

### **Grade 6 Argument Unit:**

**What is the role of parent involvement in education and adolescent development?**

### **Culminating Writing Task**

**Directions:** Please respond to the prompt below in writing. You may use your notes and graphic organizer to inform your writing.

#### **Writing Prompt**

Due to budget cuts, the Parent Center at your school will only be open for two days per week, instead of five. You have been invited to speak about the role of parent involvement at the next Board of Education meeting. Your assignment is to write an argumentative speech on this topic. In your speech, you will defend a claim about whether or not your school should keep the Parent Center open all week. Support your position with information and analysis from the sources you have examined. The audience for your speech will be the superintendent, board members, teachers, parents, and students from the district.

#### ***Questions to Consider:***

- What is your claim-and why?
- What evidence from reliable sources, would you offer to support your claim?
- How will your conclusion connect all ideas, claims, and reasons in a logical way?

#### ***Be Sure To:***

- Introduce your claim clearly and include a thesis statement.
- Include at least three examples from the texts that support your claim, making sure to explain how these examples support your claim.
- Use appropriate transitions.
- Use precise language and vocabulary in your analysis.
- Establish and maintain a formal style.
- Provide a conclusion.
- Use proper grammar and conventions of writing.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

State Board of Education Policy #89-01

A critical dimension of effective schooling is parent involvement. Research has shown conclusively that parent involvement in their children's education improves student achievement. Furthermore, when parents are involved at school, their children achieve at higher levels, and schools are more successful.

### **IMPORTANT FACTS:**

1. Families provide the primary education environment.
2. Parent involvement improves student achievement.
3. Parent involvement is most effective when it is comprehensive, supportive, long-lasting, and well-planned.
4. The benefits of parent involvement are evident at every level of schooling, from early childhood, at the elementary level, and there are continuing positive effects through high school.
5. Involving parents in supporting their children's education at home is not enough. To ensure the quality of schools as institutions serving the community, parents must be involved at all levels in the schools.
6. The extent of parent involvement in a child's education is more important to student success than family income or education.
7. The school and home must be partners and cannot be in isolation from one another, families and schools need to collaborate to ensure student success in school and in life.

## **PARENTAL RIGHTS**

Education Code Section 51101 provides that parents/guardians of pupils enrolled in public schools have the right and should have the opportunity to work together in a mutually supportive and respectful partnership with schools to help their children succeed, to be informed in advance about schools rules, and to be informed of the procedures for visiting the schools and observing the classroom. The LAUSD Parent Bill of Rights and Responsibilities is an integral component of the *Parents as Equal Partners Resolution* which communicates the partnership role of families and schools in order to achieve student success. It also affirms the rights and responsibilities that parents have in advocating for their children's academic success.

### **Parent's Rights and Responsibilities To Ensure Their Child's Success**

**Parents as Equal Partners in the Education of Their Children**, a resolution adopted by the Board of Education in December 2010, embraces family strengths and assets as essential to the academic success of students and recognizes parents as the first and most important lifelong teachers of their children.

**To that end, families and schools assume their responsibility for student success and commit to a partnership that:**

- Maintains high expectations for student achievement
- Ensures all children are college and career ready
- Promotes productive conversation and collaboration
- Reflects mutual respect and support

**Parents Have the Right To:**

- A free education that honors their child's learning and prepares them for college and careers
- A welcoming environment that values family assets and contributions to learning
- Information about the school's expectations, educational programs, policies and procedures
- The School Report Card to assess the quality of their child's school
- Visit their child's classroom and develop partnerships with teachers and staff
- Opportunities to learn how best to support education at home and at school
- Tutoring services and other learning supports for their child
- Choose the best school/programs available for their child
- File a formal complaint without fear of reprisal
- Translation/interpretation services to communicate effectively with school staff

