THE ‘HATID-SUNDO’ PHENOMENON: WHERE TO MARK THE BOUNDARY?

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It has been a Filipino tradition to accompany and fetch children from school. The joy of a parent seeing his child enter the school to learn even extends to watching his son or daughter from the windows. In other cases, parents may even wait outside of the school gate for their children during recess or lunch breaks. Children from a more privileged families may even have their housemaids wait for them. This practice, however, is good and a unique involvement of parents in the education and safety of their children.

But, where do we mark the boundary of this practice? What are the values that we develop as we detach from this practice at a proper time?

In a recent study of Garcia (2018) parental involvement in children’s education is a vital component in young children’s motivation and academic achievement (cited from Walker et al, 2005; Fleharty & Edwards, 2013). The value of education is not only transmitted through verbal communication but is strengthened and embedded in the child through simple acts of involvement in the process. This may be the act of waking up a child in the morning, accompanying him to school, fetching him after class, checking for his homework and attending meetings or parent-teacher conferences in school. Parents view their involvement as a necessary role of keeping and supporting their children to school.

One morning, a kindergarten pupil was crying. When he was asked by his parent why he cried, he replied; “kasi tinawag mo ako ‘nung paalis ka”. The child continues, “huwag mo na kasi ako titignan ‘pag nakaupo na ako.”
This presents the two facets of the “hatid-sundo” phenomenon; it is beneficial as well as it is detrimental. Safety is our first priority in this practice and it manifest our tremendous love for our children. However, there must a boundary. As a parent, one must avoid accompanying their children up to the door of the classroom. Little by little that trust and responsibility is built on the child. A parent must trust his child that he can manage himself to go in the classroom. By doing so, the child gradually develops in himself the essence of “responsibility”. Also, the child’s emotional strength and personal accountability is developed.

When the child is at a higher grade level, the “hatid-sundo” phenomenon must be seldom. It must only practice when it is necessary. Instead, involvement in other school activities such as programs and school conferences must be apparent from parents.

References: