



Birthday Invitation Policy Gives Students False Sense of Reality

By Shawnta S. Barnes - October 26, 2018

Recently, I came across an article about a six-year-old boy in Arizona who invited all of his classmates to his birthday party, but no one showed up to the party. The reason any of us know about this incident is because his mom posted a picture of

him sitting alone at his birthday party. How many students are really friends with every single kid in their class? This story made me wonder if his school had one of those birthday invitation policies.

One of the preschools my boys attended had a policy that wouldn't allow parents to distribute birthday invitations unless every child in the class received one. I have spoken to other parents who have come across this policy at their children's school. This policy is ridiculous. I put this policy in the same category of letting every child that tries out be part of a sport's team even though every child doesn't have the talent or the ability. We are too busy trying to ensure that students don't get their feelings hurt that we are not helping them deal with reality. It would be better for a child not to be invited to a birthday party and the parents help the child process his or her feelings about not being invited instead of having the child attend a birthday where he or she is not wanted.

I have identical twins. Both of them have their own friends, but one time one of my sons' friends invited him to his birthday party. The next day, his mom contacted me to invite his twin brother so he would not feel left out. I told the mom that both of my sons have attended birthday parties of their friends solo and it is not appropriate nor should she feel the need to invite both of my sons. My son was okay with not attending because it was not his friend but his brother's friend.

Kids need to learn how to deal with rejection or they will grow up and become adults who can't deal with rejection. There are so many schools adopting and implementing social-emotional learning, but I wonder if they are checking to see if they have policies that do not support this work. Kids should be taught to be kind to other students, but I don't think it is kind to invite someone to your party because that's the only way the school will allow you to invite the kids you really want at your party. There are so many other areas where school leaders should put their focus instead of policing birthday invitations.