

Teachers Need to Dress Professionally

By Shawnta S. Barnes - July 27, 2018



When I was a literacy coach, a teacher came to me enraged. An administrator spoke to her about what she had been wearing to work. She was wearing short dresses on some days and pants that could pass as exercise attire on other days. She explained she thought she looked cute and how she was trying to dress comfortably. She also expressed the administrator could be completing other tasks instead of chastising her about her clothing. The teacher soon learned I wasn't the person to voice her complaints.

Below, I have included a few reasons why teachers need to dress professionally.

Families won't care what you have to say if you don't dress appropriately.

Typically, if I have a meeting with one of my sons' teachers, I go with my husband. I always want a second pair of ears and a second person in the room advocating for my child because many times teachers will bring someone with them to support their claims. One of my sons had a terrible kindergarten teacher who eventually quit. One time, I had a meeting and my husband wasn't available, so I asked my dad to come. After I left the meeting with my dad, the first thing my dad said was, "What was that teacher wearing? It looked like she was in a nightie." The teacher was wearing a lacy, very short, baby doll cut dress with platform shoes. My dad continued, "How is she going to bend down and tie a kid's shoe? How can she sit on the floor with the students? Why did the principal let her wear this?" We talked little about the topic of the conference because my dad couldn't get past what the teacher was wearing.

Teachers are representatives of the school.

As a representative of the school, teachers should look their best. A reporter might be at the school or a photographer might drop in to take a photo. As a representative of the school, it should be clear that you actually work at the school. I have seen parents enter a classroom room to look for the teacher, and they don't realize the teacher was inside the room. They thought the adult was another parent or a volunteer because of how the teacher was dressed.

If teachers want respect, they need to look respectable.

Teachers say time and time again that society needs to respect the teaching profession. We can't bring respect to our profession when teachers look like slob or look like they are about to go to a party at a club. Kids' hormones can be all over the place, and it can be hard for them to focus on instruction when they are focused on the teacher's tight fitting attire. Part of being respected is your appearance. If you look disheveled, not only will adults question and lose respect for the teacher, but students might not respect the teacher either.

Yes, in the younger grades teachers may sit on the floor and have to bend down more, but teachers can purchase comfortable professional clothing. The bottom line is teachers are professionals, and they should dress like professionals.