Introduction

As children grow up, there are many social and hormonal changes that take place. However, if parents are not keen about psychological issues too, they may end up having a very hard time in controlling their children in future (Epp & Watkinson, 1997). A parent-child relationship is very important in determining the level of communication a child may decide to have with the parent. The school is one of the most important social places that can transform a child either into a violent person, a humiliated person or a confident and open minded child who is ready to open up to the parent to healthy growth (Socha & Stamp, 1995).

As a result of the frequent fights and abuse that happens between children in schools, the article looks into outlining and analysing the causes of child fights in schools and the way poor parent-child communication has led to the unhealthy growth of the child (Child Development Institute, 2015). The article will also analyse the best strategies for promoting communication between parents and the children so as to ensure school related issues are addressed effectively via building a strong bond between the parents and their children (Isay, 2007).

Causes of Fights in School Children

First of all, we look at the common causes of school fights among children. Children are in a learning stage and they tend to digest and learn from what they see. Most of the acquired behaviours that children have are from what they either see at home, at school or even in their neighbourhood (Socha & Stamp, 1995). Therefore, it is good to understand that children have feelings and they express them in the best manner that they think or that they see from their parents, peers, friends or even other adults that they adore. It is therefore upon their parents to ensure that they communicate effectively with their children so as to understand what they are going through (Epp & Watkinson, 1997).

Teachers and parents have the responsibility of teaching children the best way to behave and handle stressing situations. In the case of a violent situation, a child may not know how to react if their parents have not taught them or do not have time to ask them what is going on in their daily activities (Isay, 2007). Communication is the best way to know the progress and emotional status of a child. Otherwise, the child may borrow negative aspects from peers and other people who are ready to talk to them (Child Development Institute, 2015).

One of the most frequent causes of school fights is jealousy. Jealousy can be a cause of conflict between kids and their friends or peers. A case where another kid appears like other adolescents are treated better than them or a loved more than them by their peers, teachers or even their own parents may make them jealous. Children need attention. Parents have to keep on finding out what is going on in school so as to understand the things that may make their children jealous of others and thus resulting to violence if not addressed in time (Taffel, 2014).

Understanding who your child's best friend is and whom they spend most of their time with is very important, but that cannot happen if the parent is unconcerned. Peer pressure is like fuel to school violence (Child Development Institute, 2015). School fights may break out, not because there was any particularly valid reason, but because a child has been compelled by their peers to fight others so as to fit in a certain group. Other times, children may face molestation and bully from their peers and since they feel that they have nobody to communicate to about the issue, they result to violence as a way of protecting themselves (Socha & Stamp, 1995).

Parents have to also ensure that their children get enough food and money when they go to school. Money has been known to be a cause of conflict between children; a child without money may be tempted to steal some from their colleagues thus resulting to violence (Taffel, 2014). Communication and good relationships between parents and their children would help parents identify such issues in time. Additionally, children may fight over such petty issue as toys or even girlfriends; but remember, to them, these are serious issues that they feel were never addressed and they need to take the law into their hands (Turner & West, 2006).

However, one of the most important factors that may contribute to child violence both at school and at home is the behaviour of their parents. A child who grows up in a violent environment may tend to be violent through observatory traits. If the parents are always fighting in the presence of their children, then the children may transfer the same trait to others in school and make it a ‘normal' behaviour (Isay, 2007).

On the other hand, we may have some sensitive children who may be sick or reserved. This means that they may easily get into fights if provoked. As a result, it is upon the parents and the teachers to control their children and teach them to be nice to others to minimize the chances of violence (Turner & West, 2006). Psychological factors also play a immense role in propagating fights and other forms of violence in schools. The adoption of the violent attitude may be instigated by the divorce between parents at home. Most of these divorces take place at the early stage of marriage and the children witness everything in their tender age. This creates a mental disturbance for the children and they may tend to be violent to others in schools (Taffel, 2014).

Another aspect that promotes violent attitudes in children is, unreasonably high expectations from their parents; this builds up the mental pressure in them. Parents want their children to excel in each and every sector in schools and thus the children feel as if they are failures. As a result, they cut communication and withdraw from their parents and consequent violent nature builds up. Depression may be another driving factor to child fights in schools. A mentally disturbed child with no one to talk to may tend to unleash this stress on other children through violence and fights. Finally, and most important of all, a child who feel unloved and lacks affection from their family members, particularly their parents, tend to be lonely and repulsive to the others and may even result to fighting so as to protect their privacy (Segrin & Flora, 2005).

