[AS PARENTS ARE WE HELPING OR HOVERING?](http://www.jeanniecampbell.ca/new-blog/2016/9/22/as-parents-are-we-helping-or-hovering)

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As a secondary school educator and counsellor in the public school system for over forty years, I have seen a dramatic increase in parental over-involvement in their sons and daughters lives in the past fifteen years. Is this over-involvement a good thing or a bad thing? I would argue that it is a bad thing. In her book, "How to Raise an Adult" (2015), Julie Lythcott-Haims states that she has encountered increasing number of students (at Stanford University) who are lacking a strong sense of self and are poorly equipped to handle the demands of adult life due to the hyper attentive parenting they have experienced in their young lives.

As parents we love our children and want the very best for them and with those two things in mind we are more than willing to help! But when does the help you give turn into hovering? When are you becoming a helicopter parent or a snowplough parent? In our enthusiasm to make sure our children are doing their best, are getting all the opportunities available to them and are being treated fairly by all the adults (teachers, coaches) they came in contact with, it is not uncommon for us to jump in, rescue, make decisions and save them so they don't have to face any discomfort or any really difficult situations because after all we know best! In my opinion this is when our helping becomes hovering.

When we are constantly jumping in to" help" our children we are taking away their opportunities to learn the many valuable skills needed to be successful. Learning basics skills such as decision making, handling stressful situations, understanding and coping with sadness is started in childhood and adolescence. When a parent is constantly coming to rescue their child or teenager so they don't have to face "bad" or uncomfortable situations these skills are not being learned. The other message that is received by some young people is "I'm useless", "I'm not trusted", and in some cases "I'm not good enough". In my opinion, the youth of hovering parents fall into one of two categories: they are either very entitled and feel that everything should be exactly as they want it to be or they are unmotivated, stressed, anxious and lacking in self confidence.

As parents, we need to help our children build resiliency. Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg in his book "Building Resilience in Children and Teens: Giving Kids Roots and Wings" says that resilience is comprised of the 7 C's: competence, confidence, connection, character, contribution, coping and control. When we are hovering with our kids we are taking away the many opportunities they have to build their resiliency so they can face things on their own. Mistakes can be our biggest teachers but if the mistakes are constantly being fixed by the hovering parent the lesson being learned is someone will swoop in and make it right for me or I can't handle this situation. What a huge reality check for these young people when they are on the job or away at school and their parents are not there to make things "right" for them.

In my next blog, look for tips on how to do help differently!

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