



When School Discipline Goes Wrong

Educator Barnes – March 26, 2019

In some mythical utopian school, students would be angels. They would come to school ready to learn. They would work hard, follow rules, and get along with other students, but we know conflict and bad behavior is part of growing up. Students have to learn how to behave and interact with others.

Knowing student misbehavior will happen, educators should be prepared to handle students when they misbehave. Unfortunately, in East St. Louis, students were subjected to inappropriate discipline. According to *CBS Philly*:

Two Head Start teachers are on paid administrative leave after preschoolers were allegedly forced to strip off all of their clothes and stand in a closet as part of punishment for misbehaving...four of the 20 students in the class, aged 4 and 5, were forced to take their clothes off.

The number one rule of discipline is that the punishment should match the offense. There is no offense students could commit that warrants taking off all their clothes at school.

What angers me the most about this incident is that the children involved are in preschool. Preschool is a child's first school experience. No child's first school experience should involve standing naked inside of a closet. Yes, the teachers are on administrative leave, but the damage is done. It seems like these teachers were more concerned with shaming these children instead of creating a loving and safe environment where they could learn to improve their behavior.

This situation also creates mistrust for their parents. As an educator, I have met parents who automatically don't trust me because of an incident that happened with a previous teacher. I understand this because as a parent, I have been skeptical of my children's teachers because of past experiences with other teachers. It will be hard for these parents to trust the next teacher.

Discipline is a necessary component of school, but it must be restorative. Teachers have to help students understand why their behavior is problematic, but they also have to teach students how to behave differently. If you are a teacher and are more concerned about getting even with a student or shaming him or her, then you need to seek a different profession.