

Example of raising successful children article review

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



Article Summary

The changes in playground equipment over the past four decades have been fascinating. If you went to a playground in 1972, you would have found a wooden or metal teeter-totter or two, a tall swing set with rubber seats and metal chains, a jungle gym that looks like the Northern Hemisphere, and a metal merry-go-round. The surface of the playground would have been the same grass as the rest of the field that made up the park. There might have even been a metal corkscrew slide; there certainly would have been a long metal slide. Nowadays, of course, the surfaces of playgrounds are soft and rubber, or filled with wood chips, to make landings softer. Merry-go-rounds aren't around anymore; too many people flew off and hurt themselves. Too many people have fallen off jungle gyms, and too many people have flown so far off a swing, with an exceedingly optimistic jump at the end of a swing, that they have broken a bone. So swing sets are shorter now. Parenting is different too, of course. There are more and more parents who sit at the table and do their kids' homework with them – in middle school, and even in high school. They write their kids' college application essays for them and call it “ editing.” They say that they are trying to help their children succeed, but all that they are really doing is keeping their own children from finding their own success – and doing their own growing.

This is the central argument of Madeline Levine's article entitled “ Raising Successful Children,” which recently appeared in the New York Times. She summarizes the results of an experiment by Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck, who has run many tests about the various effects of authoritative

parenting, self-esteem boosting, and other practices that happen with children at a variety of ages. One of her more interesting results is that children tend to do better, over time, if you do not tell them how well they are doing. The reason for this, according to Dr. Dweck, is that if a child succeeds at putting together a 500-piece jigsaw puzzle and then receives praise from a parent, that child will be afraid of a 750-piece puzzle, because failing might mean losing the approval of the parent. Ms. Levine has conducted clinical psychology for almost three decades and has found similar results; namely, that “ the happiest, most successful children have parents who do not do for them what they are capable or almost capable of doing; and their parents do not do things for them that satisfy their own needs rather than the needs of the child” (Levine). In other words, parents should allow children to try tasks that are at or slightly above their developmental levels, to allow them to grow. Parents should not try to fulfill their own needs through their decisions.

This makes a lot of sense to me. I do not understand the impulse behind “ helicopter parenting.” While it is positive for parents to be close to their children, it is not positive for parents to do everything for their children. The end result will be a generation of young adults who are basically unable to take care of themselves, because their parents will have left them practically and emotionally unable to fend for themselves. One would not expect a mother bird to put her young into a parachute and let it float to the ground; when it is time to fly, the mother pushes her young out of the nest, praying

that it will defeat the law of gravity, but never placing a trampoline underneath to stop the fall.