Teaching Kids Essay, Research Paper

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The issue of morals and values being taught to our children is one of the most pressing problems in our society today. The responsibility of raising children with a strong moral base has been lost in the chaos of the modern world. With an increase in single parenting and more homes where both parents are employed full-time, the role of parents in their children’s lives has drastically changed. Many parents are no longer involved in raising their children, which leaves the responsibility of providing children with a proper moral background neglected. Today, there are children being raised in day care centers and elementary schools which most often do not meet the need for supplying kids with moral character.

The most obvious and effective solution to this problem is for parents to reclaim this responsibility and become the primary educators and mentors in their children’s lives. If parents make time to teach their children right from wrong, then there is no better way to raise a child with a strong set of values. The most effective way of teaching kids about values and morals is by example. Children will simply learn by observing and following their parents. This means that when parents participate in volunteer programs and donate time and money to charity, then they are teaching their children the importance of serving those in need. When parents respect their children’s privacy and opinions, children develop a mutual respect for their parents and for others. Parents that take their children to church and help them with their homework will have children that understand the significance of spirituality and education. Children learn better from their parents than anyone else; parenting needs to be the first priority over any other concern. Parents need to take the time to regulate what their children watch on television, become involved in their education, help them in time of need, and encourage them when they do well. This also involves reestablishing the importance of family as the most integral part in the lives of children and parents alike which requires a tremendous time commitment and a dedication to the family as first and foremost. By making it a point to attend their children’s baseball games, band concerts, school plays, or just spending time with their family, parents are teaching the importance of family life to their children. There is no question that children with dedicated and loving parents, who do all of these things are much more likely to experience happiness, contribute to society, and avoid distress.

But this solution demands that every parent both answers this call and can successfully accomplish these tasks. The likelihood of this idea actually taking place is doubtful at best. Most parents have neither the time nor the resources to raise their children in preparation for the real world. So when parents aren’t there to stop their children from watching excessive violence on television or to point out the evils and consequences of drug and alcohol abuse, this is when problems arise. If parents haven’t explained the issues of race and religion in society, how are children supposed to react when they encounter people who are different from themselves? Our society cannot afford to be raising children that are bigots, drug-users, alcohol abusers, and gang members. If parents have failed to convey the importance of values to their children, such as serving in the best interest of others, then our future businessmen, doctors, and politicians will lack this fundamental moral concept. This means that these tasks must be shared or passed on when parents fail to fulfill their responsibility; there must be some alternative to pick up where parents have left off. The most apparent alternative is the setting where children spend a majority of their time at a young age: day care centers and school communities. Day care centers and schools must become more than just places that look after and educate children. Teachers and care givers must take it upon themselves to teach children to share, work together, and respect each other, along with the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. The comprehension of morality is as equally significant to the future of our children as the other basic skills that they learn in primary schools that are so important to the rest of their lives.

The evidence of the lack of morals and values in our children today is clear. The number of teens involved in gang violence, teen pregnancy, and illegal drug and substance abuse has been on the rise for years and is a direct result of what can happen when children aren’t raised with a clear picture of morally right and wrong. When children can’t identify the dangers and wrong in such problems, often they are drawn to gangs and drugs as easy answers. This ignorance of morals and values which these children confront is somewhat responsible for these modern problems. Often there is a misconception that these problems only take place amid poverty or inner-city conditions. Although poverty is a catalyst for these problems, the fact is that drug abuse and teenage pregnancy have become more prevalent in suburban settings. This proves that these problems cannot be blamed entirely on impoverished settings but have deeper roots. Middle class parents are just as guilty as lower class parents in failing to raise their kids with some basic moral principles.

The disintegration of the traditional family is another example of the absence of morals and values being taught to our children. The close-knit family has become a thing of the past rather than the essential part of people’s lives. The gathering of the family at the dinner table to discuss the happenings of the day is one of the most fundamental events of family unity. It is the time that conversation, expression and shared experiences contribute to the character development of children in the family. Instead, this affair has been replaced by sharing a quick meal with the television when it is individually convenient. Although the discontinuance of this ritual may seem somewhat unimportant, it is highly representative of the well-being of the family. The interaction that takes place at the dinner table is incredibly significant to the strength and development of the family which in turn affects the morality of children.

By educating children about morality and personal values in schools and day care, children can develop morality both at and away from home. Teachers and care givers are there because they love working with children, which makes them great candidates for this job. If they care enough for the children they teach and look after, they will be happy to do their best to assist parents in order to help these children become better people. If parents are unable to properly raise their children because of their careers, then teachers that spend the same amount of time and effort in their career should be able to make some significant contribution to the morality of their students. Teachers must be able to relate to the children as their parents do in order to make a significant impact on the morality of their students.

I personally was raised by more than just my parents. Both of my parents have had full-time careers throughout my life. They did their best to balance their careers and their children, but still didn’t have as much time to dedicate to my sister and me as they may have wished. But my parents always felt obligated to leave us in an environment with relatives or close friends, which they felt was the best for us. My sister and I spent every afternoon after school at the home of close family friends. She and her children, The Whitings, were like family to us. My sister and I looked up to the older children all through elementary school and they always treated us like their own little sister and brother. Mrs. Whiting was like having a second mother; she would cook for us, ask us about our day, and help us with our homework. My mother feels indebted to that family for life for all that they did for my sister and me. Although she would have rather been the one to take care of us, she knew that we were in good hands with Mrs. Whiting. If that family hadn’t been there, we would have gone to day care. That family atmosphere would have been gone and no one could have taught us better. Without that family, I know that I would not be the same person that I am today. Day care and elementary school must become more like a community or a home rather than a business or a service and try to provide some of the same benefits which I experienced with the Whitings. I was fortunate enough to have another family who cared and taught me so much about life when my parents couldn’t, but this is not often the case in most situations. Because of this fact, schools and day care must try to emulate the family setting where teachers are more like friends or relatives.

This is obviously not a simple task. It is a challenge which seems difficult and possibly inconceivable to actually occur. Morals and values cannot be taught as simply as arithmetic. There is no designated curriculum, no outlined method for teaching morals or values. In fact, many adults probably need a refresher course in the subject. But morality and the establishment of values do come with trust, friendship and experience. If enough time and energy are devoted, children will learn from a parent, a teacher, a friend. It has already been shown that it is possible to teach children about life in school. The D.A.R.E. program is a successful approach to solving problems before they start. It is a prime example of teaching children to face modern problems and at the same time exposing them to certain values. Another example of this is a serious sexual education program. Schools have made efforts to teach children about the complexities and dangers of sex, rather than just the basic facts about sex. When schools teach children about forms of birth control and how sexual diseases are spread, this is much more effective in preventing teen pregnancy and the spread of sexual diseases than simply preaching abstinence. It addresses another important contemporary issue which children will face in the modern world. These innovations in the education of students are strong support that a more complex education about life is not just a theory, but a definite possibility.

If parents continue to be the sole moral influence on their children, the problems of youth in society will persist. Often, parents of today cannot instill the same morals and values that their parents gave them. Teachers can no longer assume that children are morally prepared for life, but must teach, develop and challenge the values that children have acquired. Without this contribution, children are going to continue to face problems and dangers that they are unprepared for until changes are made. The complexity of modern parenting requires assistance from another source, and the most obvious solution is from teachers and day care facilitators. Although there are many cases where parents are successfully raising children on their own, the trend is moving away from traditional parenting and some aspect of raising children must be altered in order to stop the continuing problems.