’s word against the teacher.
- ___ demand the teacher give their child better grades.
- ___ constantly *“rescue”* their child.
- ___ fight their child’s *“battles.”*
- ___ protect their children from a *“dangerous world.”*
- ___ direct and orchestrate their child’s games.
- ___ arrange the *“rules of the games”* their children play.
- ___ spare their children from having to do chores.

***“Snowplow”* Parenting**

Over-protective parenting may
__ remove any hurdles in a child’s way.

__ protect children from setbacks.

__ shield children from disappointments.

__ protect their children from making
mistakes.

__ weaken children’s perseverance.

__ undermine children’s resilience.

__ inadvertently foster an *entitlement*
mindset in children.

Understanding The Unintended Consequences of “*Overparenting*”

- ___ Children who have been exposed to “*overparenting*” may feel entitled.
- ___ lack courage.
- ___ fail to learn to be independent.
- ___ lack the skills necessary to bounce back after a defeat/setback/disappointment.
- ___ **NOT** take personal responsibility for their actions.
- ___ **NOT** demonstrate a sense of self-discipline.
- ___ show signs of anxiety.
- ___ lack perseverance.

Every principal needs to know that babies born with a low birth weight (weighing 5.5 pounds or less) are more likely to

- ___ 1. have learning disabilities.
- ___ 2. fail school.
- ___ 3. have health-related problems.
- ___ 4. have overall low academic performance.
- ___ 5. be retained-in-grade.
- ___ 6. have a short attention span.
- ___ 7. have developmental delays.

Caveat: The consequences associated with low birth weight are **NOT absolute. There are always exceptions.**

Childhood Trauma: What Every Principal Needs to Know

Many Children have experienced trauma, e.g., divorce, family dysfunction, moving, being homeless, changing schools, parent/sibling incarcerated, death of a family member, violence, abuse/neglect, family/friend terminally ill, parent or sibling deployed, poverty, etc.

Societal Trends & Family Factors

Trends & Factors that impact young people's health and well being and influence their mindset may include, but are **NOT** limited to

- ___ a lack of respect for appropriate decorum.
- ___ being oblivious to all types of traditional boundaries/limits.
- ___ ignoring traditional taboos.
- ___ de-emphasis on traditional manners.
- ___ exposure to adult knowledge.
- ___ sophisticated marketing targeted to children.
- ___ the focus on materialism.
- ___ focus on brand names.
- ___ technology obsession and addiction.
- ___ the increased incidence of stress/anxiety/depression.
- ___ the loss of free play.
- ___ increased incivility & violence.

5M supports slide 5 #4-5.

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- ___ magazine ads/store displays.**
- ___ adult decorum.**

**These exposures tends to create an,
“I want it all now mindset.”**

5N supports slide 5 #4-5.

Stress & Anxiety

Factors and Circumstances That Produce Stress, Worry, Fear, and Anxiety

Factors and circumstances may include,
but are not limited to

- ___ major family changes, e.g., divorce, death of a family member, moving, birth of a sibling, major illness, injury, incarceration of a family member, etc.
- ___ separation from home, parents or other loved ones.
- ___ school worries, e.g., testing, homework, grades, failing, not fitting in, etc.
- ___ being over-scheduled with activities.
- ___ conflict with friends or being rejected by peers.
- ___ being anxious about being negatively judged or ridiculed.
- ___ fearing an object, activity, event, etc.
- ___ the fear of being bullied.
- ___ being upset and fearful over world events such as natural disasters, storms, violence, terrorism, etc.

50 supports slide 5 #4-5.

Signs & Symptoms of Anxiety

Red flags that children may feel stressed/anxious may include, but are not limited to

- __ complaining of headaches and/or stomach aches.**
- __ exhibiting avoidance behavior and/or be disobedient.**
- __ having trouble focusing and concentrating.**
- __ developing nervous habits such as nail biting, skin picking, hair plucking, etc.**
- __ having trouble sleeping and or have nightmares.**
- __ not wanting to go to school, church, friend's house, etc.**
- __ clinging to a parent/caregiver.**
- __ crying a lot, throwing tantrums, and/or acting out.**
- __ experiencing muscle tension and/or fatigue.**
- __ having a case of the “*what ifs*” due to an overwhelming fear that something bad is going to happen in the future.**

All children show some signs of stress and anxiety at times.

5P supports slide 5 #4-5.

