

CLIP TRANSCRIPT:

[Lawrence Barns]: Right, let's talk about particularly for educators now and let's talk about the things that they should understand and that you'd like educators to know in dealing with the parents' side of this relationship, Kelli, with your educator hat on and assuming that each teacher is experiencing more and more kids and let's be honest it's special needs in a general sense between learning disabilities, autism, behavioural issues there is a gamut in that inclusive model that I'm gonna be very clear and up front and say I think it's difficult for a teacher to deal with all of those kids in a classroom environment as every parent would like it all of the time. I think that's almost an impossible equation and I want to get that on the table up front. But what can educators do to ease that relationship with parents? What tips, tricks, insights do you have to that one?

[Kelli Cote]: I think empathy, compassion, I think you have to understand that there's a grieving process sometimes with parents when we're finding out about identifications whether it's a learning disability or it's autism, and we're all in different places along that process. Trust. We as educators can break trust very easily and we need to establish a trusting relationship at all times and I think going back to your point earlier about being open, when parents call it's not about necessarily complaining, and so we have to take that information in. They might send us one or two children and so they're gonna be strong advocates and we can't be afraid of that 'cause they really just want what's best for their kids. For teachers I think we could be very mindful in terms of providing a differentiated instruction model that it's not a one-size fits all and I know we're working very hard on that. Assessment practices can change. Again, it's not a one size fits all and how do we include people along the way because we can wrap the package up but we need to unpack it and see who's in our room. I think we need to be open, and I think we need to listen, and I think we need to be very careful about putting our own opinions on parents. I think we need to listen to what they're sending us and be responsive to their needs.

[Lawrence Barns]: And I think you spoke at the beginning of this and I think it's such a key point for the educator is the biggest downfall for all of us in this, in managing the parent-teacher relationship is if the kid starts to hate school. Because the minute they're starting to hate the school process we're all going to find our lives much more difficult. And it is finding these kids' strengths, finding those little areas where they can have success is so important, but the other interesting thing when you talk about openness, and again, now I work in the field I see so much that I didn't know when I was a parent. So I was talking to a director of education not long ago who was showing me all of the different tests they do in school to see where kids are at from their reading ability and various things, and there's all sorts of screens and other things. As a parent I thought it was an IPRC and an IEP and that was it. There's all this other stuff often going on in the background and as a parent, I'm gonna make a plea to educators to just you know what? Let us know what you're finding. If their reading ages are improving but they're still behind their peers I'd like to know that as a parent because I can then make an informed decision of potentially adding some extra tuition, right?

[Kelli Cote]: Correct.

[Lawrence Barns]: I know that potentially it can't always all be done in the school environment. There's not enough hours in the day, Kelli, right? But if I don't have that information I'm always gonna be looking to the educator and the school to solve my issue.



Podcast clip transcript: Managing Parent-Teacher Relationships”

[Kelli Cote]: And so they need to be honest about that.

[Lawrence Barns]: Right.