

September 2020

Dear Parents,

If you are thinking about what is the best education you can imagine for your child ...

If you are questioning how you can best support that happening for your child ...

If you are open to considering some “out of the box” alternative views on education ...

In this letter, we offer some perspectives from our many years working with teachers, parents, and school administrators. We especially draw on Victoria’s 45 years of professional work in the field of homeschool education.

An excerpt from the book *Discover Your Child’s Learning Style*, co-authored by Victoria and Mariaemma Willis, describes two approaches you may find useful to consider—“Outside-In Education” and “Inside-Out Education”:

Kids can be educated in two ways: (1) from the outside-in and (2) from the inside-out. Educating from the outside-in means that a child is expected to be passive most of the time. Rules, instructions, and information come from the top down, from the experts or authority figures to the students. Knowledge is dispensed and a student’s role is to receive information. Shoulds, oughts, musts, commands, and demands are often the means for communicating to learners who are judged by test scores as blameworthy or praiseworthy, right or wrong, good or bad. Students are evaluated by comparing them with each other. ... Rewards and punishment are used as a means for motivating learning.

The second way that children can be educated is from the inside-out. In this philosophy, children are expected to be active and involved. They are seen as individual people with traits and attributes of their own. They are people to get to know, people with whom to interact. They are seen as people coming into wholeness from the inside-out, on their own time schedules. Expectations and methodologies are individualized as much as possible. Parents and teachers set up appropriate conditions that encourage skill development and learning-success. Respect is the underlying principle for interaction. ... Motivation for learning comes from having interests, strengths, and goals acknowledged, and from being appropriately challenged.

Parenting Practice

With the contrast between outside-in and inside-out education in mind, think about what kind of education you want for your child. The short survey below may help you clarify your thinking:

___ Are you a person who fully buys into the concept of *school* and wants to support it every step of the way to high school graduation and beyond? What needs does this approach to education meet for you? What needs are not met for you by this approach?

___ Are you a person who fully buys into the concept of providing things that work with the individual needs and interests of individual kids? What needs does this kind of education meet for you? What needs are not met for you?

___ Are you a person who would like a blend of the above approaches? What needs would be met for you with a blended approach? What needs would not be met?

Family Activity

Sura lives with her daughter and nine-year-old grandson. They have a family meeting every Friday morning, as described below:

Our most recent activity was to clarify and express what's important to us for the fall. We each made a visual representation of six needs that are important to us: Learning, Contribution, Rest & Fun, Family & Friends, Movement & Exercise, Creativity. We wrote down how we would like to meet these needs in the fall, and we talked about how we could support each other. We expect to receive the school district's agenda for the 2020–2021 school year in the next few weeks, and we will see if/how it fits into our picture of what is important to us for this fall. We can then discuss if/how we want to follow their curriculum. (I want us to be very clear that it is a choice to participate in the public school program, not a "have to.")

We hope this story inspires your family to find multiple ways to talk together about what matters to each one of you, and how you can help each other meet needs.

Resources

Article: [“What if we radically reimagined the new school year?”](#)

Books: *Discover Your Child's Learning Style: Children Learn in Unique Ways—Here's the Key to Every Child's Learning Success*, by Mariaemma Willis, M.S., and Victoria Kindle Hodson, M.A.

Awakening Your Child's Natural Genius, by Thomas Armstrong

In Their Own Way, by Thomas Armstrong

The Myth of the A.D.D. Child, by Thomas Armstrong

Family Matters: Why Homeschooling Makes Sense, by David Guterson

Beyond Discipline, by Alfie Kohn

The Schools Our Children Deserve, by Alfie Kohn

Emotional Intelligence, by Daniel Goleman

A Short, Angry History of Modern Schooling, by John Taylor Gatto

Dumbing Us Down, by John Taylor Gatto

A Mind at a Time: Every Child Can Succeed, by Mel Levine M.D.

Positive Discipline in the Classroom, by Jane Nelsen

Nonviolent Communication, by Marshall B. Rosenberg

Respectful Parents, Respectful Kids, by Sura Hart & Victoria Kindle Hodson

The Compassionate Classroom, by Sura Hart & Victoria Kindle Hodson

The No-Fault Classroom, by Sura Hart & Victoria Kindle Hodson

We hope you find these resources and perspectives helpful in your journey.

With warm wishes,

— Victoria & Sura

*Victoria & Sura are available for consultations by phone or Zoom
and can be reached by email: Sura Hart – sura@thefaultzone.com
Victoria Kindle Hodson – victoria@thefaultzone.com*