- 6. Today's there is an increase in the number of children who are sleep deprived.**
- 7. Children today are spending too much time “*looking at screens*” (see slide 6A.)**
- 8. Many more children today are spending too much time inside.**
- 9. More students are poorly nourished, undernourished, obese, etc.**
- 10. Many more children today have “*artificial maturity.*”**

Things Every Principal Needs to Know About Too Much Technology

Technology related concerns for children include, but are not limited to their:

- 1. having reduced *face-to-face* interactions.**
- 2. having diminished social skills.**
- 3. spending 7½ hrs. each day in front of screens.**
- 4. having reduced family time.**
- 5. being sleep deprived.**
- 6. being “*hooked on `Tronics*” (addicted).**

Factors Every Principal Needs to Know About Children in Poverty

- 1. Over 23% of today's students live in poverty and many more are *near* poor.**
- 2. Poverty continues to be the greatest predictor of a child's academic performance.**
- 3. The stress of living in poverty has long-term toxic effects on children's brain development.**
- 4. Children from poverty are disproportionately impacted on all measures of health and well being.**

Things Principals Need to Know About Giving Children An Additional Year of Learning Time

- 1. Some children are simply developmentally too young for their program placement.**
- 2. Some children have significant developmental delays that may turn into learning disabilities.**
- 3. Some children will need an additional year of growing/learning time in some form.**
- **4. Some things in life exceed a teacher's ability to remediate, e.g., age, gender, genetics, individual growth rate, etc.**

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Things Every Principal Needs to Know About Left-Handers

- 1. There are twice as many left-handed boys as girls.**
- 2. Mensa (the high IQ society) reports that 20% of their members are left-handed.**
- 3. One person in ten is left-handed.**
- 4. One-third of all presidents since 1945 have been left-handed.**
- 5. President Ronald Reagan was a “*switch-hitter*” (born left-handed, and then switched).**
- 6. Left-handed people tend to have more industrial accidents and deaths.**

- 7. The French horn is valved for the left-hand.**
- 8. Michelangelo was left-handed.**
- 9. Famous left-handed people with a good sense of humor include: W.C. Fields, Harpo Marx, Carol Burnett, David Letterman, Charlie Chaplin, Richard Pryor, Jay Leno, and Dick Van Dyke.**
- 10. Left-handers are more likely to have _____.**
- 11. Almost one-half of the major league batting and pitching stars is left-handed.**

- 12. Toll booths favor left-handers, as do banks and fast-food restaurants with drive up windows.**
- 13. Ben Franklin was left-handed.**
- 14. Hand preference is usually evident by age five.**
- 15. Lefties suffer learning disabilities at 10 times the rate of righties.**
- 16. Lefties are also more likely to:**
 - ___ stutter. ___ have thyroid problems.**
 - ___ have allergies. ___ have migraines.**
- 17. Napoleon was left-handed.**
- ~~18. Billy the Kid was left-handed.~~**
- 19. Joan of Arc was thought to be left-handed.**

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Things Principal Need to Know About Teaching Left-Handed Students

Provide left-handed students with:

- 1. pens with quick-drying ink, with the words on the pen *going in the right direction.***
- 2. pencils with hard, no-smudge lead, with the words on the pencil *going in the right direction.* Also provide a left-handed handheld pencil sharpener.**
- 3. a left-handed ruler.**

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Provide left-handed students with:

- 4. handed scissors or Fiskars® .**
- 5. a notebook, spiral-bound on the right side, 3 holed punched and margined on the left side. Stenopads (spiral bound on top) also work well for lefties.**
- 6. a left-handed armchair desk.**
- 7. Allow left-handed students to:**
 - ___ A. slant their papers in whatever position is best for them when writing.**
 - ___ B. print rather than write in cursive.**
- 8. Never attempt to change a child's handedness.**

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Things Teachers Need to Know About Teaching Boys

- 1. Boys are different than girls!**
(see slides 9A-D)
- 2. Make an effort to keep the sound source to the student's right side when possible.**
- 3. Provide frequent talk breaks to foster processing as well as a preventative to decrease classroom**
- 4. Keep in mind that boys tend to be more aggressive in temperament than girls and this has implications for grouping and pairing.**
- 5. Provide priority seating (front row) for boys who are struggling learners (see slide 9E).**

Many more **boys** than girls

- drop out of school.
- repeat a grade.
- are color blind.
- are identified as learning disabled.
- are left-handed.
- have attention deficit disorder.
- are hyperactive.
- fail school.
- perform below grade level academically.
- are late readers.
- receive compensatory services e.g., Title I, remedial reading/math, etc.