

Family Living

The Portland Observer

The Dangers of Labeling Children

A teacher has a very, very successful year working with one of her classes, a Middle School Social Studies class.

The class results on the yearly achievement test were outstanding, and the special projects the class produced were exceptional. The Principal was very impressed and highly commended the teacher.

The teacher thanked the Principal but told him it wasn't very difficult, after all they were an intellectually gifted class. The Principal knew that the class was not identified as gifted and that the students had an average academic record. He asked the teacher why she believed they were gifted. She pulled out a piece of paper with the names of her students; next to the names were number such as 139, 143, and so on.

When the Principal looked at the paper he realized what she had been referring to. The paper did not give the students' IQ scores, as the teacher had thought, they gave their locker numbers. The teacher had labeled the students in that class as gifted. As a result she had very high standards and expectations for what they could and should accomplish, and they did achieve far beyond what others could have expected.

I wonder how that class would have done if their locker numbers

were in a range of 80 to 100. How would the teacher have labeled them and would her expectations and standards for the class have been lowered? Most probably.

In the above example, a very positive label was attached to the students. What happens when negative labels are attached to students. When a child is identified, no matter how incorrectly, as having ADD (Atten-

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tion Deficit Disorder), Dyslexia, Reading or Math Development Disorder, or any of a host of other negative labels, that child becomes branded and the expectations and standards of what that student can accomplish become greatly diminished. Educators begin to look for and 'find' the reasons why the student was given that label, whether those reasons truly exist or not.

One of the great dangers in labeling students is that teachers then fail to look for the correct source of the apparent problem, and fail to find the correct solution.

How often are students labeled as having some learning problem, only to discover, sometimes years later, that their problems were caused by poor hearing or poor eyesight?

How often are student labeled as having some psychiatric named affliction (such as ADD or developmental reading disorder) when the truth is that they are displaying mental or physiological phenomena caused by having

hit a barrier to learning?

There is a Study Technology which is developed by L. Ron Hubbard, author, educator and humanitarian, and utilized by Applied Scholastics International to improve the quality of education world wide. This technology identifies the three key barriers to learning that a student encounters by determining the mental or physiological phenomena a student is displaying.

For example, nervous hysteria is one of the potential symptoms of having passed a misunderstood word. How often have students displaying

this symptom been labeled by a teacher as 'perhaps having ADD'? From that moment on the teacher will most likely find other 'evidence' of ADD and perhaps even recommended that child be put on the destructive drug Ritalin.

One of the great tragedies of labeling is when a student accepts as being true the label they are incorrectly tagged with, such as when they are placed in a class for students with learning disabilities. They begin to think, "I am learning disabled and lower their expectations and belief in what they can accomplish."

Understanding the Study Technology of L. Ron Hubbard, students do not attach labels to themselves when they have problems in study. They think, "I hit a barrier to learning". They identify the symptom they are displaying and determine which of the barriers they have hit. They then know the correct solution to handle their problem.

Let's keep the attachment of negative labels to students having learning difficulties from becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. Let's take the viewpoint that a student with a learning problem has hit one of the barriers to learning, and let's help him or her overcome that barrier by applying the correct technology as developed by L. Ron Hubbard.

"Waiting Children"



Shondra and Keisha, ages 8 and 7: These two African American/Caucasian sisters were both birthday girls last month! Shondra and Keisha are very close and share many of the same interests. Shondra is a bright and inquisitive older sister who is strong in spirit. Keisha is a curious and independent little one with a passion for nature. Both girls are bright and eager to learn. These sisters are waiting for parents with generous amounts of love, praise and patience so they can reach for a hopeful future.



Travis, age 9: Travis would be a wonderful addition to the right family. One-on-one with adults, he tends to be an easy-going child to be with. Rollerblading, skiing, swimming and soccer are special interests for this strong and coordinated kid. He is a hard worker and helps out around the house, participating in family chores. Patience and flexibility would be important qualities as both Travis and his new family aim to construct a solid and loving framework of skills for this big-hearted boy.

