



How to Not Crash and Burn with Helicopter Parents

They're the first to volunteer in the classroom, readily donate school supplies and vow that the upcoming school year will be the best year ever. And then it happens, little Johnny gets a below average grade on his medieval castle model (which was clearly designed by his engineer dad). **And.... "BAM!" the helicopter parent comes out.**

Johnny couldn't possibly get a mediocre grade on a cardboard construction project, after all, he was the star student at architecture summer camp.

Ideally, parents can be your best allies when working with students; no one knows a child better than his or her parent. But when parents are overly involved in making sure their student succeeds no matter what the cost, the helicopter parent flag comes out.

It's impossible to avoid these over-attentive parents. Taking just a few steps on the front-end, will help establish a healthy classroom that's in the best interest of not only the students, but the teacher as well.

Five Key Steps in Trying to Appease Helicopter Parents

1. Establish Good Communication. Letting parents know when and how you'll be in touch regarding a child's progress is the first step in preventing issues from arising. Send a monthly email newsletter or create a class website for parents that details events and curriculum. Give your contact information to parents early on, clarifying the best times and ways to get in touch with you. Make weekly calls regarding student progress and achievements. The better the communication, the more trust you establish with parents.

2. Set up Clear boundaries. Clearly communicate your grading system and classroom rules at the beginning of the year. That way, when a parent demands that you change a grade, you can reference your rubric and policies.

3. Keep the Parents Busy. These energetic parents can be put to good use! Find out their areas of expertise and how the school can benefit from them. Enlist parents to run classroom centers on specific days, or facilitate study groups, maybe even oversee a school fundraising drive.

4. Stay Calm. Be a good listener and breathe. Chances are, this is not about you or your teaching abilities. The worst thing that you can do is react poorly and put a permanent strain on the relationship.

**Keep in mind, the helicopter parent is quick to contact administration if they feel that their (unreasonable) expectations aren't being met. Be sure to bring your principal or immediate superior into the loop early. Keeping a separate file with all communication is also a good idea, as it provides the backup to record your efforts.*

5. Keep Your Focus. You're here for the students; now isn't the time to engage in power struggles and become distracted. Don't let anyone cloud your judgment, and always strive to help your students become independent problem solvers. They will need these skills when they leave home!

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