

## Helicopter Parents Activity 16: Considering the Writing Task/Assignment

Plan and prepare to write a response to the passage below. Before you begin writing, read the passage carefully and plan what you will say. Your writing should be as well-organized and carefully written as you can make it.

I recently attended my child's orientation for a new middle school. When I asked the principal how I could help in my child's classes, she told me I couldn't—that this was middle school, not elementary school, and that she wants the students to be less dependent on their parents. How insulting! I was the PTA President at my son's elementary school for five years and was present on his campus nearly every day because I believe kids are more successful when their parents are heavily involved in their lives. Just like athletes or musicians whose parents attend all their practices, kids whose parents volunteer in their classrooms know they have someone cheering for them every step of the way. And let's face it—middle school students are still kids. There are a lot of problems and issues they simply aren't ready to face alone yet. Having a parent continue to be a frequent presence in their school lives is one of the best ways to ensure young adolescents don't make too many big mistakes before they're prepared to handle the consequences. Moreover, in this time of big budget cuts, how can any school afford to turn away volunteers?

The benefits of parents in middle school classrooms are many: Schools need the help; parents need to know what's going on; and kids need someone looking after them.

— A Concerned Mother

In groups: Explain "Concerned Mother's" argument and discuss the ways in which you agree or disagree with her views. Support your position by providing reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or the reading "Putting Parents in Their Place."

Write in quotation marks each statement you AGREE with and why below:

Write in quotation marks each statement you DISAGREE with and why below:

Drawing your own conclusions: Do you Agree, Disagree, or are In The Middle about this issue and why? Please be specific.

## Helicopter Parents Activity 17: Taking a Stance

As you prepare to write, think carefully about your reactions to the various viewpoints you've read on the issue of parent involvement in middle school classrooms. Which ones most closely represent your own opinion? Do you agree with parts of a writer's argument but disagree with other parts? Use the activity below to think through the extent to which you see parent involvement in middle school classrooms as a help or hindrance.

### Polar Opposites Guide

This strategy can help you see that taking a stand on an issue doesn't have to mean choosing between two opposite positions.

Place a checkmark closest to the adjective that best describes your view of parent involvement in middle school classrooms. Then, in small groups of either Agree, Disagree, or are In The Middle, discuss and gather the evidence from the two texts to prepare for a Socratic Seminar discussion, defend your choices by using examples from the readings, class discussions, and your outside experiences and observations.

Parent involvement in middle school classrooms is...

helpful	—	—	—	—	—	harmful
supportive	—	—	—	—	—	intrusive
motivating	—	—	—	—	—	discouraging
needed	—	—	—	—	—	unnecessary
generous	—	—	—	—	—	self-serving
empowering	—	—	—	—	—	disabling
appreciated	—	—	—	—	—	unappreciated
important	—	—	—	—	—	unimportant
common	—	—	—	—	—	rare
	5	4	3	2	1	

Use the bottom and the back side to chart out your group's support/stance on the topic