

The Socialization of Children

From time to time when asked, I tell someone who doesn't already know, usually extended family or new acquaintances, that we are keeping our kids home from school. They look puzzled until I use the word "homeschooling". Like clockwork, sooner or later, they mention the social aspect of schooling and why it's important that kids play with other kids. I respond, not wanting to get into anything, that we have play groups during the week and that my children are often found gaming with friends over the internet.

Now, that's true, the play groups and internet gaming, but that's not always the best response to one's concern about socialization. Actually, I strongly believe, through logic and experience, that what kids learn in school is anti-socialization. But that's another post. What I wanted to briefly talk about here is proper socialization.

From the time they're born until they're about 18, children are preparing for the rest of their lives; in other words, they are preparing for *adulthood*. Part of that preparation is learning to communicate with other human beings. That's an important thing, communication. We're social animals, and socializing with others of our species is darn near vital to our survival.

"Kids need to learn to work with other kids," they say. "But why?", I must ask. "When will they be working with other kids as adults?" Haha! No, really, think about it. As adults, they won't be using working-with-kids skills, they'll be using working-with-adults skills. Right? In preparation for adulthood, shouldn't kids be, at least partly, among adults? Shouldn't they be learning to communicate with adults? Shouldn't their socialization be learned from adults? It's not a no-brainer until you put your brain on it. It makes complete sense. Now, give yourself a facepalm and say "Duh!".

Kids can't learn proper communication skills and socialization from other kids because those kids need to learn them too! (Blind leading the blind?) They can only learn them from adults, and those are who they should spend quite a bit of time with if our concern is learning communication skills and socialization.

The comment is always made, and it needs to be properly responded to. Of course, tact must be used. Sometimes it's not worth getting into a heated argument over. But there are those who are genuinely interested and open-minded enough to hear about this point of view. Give it to them.

(Cross-posted at my Life blog.)

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