



August 20, 2007

*Parental Wisdom – Emails
Helicopter Parents*

It's a bird; it's a plane, it's a helicopter parent.

Helicopter Parent: "A mom or dad who hovers over his or her children."

In case you haven't heard the term, "Helicopter Parents," they are the parents always hovering--always helping--always rescuing--and always involved. In the past these were the parents who micromanaged their kids' play dates, science fair projects, and soccer game tournaments. At high school they drove the teachers batty by hovering in at the first sign of a bad grade, making sure their kid's schedule was stellar (with only the very best teachers), and writing those college entrance essays. At college they were first on the scene setting up their kid's dorm room (and complaining if the roommate wasn't the perfect fit), and even calling the university president to complain about an unfair grade. Cell phones and e-mail have created umbilical bonds that are difficult to cut.

Well, now the kiddies have graduated and they are entering the workforce in mass numbers. It seems these parents are still hovering, but from all indications, their presence is now up a level -- think "Black Hawk" mode. According to major businesses from coast to coast these parents are actually attending their kids job fairs and interviews, negotiating salaries and benefit packages for their children and even demanding that the business call to let them know if their offspring got the job. And businesses are scratching their heads. What do we do with these parents? Many are actually changing their long-standing practices to send notices of hiring intent to the parents as well as the kids.

This is over-the-top parenting. This isn't mentoring but meddlesome, and it can rob kids of the self-reliance they need at this point in their grown-up lives. What can these kids fall back on if they have no internal resources of learning and failing because parents protected them from any ever experiencing failure?

Ask yourself a question before you jump in to save your child.
What is the worst thing that can happen if you don't step in?

If there was such a thing as a parent's job description, it would probably say that we should raise happy, healthy, well-adjusted, independent children that contribute to society. Don't wait till your child is twenty to celebrate Independence Day. Even very young children can and should have chores. Though well-intentioned, the self-esteem movement of the last twenty years is what many believe to be the cause with the lack of self reliance many 'twenty-somethings' now face. Interestingly, that movement started about the same time you would see those annoying 'Baby on Board' signs on cars.

It's actually very simple. If you want your child to have self esteem, give them responsibilities. Begin when they are little with simple chores, and continue on as they get older. Visit www.parentalwisdom.com Free Reports, get a copy of the Chore Chart Ideas for a few ideas; add your own creativity. For example, if you want a four-year-old to pull up his bed covers every morning, take a few digital pictures of each step in the process and label the pictures with a big #1, #2 and #3 for each step. Leave it on a small poster so he will know and remember what to do. That will make your child feel good about his achievements and he is more likely to take on more responsibility.

This is one of the best ways to communicate with, and stay connected to your child.
Great way to avoid all the helicopter traffic.