**Parents Have the Responsibility to:**

- Promote literacy, high achievement, and a love for learning
- Ensure their child attends school every day, on time, and ready to learn
- Monitor and guide their child's academic progress to ensure success
- Confer with teachers and other school staff about their child's education
- Attend meetings and learning activities to be informed and support their child's education
- Express their level of satisfaction through the annual School Experience Survey
- Provide all information about their child as needed by the school
- Advocate for their child's education

## Motherload Adventures in Parenting

# In Defense of Helicopter Parents

By LISA BELKIN

The New York Times *March 4, 2009, 3:56 pm*

I have helicoptering tendencies. I like to think that awareness of the problem is part of its prevention, but when it comes to my children I have been known to remind, help, smooth the way, add my two cents and check-up on them more than a less enmeshed mother might consider absolutely necessary.

I try not to be as extreme as some (I can never imagine calling a college professor to discuss grades, or coming along on a job interview, as some parents have been known to do.) And as they get older I am purposely sitting on my hands, biting my tongue and reining myself in, because I understand that independence (theirs) is a muscle that needs exercise.

Even so, I can understand how parents can go from helpful to hovering. For years the message we're given is "the world is scary and complicated; your kids need you to navigate." Then one day (their 18th birthday? The day the leave for college?) we are told: "Time is up. Pencils down."

So I read with interest, and more than a little reassurance, an article in the Boston Globe yesterday defending helicopter parenting.

Reporter Don Aucoin writes:

*Beyond such undeniable excesses, a quiet reappraisal of helicopter parents is underway. Some researchers have begun to argue that late adolescence and young adulthood are such minefields today – emotional, social, sexual, logistical, psychological – that there are valid reasons for parents to remain deeply involved in their children's lives even after the kids are, technically speaking, adults.*

*Moreover, they say, with the economy in a deep swoon, helicopter parents may have a vital role to play as career counselors or even as providers of financial aid to their offspring.*

Aucoin goes on to redefine the terms we use to describe "involved" parents, drawing a distinction between over-parenting and helicopter parenting.

"Over-parenting," explains social historian Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, "is not letting our kids take the consequences of their actions, swooping down to rescue them, and the result would be a spoiled brat. But helicopter parenting is entirely different, and I think it is a positive style of child-rearing."

Aucoin also provides data to show that a parent's fingerprints on a child's life does not *de facto* cripple that child, citing the 2007 research of Jillian Kinzie, the associate director of Indiana University's Center for Postsecondary Research, which looked the effects of so-called helicopter parents on students at 750 colleges. Those students "were more engaged in learning and reported greater satisfaction with their colleges," Aucoin writes. Adds Kinzie: "They tended to have more interactions with the faculty, they tended to be involved in active learning, collaborative learning, more often than their peers." (But, he adds, their grades were slightly lower.)

Kinzie's first response to the data, she says, was: "This can't be right. We have to go back and look at this again."

Not everyone agrees with that sunny conclusion, though. Susan Newman, the author of "Nobody's Baby Now: Reinventing Your Adult Relationship With Your Mother and Father," told Aucoin that helicopter parents "do their children an extreme disservice."

"When parents are making decisions for their children all the time and protecting them, when they get out on their own they don't know a thing about disappointment," Newman says.

"I've seen a lot of these children who are parented in the helicopter manner who can't make a decision. They are calling home constantly: 'I don't get along with my roommate, what should I do? My roommate ate my food, what should I do?'"

Are you a helicopter parent? Are you wary of becoming one? And does any of this new thinking make you feel any better?