Flying the coop

Freshman year of college, and your son or daughter is trading in home-cooked meals and their home town for cafeteria food and dorms. With all the excitement surrounding the new student's first-time trek away from home, insurance issues are often overlooked.

"College students often bring with them valuable items such as stereos, expensive cameras, TVs and personal computers. If you own your home or even if you rent, you may be pleasantly surprised to learn that both homeowner's and renter's insurance policies provide coverage for most-if not all-items students take to college, whether they are staying in a dorm or renting an apartment,"

says Marianne Macina, CPCU, regional manager for Western Insurance Information Service (WIIS).

According to Macina, "homeowner's and renter's policies typically cover property stolen away from home, usually up to 10 percent of the contents coverage."

For instance, you may have insured your home for \$100,000 and your contents for \$60,000.

That will most likely mean that your student's belongings away from home will be covered up to \$6,000 (10 percent of the content's coverage selected)--minus the policy's deductible (usually between \$250-\$500).

Some companies now provide up

to \$5,000 coverage for a personal computer, but it may not be covered if it's not at the residence.

There are certain dollar limits on some kinds of personal property such as jewelry, watches, cash or furs.

So be sure to check with your insurance agent to determine the specifics for any items not covered under your homeowner's policy.

"Parents might also be able to take advantage of substantial automobile insurance discounts," says Macina. (Some companies offer parents discounts of up to 20-25 percent for students more than 100 miles away from home without a car in their possession. Again, WIIS advises consumers to check with their

insurance agent or company representative.)

For free brochures on homeowner's insurance, renter's insurance, auto insurance and more, contact: WIIS, 11855 SW Ridgecrest Drive, Suite 107, Beaverton, Oregon, 97008, (503) 643-6355/(800)457-87133.

In addition, members of the WIIS Speakers' Bureau offer free presentations on a variety of insurance and loss prevention issues.

Speakers show films, distribute educational materials and present information in a non-commercial atmosphere. For more information contact the WIIS regional office in Beaverton.

Parents of Children with Asthma & Allergies

Parents of Children with Asthma & Allergies Support Group will meet on Sunday afternoon, September 15, noon-4 p.m. at Oaks Amusement Park.

A discount will be given by the park.

This is the back-to-school event for children with asthma and allergies and their parents.

Parents of Children with Asthma & Allergies Support Group is free and open to anyone interested in information on children with asthma or allergies.

Please call 636-9242 to RSVP.

Behavior Management for Children

Mt. Hood Community College's Early Childhood Institute will offer a two-hour seminar for childcare providers, educators and parents of young children on Sept. 16 7-9 p.m.

"The How and Whys of Effective Behavior" will focus on criteria to consider when deciding what management tools to use, how to use "soft" and "hard" tools, and which to use in which situation.

Michael Morrow, a popular regional and national teacher and instructor at Portland Community College, will facilitate the seminar. Morrow has worked with children and teachers for more than 20 years, teaching preschool, Head Start, elementary school and college.

The deadline for registration is Sept. 13. The cost is \$9. For registration form and schedule of upcoming Mt. Hood Childhood Institute seminars, call Jan Sullivan at 667-7357.

Show kids the way to 5 a day

Only one in five children eat the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables every day, and nearly one-fourth of all the "vegetables" they consume are french fries, according to a 1996 report in the Archives of Pediatrics and Internal Medicine. Fruit and vegetable consumption needs to begin in childhood to become a healthful lifestyle habit, so tots must be provided with an ongoing variety of fruits and vegetables to choose from everyday.

Pre-schoolers can learn colors, shapes and textures from fruits and vegetables like fuzzy kiwis, purple eggplants and starfruit. Children who help out in the kitchen often develop a more active interest in the foods they've helped to prepare. For a cool treat, finely dice a variety of berries, melons and oranges, adding a tablespoon of sugar to each 2 cups of diced fruits. Let stand a few minutes then spoon into 5 oz. paper cups, and freeze for about three hours.

Pop a can of fruit cocktail into the freezer overnight. Open both ends and push through; cut into slices and top with fat-free whipped topping! And it's quick and easy to introduce kids to fresh salads with Tanimura & Antle's Salad Time for Kids.

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