Establishing effective Parent-Child Communication

The basic move in building up a good communication platform for children and their parents is by first of all understanding the children. Parents have to show concern and learn how their children operate, what they like, how they like it and their emotional response to challenges (Socha & Stamp, 1995). Most of these children have replaced their parents with the social media as the parents themselves have become too busy; finding no time to spend with their children and listen to them. A parent has to make their child feel that they genuinely care and are not just trying to patronize them (Isay, 2007).

The first thing is to create a talking environment with children as a parent. Let them recognize you as their most supportive best friend while at the same time ensuring that you do not neglect to discipline them in bad situations. It is good to create a talking ritual that will make a child open up gradually and soon build up trust and confidence in their parents. Apparently, this session should be about fifteen minutes to avoid boredom or more in case the child seems to be more interested. It is also advisable to join the child in their emotions as they address their issues to you (Salkind, 2002).

On the other hand, it is good to encourage the children to articulate their problems through an emotional intelligence. That is, knowing how to react to the issues they raise so as not to make them uncomfortable or embarrassed (Isay, 2007). Ensure that the child understands that you, as a parent, are going to take an action and address their problem. Children who are motivated by concerned parents who respond to their problems tend to be open more often and communicate way better with their parents. As a result, this leads to the mitigation of any violent behaviour that they may have acquired. Moreover, they are able to respond to violent situations as they would have already cultivated the confidence to address the issues with their teachers and parents (Socha & Stamp, 1995).

Finally, parents must ensure that they keep on advising their children on how to respond to certain violent situations. The adolescents must be taught that violence does not solve problems. At the same time, they must be taught on how to stand against bullies and how to respond in case of harassment (Salkind, 2002). Furthermore, the act of parents reprimanding their children and embarrassing them should be avoided. The children must be sure that in case they report something to their parents, they will not see them as weak, shout at them or even scold them. They will instead provide a listening ear and offer a solution or advice (Taffel, 2014).

Violence in children is mostly emotional and psychological. Parents have to create a conducive environment for their children to learn and grow emotionally. Leaving children to entirely look for solutions in the social media will definitely lead to violent behaviour in schools which may result in suicides or even murder if not addressed in time (Salkind, 2002). On the other hand, the only way to address them is to know what is going on with the children when in school. Parents should be the best friend to their children and thus their role models. A word of encouragement to a child will definitely boost a good relationship between them and the parents and communication will be enhanced as they tend to feel loved and appreciated (Isay, 2007).

To show attention, one has to leave what they are doing and concentrate on what the child is saying, turn off your phone in case a call comes in unless it is an emergency. Child conversations should be held in private to ensure that they do not feel embarrassed unless they are comfortable with other family members being around (Taffel, 2014). A child should never be embarrassed in front of others or family members as it may lead to hostility and resentment that may be taken to school as well as impeding communication. In addition, never address a child's bad behaviour when angry. Regain your cool and then talk about it (Socha & Stamp, 1995).

When a child is trying to narrate their ordeal of the violence in school, do not try to insert your own theme into the story. Just let them finish and then ask questions. It is always good to inquire what happened that asking why it happened (Salkind, 2002). After the story has been told, then give the child your version of the story as given and let them ascertain if it is true. It is here that an action should be taken. A child is then given some advice. The listening should be polite and careful to win the openness of the child to the parent in future (Turner & West, 2006).

Addressing School Violence through Effective Communication

The reduction of violence begins with parents at home. Children are the easy recipient of observatory behaviour. Therefore, parents must ensure that domestic violence is mitigated so that children do not copy it. Secondly, children can practically be taught to be non-violent through effective communication. Developing a loving relationship with the children ensures that the nature of violence is mitigated as some of the children are violent as a result of loneliness and lack of compassion (Segrin & Flora, 2005).

Secondly, violence can be curbed through building self-esteem in children. Such a child will have the confidence to stand up for themselves in tough situations as well as the courage of sharing it with the parents at home (Turner & West, 2006). Instead of using physical punishments, parents should use such means as withdrawal of privileges to send a message that violence is bad. Cultivate anger and emotional management in children by setting up a personal example by being calm in extreme situations (Socha & Stamp, 1995).

Talking to children as parents and acknowledging their emotions is very important. Explain the aspects that violence seen on the social media or television is just acting and it should never be copied (Isay, 2007). In case violence happened at school, allow the children to talk it out and add your views about it after listening to theirs. This would help the parent assess which child is on the verge of embracing violence and tactfully address the issue. Lastly, teaching the kids to have tolerance for others is very important. Make sure that they understand that violence does not solve problems but rather accelerates it (Segrin & Flora, 2005).