## Putting Parents in Their Place: Outside Class

### Too Much Involvement Can Hinder Students' Independence, Experts Say

By Valerie Strauss  
Washington Post Staff Writer  
Tuesday, March 21, 2006

- 1 They are needy, overanxious and sometimes plain pesky—and schools at every level are trying to find ways to deal with them.
- 2 No, not students. Parents—specifically parents of today's "millennial generation" who, many educators are discovering, can't let their kids go.
- 3 They text message their children in middle school, use the cellphone like an umbilical cord to Harvard Yard and have no compunction about marching into kindergarten class and screaming at a teacher about a grade.
- 4 To handle the modern breed of micromanaging parent, educators are devising programs to help them separate from their kids—and they are taking a harder line on especially intrusive parents.
- 5 At seminars, such as one in Phoenix last year titled "Managing Millennial Parents," they swap strategies on how to handle the "hovercrafts" or "helicopter parents," so dubbed because of a propensity to swoop in at the slightest crisis.
- 6 Educators worry not only about how their school climates are affected by intrusive parents trying to set their own agendas but also about the ability of young people to become independent.
- 7 "As a child gets older, it is a real problem for a parent to work against their child's independent thought and action, and it is happening more often," said Ron Goldblatt, executive director of the Association of Independent Maryland Schools.
- 8 "Many young adults entering college have the academic skills they will need to succeed but are somewhat lacking in life skills like self-reliance, sharing and conflict resolution," said Linda Walter, an administrator at Seton Hall University in New Jersey and co-chairman of the family portion of new-student orientation.
- 9 Educators say the shift in parental engagement coincides with the rise of the millennial generation, kids born after 1982.
- 10 "They have been the most protected and programmed children ever—car seats and safety helmets, play groups and soccer leagues, cellphones and e-mail," said Mark McCarthy, assistant vice president and dean of student development at Marquette University in Milwaukee. "The parents of this generation are used to close and constant contact with their children and vice versa."
- 11 Academics say many baby boomer parents have become hyper-involved in their children's lives for numerous reasons. There is the desire to protect youngsters from a tougher and more competitive culture. And there is the symbolic value of children.

## READING SELECTIONS

- 12 “It was just about 20 years ago that we started seeing those yellow ‘Baby on Board’ signs in cars, which arguably had little to do with safety and a lot to do with publicly announcing one’s new status as a parent,” said Donald Pollock, chairman of the Department of Anthropology at the State University of New York at Buffalo.
- 13 “I imagine that parents who displayed those ‘Baby on Board’ signs are the ones who are now intruding themselves into the college experience of those poor babies 18 years later,” he said.
- 14 “There are a lot of things I can’t control,” said one Bethesda mother who asked not to be identified because, she said, her daughter would be mortified. “Terrorists, the environment. But I can control how my daughter spends her day.”
- 15 Teachers and principals in the early grades began noticing changes in parents in the 1990s. Parents began spending more time in classrooms. Then they began calling teachers frequently. Then came e-mails, text messages—sometimes both at once. Today schools are trying to figure out how to take back a measure of control.
- 16 Some parents who once had unlimited access to classrooms or school hallways are being kicked out, principals say. Teachers are refusing to meet with parents they consider abusive, some say. A number of private schools have added language in their enrollment contracts and handbooks warning that a student can be asked to leave as a result of a parent’s behavior. Some have tossed out children because their parents became too difficult to work with.
- 17 College officials say they, too, are trying to find ways to handle ubiquitous parents. Freshmen orientations incorporate lessons for parents on how to separate and let their children make their own hair appointments.
- 18 At Colgate University in Hamilton, N.Y., for example, administrators issue parents the university’s philosophy on self-reliance when they drop off their children, spokeswoman Caroline Jenkins said.
- 19 Colgate administrators also send out a memo to department heads at the beginning of each semester reiterating that “we will not solve problems for students because it robs students of an opportunity to learn.”
- 20 The Parent Program at Alma College in Michigan takes a comprehensive approach at orientation, complete with scripts that allow parents to role-play. A problem is presented and parents are asked, “Tell me what you’ve done already to solve this problem,” said Patricia Chase, director of student development.
- 21 The answer often should be nothing, but inevitably parents offer lots of somethings.
- 22 “Our aim is not to tell parents to let go completely because, of course, parents want to be an integral part of their children’s entire lives,” said Walter of Seton Hall, where orientation includes sessions for parents and students — both separately and together. “Rather, it is to discuss how to be involved in their children’s lives, while allowing their children to learn the life skills they will need to succeed in college and beyond.”