

Thank you for taking time to attend our annual graduation cum concert event. My topic today is “Supporting our children in their pursuits”

This year we booked here for 3 hrs to cater for my half hour speech. I see some worried faces. Now that I get your attention, let me begin.

Let me start by sharing with you a lesson learnt from teaching my son Chinese language.

Wendy and I speak mainly English at home, only occasionally I will speak Mandarin. As such, our children naturally speak English to us all the time. So when it comes to learning Chinese, it is always a struggle for them. I expected my son to learn by himself because that was how I did it. I didn't have tuition and my parents were not able to help. I did 2 first languages in Secondary school and managed to do well for both on my own. So my expectation of my son's standard of Chinese is naturally high. I asked him to check the dictionary for the words he didn't know but even after knowing how to read, he couldn't understand the meaning of the passage. I didn't spend enough time to explain to him. I get angry whenever he didn't feel like studying and would find all kinds of excuses to delay doing Chinese. He will cry after I give him a lecture. After some reflection and talking with him, I realised that he is just not interested in Chinese. He is very interested in the other subjects and is doing well in them. So I decided to lower my expectations for his Chinese, do whatever I can to help him and hope that he can do well. I don't want to spoil my relationship with him because of this. Learning Mother Tongue is important but to me, our relationship is more important.

How are we supporting our children in their studies? Do we give them tuition for every subject even those that they are already doing well? Do we have realistic expectations of them? How much time do we spend with them? These are some questions which we need to ask before pushing our children to work harder. Is the relationship between parent and child more important or the results? Do we hold back our love when our children don't do well? I don't have all the answers because I am also learning along the way. What's important is to have frequent reviews of where our children are and adjust our expectations accordingly.

Nature is a very important ingredient for success. However, nature without proper nurture is useless. For example, we need to water a plant to make it grow. If the stem is weak, we use a stick to support its growth. Similarly, we need to monitor our children's progress and give necessary support along the way.

I believe most of us have at least 'O' levels. So we are more than qualified to coach our children up to PSLE. Well u may say that nowadays their curriculum is very different from ours. For me, I see this as an opportunity for us to learn with our children. If we find their work confusing and difficult and yet expect them to be able to handle, I don't think it is fair. u can employ the best tutors for your children but the effect is not as good as we putting efforts in trying first. We don't want our children to think, “Since daddy and mummy can't do, it is ok if I can't do it too.”

If u are not doing so already, u can start by reading our partnership circular and letting your child bring an object on Wednesdays for show and tell. The first formative assessment for P1 students is show and tell. This is a very good way of building up a child's confidence in speaking up in front of the class. I think this is a good starting point for you to be involved in your child's learning.

I understand that most of us are busy with our work etc. but parenting is a full-time job. We don't have to wait till our children are sick then take urgent leave to be with them. I always remember a movie where a boy deliberately went naked and exposed himself under the air-con to get sick so that his busy parents will take leave to be with him. Each time I watched that scene, my tears will flow. The little boy was known as 'xiao bin bin'. I am sure the name rings a bell for some of you.

Let me sum up by saying that our children need our constant monitoring and guidance in their lives. We need to show them how to do it and better still, do it with them. They did not decide to come into this world. We decided to bring them here and now we need to fulfil our roles as parents, as role models and as coaches.

Thank you.