Conclusion

Communication between parents and their children is the best way to address aggressive and violent behaviours in children. Moreover, it is a platform that helps children cultivates the confidence to handle violence through self-control and stand up to it (Epp & Watkinson, 1997). This method will build a better relationship between the child and the parent. Good communication ensures that children do not suffer in silence and at the same time giving parents the chance to address the school and home issues facing their children (Turner & West, 2006).

References

Isay, J. (2007). Walking on eggshells: Navigating the delicate relationship between adult children and their parents. New York: Doubleday/Flying Dolphin Press.

Socha, T. J., & Stamp, G. H. (1995). Parents, children, and communication: Frontiers of theory and research. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Turner, L. H., & West, R. L. (2006). The family communication sourcebook. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Epp, J. R., & Watkinson, A. M. (1997). Systemic violence in education: Promise broken. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Salkind, N. J. (2002). Child development. New York: Macmillan Reference USA.

Segrin, C., & Flora, J. (2005). Family communication. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Child Development Institute. (2015). From Toddlers To Teens; Good Communication With Children Is Possible. Retrieved from https://childdevelopmentinfo.com/how-to-be-a-parent/communication/#.WDm9\_aI9rIU

Taffel, R. (2014). 7 Powerful Tips for Great Parent-Child Communication | TIME. Retrieved from http://time.com/65324/7-powerful-tips-for-great-parent-child-communication/

The issue on school fighting and need for parent-child communication

Dear Dan,

Today was an embarrassing day to me just to say the least. It was such a stressful day to me; my 11-year-old son brought me a letter. I was feeding my youngest son who is now 3 years old when your nephew Christopher came to me with his faced dropped and handed me a suspension letter. From the look on the face I noticed not everything was not going on fine. The letter read, “Your son Christopher has been suspended for violation of school code of conduct and it has been noted as a recurrent behaviour in three separate occasions.” I could not believe my dear son had just turned into a fighter at school despite the many times we have talked on the issue of fighting. He told me that fighting happened because another boy gave him a look he didn’t like, then they exchanged words. His friends instigated the situation by goading him on then finally the fight broke out in the cafeteria. He said that he didn’t want to fight but his friends asked if he was afraid to fight the other kid. I told him peer pressure was no reason to get into fights before but I guess he still hasn’t learned his lesson.

My son has been having unusual behaviours over the past two terms. He has been in company of other boys in the neighbourhood. Of late he has been coming back home at around 6 pm which I have talked to him about severally but he claims that he is doing homework with his friends but when I ask the parents of his friend they deny seeing him at their house. I know that when children reach the adolescent age such as this they change because several factors at home and at school such as of peer pressure. The fighting behavior at has now become too much as teachers have called me earlier to explain of Christopher’s behavior change. Though I cannot judge through my experience when I was growing up but I must say that for Christopher’s case it is extreme considering his age. Racism, inferiority complex and peer pressure are described as the leading contributors to fighting cases at schools in America (U.S. Department of Education [U.S. DoE], 2007), which I believe should be the cause for this sudden behaviour change.

Many parents are facing the problem of controlling their children’s behaviour especially when they reach the adolescent age. The most notable causes of adolescent violence behaviour in schools are the increased parent-child conflict, the desire to experiment and self-identification (Bonilla, 2000). Through my interaction with my friends at work we discuss the issues that affect their adolescent children and try to come up with solutions through brainstorming. Through such team participation I believe that I will be able to work a way out to the problem.

The thing that I will continue to do is making my son be free with me and discuss out the problem. Through a one on one communication with him I will be able to understand what makes him get into fights all the time. I address the issue by making him understand that there are other ways of solving a problem rather than fighting each other which lowers a person’s worth. For instance, I will show him that walking away from fights doesn’t make one a coward but rather it makes you powerful by doing the right thing. Using books and movies that are non-violent which he loves I believe my son’s behaviour will be reformed for the better. For instance, I will be an example by not being aggressive on him not because I am a coward or unable but because I want to solve the problem entirely in an appropriate manner such as withdrawing privileges from him will make him return to his senses and notice the wrong done. He will probably resist the increased discipline I will implement but it is for the best of our family.

I would love your view in this matter Dan since your son had comparable issues when he was growing up in California with his mom after your divorce. How did you handle disciplining him when in different cities through joint custody? Any information that you can recommend may perhaps ease the transition into a better relationship with Christopher and will benefit us as a family.

References

Bonilla, D. (2000). *School Violence*. New York: H.W. Wilson Co.

U.S. Department of Education. (2007). *Empowering Parents: School Box*. Washington, D.C: Author.