



Helicopter Parenting VS Helpful Parenting, by Dr. Brad Schwall

We don't want our children to fail or hurt. We want our children to succeed. We must determine the best strategies and techniques for helping our children grow, mature, and thrive. There are key differences between being a "helicopter parent" and a helpful parent:

Helicopter Parenting

Goal – avoid all pain and problems
Strategy – intervene and rescue
Takes away problems
Leads to dependence and external locus of control

Helpful Parenting

Goal – teach how to face problems
Strategy – equip, listen, and guide
Helps problem-solve
Leads to independence and internal locus of control

Becoming a helpful parent does not mean wanting your children to fail or avoiding guidance or supervision that can help them avoid failing. Being a helpful parent means equipping your children with the skills they need to succeed and helping them problem-solve when they do not. If you rescue your children without helping them problem-solve or reflect on the situation, they learn that there are forces outside themselves that can take away problems rather than to rely on their own strengths and wisdom to handle challenging situations.

How to Be a Helpful Parent

- Decide what values you want your child to learn
- Make expectations for behavior clear
- Set limits
- Enforce consequences
- Teach problem-solving
- Communicate positively
- Teach accountability

We cannot control others or our circumstances, but we can control how we respond to them. The world around us is not perfect and we all make mistakes. We must accept challenges, our own mistakes, and different personalities and choose to respond in the most respectful and responsible way possible. Our children will learn to blame others if we immediately blame a problem on another child, a teacher, a coach, or another parent. There's nothing wrong with watching over our children, it's what we do when we swoop in when they have a problem that matters. Instead of intervening to take away the problem, step in to guide and help your child think, accept responsibility, and learn.

© 2012 Dr. Brad Schwall, Author *Cool Kids* Resources for Schools and Parents. The *Cool Kids* resources help schools develop positive learning environments, children build character, and parents effectively parent their children. Sign up to receive free parenting tips: www.coolkidschannel.com/parentingtips, DrSchwall@coolkidschannel.com