HOLISTIC SUPPORT TO A CHILD

by:

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Schools should not only focus on the intellect of a child. It is common sense and crucial to include social-emotional learning in the educational arena. This means that supporting the mental and emotional health of children should be second nature to educators and administrators. How? Teach children to work well with others and teach them to value diverse experiences and personalities.

Many programs in education tend to focus on education that makes sure students pass tests and get good grades but not to become good citizens. Mental, social, and emotional learnings are of utmost importance to a holistic approach to helping a child become a totally learned individual.

In a report done by the Aspen Institute’s National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development entitled From a Nation at Risk to a Nation at Hope, six recommendations were given on how schools can support students beyond the intellect.

The six recommendations are as follows:

1. The success of a student prioritizes the whole child. This means that the student should be seen as a total person, including emotional, social, and spiritual aspect. The need to acknowledge and care for these aspects is important so that the student would feel and see that his entire being is being care for and nourished.
2. Create a safe and supportive learning environment. Children should be provided with an environment conducive not only to intellectual learning but as well as a good emotional and social learning environment. Encourage words of affirmation among educators and focus on child’s strengths. Help them in their weak points by being supportive and encouraging, not judgmental.

3. Instruction should include intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual learning experiences for the children. School practices should allow learning on all these aspects not only inside the classroom but during extra-curricular activities and even during play time. Allow an environment where students feel that schools do not only feed their minds but their emotional well-being as well.

4. Teachers, parents, and other adults directly or indirectly involved in children’s education should also be taught and trained to becoming experts in child development. Preparation programs for them should be made available and provided to them so that they would be equipped with the right knowledge and skills on how to make students feel safe in school despite diverse backgrounds and individual personalities. Likewise, teachers should also be provided with the appropriate and sufficient social-emotional support as well.

5. Involve the whole community in supporting the whole child. The stakeholders are important in playing this role. Encourage parents and students to participate in advisory boards especially in current issues that may hamper continuity in learning such as health issues, climate change, and concerns about school culture.
6. Create a strong partnership between the school and researchers. This is vital in continuously allowing improvements and growth not only in the teaching process, school system, but in helping address a truly holistic approach to children education. Research is sometimes put aside because of its difficultness and lack of resources but it is crucial to understand and include it for its worth.

When the holistic approach and support to learning is properly and adequately provided to students, they will not only achieve in the present but up to adulthood as they set foot on the huge world out there.

References:

