



Miscellaneous Topics

Is a teacher important?

Children with disabilities need good teachers. A teacher is more important to these children than to a child without special needs. A teacher can make or brake a child with a disability/disorder.

Children with disabilities quite often hate school. The teachers do not know how to properly deal with them. When I ran the after school program, I saw the effect of a great teacher. Every time one of “my” children had her as a teacher, it was like a miracle. When my students had this teacher, suddenly they loved school. They were learning. The change was astounding. Their whole outlook on life and school changed. They were animated, eager to learn, not just in school but also outside of school. They were extroverted, happy, laughing, cooperative and easy to get along with. Their self-esteem soared. Unfortunately, the following year that was all gone. They now had a teacher, who did not understand them.

Is this the teachers’ fault. Maybe to some extent, however, I believe our complete educational system needs to change. I think several steps need to happen.

1. People wanting to become teachers should go through an assessment process to determine, if they are suitable as future teachers.
2. The education of future teachers should include mental health, both how to help a student with a disorder, but also to spot them without “diagnosing” them. Dr. Kutcher’s course is a beginning.
3. New teachers should be required to have this training, before any of our school boards would hire them.
4. Teachers, who want to become vice-principals or principals, should be required to have this training.
5. Existing vice-principals and principals should be encouraged to get this training.

This is a long-term process. In the meanwhile, we need to protect our most vulnerable population: children with disabilities. They have a moral right to a future as a productive member of our society. They are quite able to become that with the proper environment and support.

Think of some people in our past, who are believed to have had Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Where would we be without Albert Einstein, Thomas, Edison, Nova Scotia’s own Alexander Bell (a teacher of the deaf), Louis Pasteur and many other inventors and future-thinkers? We need more of these people to bring us forward to a better future. Does our future completely depend on people with ADHD? Of course not, but if we have a few futurists with ADHD or another disorder/disability, would it not be prudent to help that person grow and flourish?