

11/20/08

Principal's Corner

If you ask adults what children need to succeed in school, they will say that children need a supportive family and a school system that provides for their learning needs.

If you ask children the same question, their answers might be somewhat different. Their responses may have more to do with friends and fun, and a sense of belonging. That's because friends and fun *do* help children achieve success in school.

In order to be "available" for learning, children need to feel comfortable in their school environment. They need to know that their interactions with their peers will be positive. That is why schools spend so much time working on character education. The focus is on how people treat each other. When children are kind to each other, they are more ready and able to learn.

This is the message we send to children every day at West Side School. I have been spending time in classrooms, on the playground, and in the lunchroom talking to children about kindness, friendship, and sticking up for each other. The teachers have been leading discussions about quotes, such as, "The only way to have a friend is to be one," (Ralph Waldo Emerson) and "Be the change you want to see in the world." (Mahatma Gandhi) Children are also learning that there is a big difference between "tattling" and "reporting." They are reporting unkind acts so that those involved in "being mean" can apologize and learn from their mistakes.

So, when you ask your child what s/he learned (that day) in school, you might also consider asking what s/he did to help someone, show patience and tolerance, or make someone's day brighter.

The more we ask, the more they'll know it matters.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please call.

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving!

Mrs. Herschlein

