

IN LOCO PARENTIS
**“In the Place
of Parents”**

Practical Guidelines for
Teachers and Parents
Regarding Their Roles in
the Education of Children

In Loco Parentis **"In the Place of Parents"**

Basic Teaching:

- **Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Ephesians 6:4, Colossians 3:21**
- **Parents are the ones given the charge by God to educate, train, and instruct their children.**
- **The school has no ordained authority directly from God, but only as that authority flows from parents.**
- **The Christian school is a "3-walled institution that cannot stand alone, it shares as its fourth wall the living room of the Christian home". (Jay Adams)**
- **This accountability cannot be handed over to an institution and no institution should try to take it. PA has no more business usurping the authority of parents than does the state.**
- **The parental authority, not accountability, to educate, train, and instruct can be delegated.**
- **Providence Academy exists because parents have asked the school to exist.**
- **Teachers who have been delegated this authority by parent, stand "in the place of parents" and carry the responsibility and authority for those children who are in their care exactly as the parents would if they were present.**

In Loco Parentis - Roles

Teachers

- You face 20–25 different children each day, but you serve 20-25 different set of parents.
- As situations arise, seek to relate to a particular child as their parents would in that situation.

- Do not view parental input as an invasion upon your domain in the classroom.
- You should expect authority to be given from parents.
- Earn the trust of the parents. Otherwise parents will see you as a third party between them and their child and will typically take the child's side in every situation and not delegate the authority you need to do your job properly.

Parents

- Take the responsibility for educating your child as commanded by God very seriously.
 - Don't just "pray and pay".
 - Don't just "praise and pay" – that the school has your child all day and you don't!
 - As you interact with the teachers, remember that they are seeking to serve 20-25 different sets of parents with different views, all held with equal sincerity, some with great passion, and some being mutually exclusive!

- Stay involved yet learn to delegate. Your child's classroom is not simply an extension of your private home school. You have a right and a duty to make sure a proper education is taking place for your child, yet you cannot maintain hands-on authority over every detail of what happens during the day.
 - View PA as a supplement to your own teaching, enabling you to be even more effective in your time you spend with your children.
 - Give teachers your trust and the authority they need to do their job.

In Loco Parentis - Roles

Teachers

- **Communicate, Communicate, Communicate!**
Always promote clear and constant communication with parents.
- **Always defend the authority of the family, especially the authority of the father.**
- **Don't put a child in the position of facing a conflict between what is expected of them in the classroom and what is expected of them at home. Know and appreciate the sensitivities of the parents to avoid offense whenever possible.**
- **Be careful not to pass judgment on the approaches taken by a parent in raising their child. The parent must give an account to the Lord, not you.**

- **Never view the home as an extension of your classroom or the school as a whole.**

Parents

- **Communicate, Communicate, Communicate!**
Always promote clear and constant communication with teachers. If you have a concern about the classroom, go to the teacher first (Matthew 18).
- **Fathers, stay involved. God holds fathers ultimately accountable for the education of their children.**

- **Don't view your child's teacher as simply an extension of your home. They are not expected to be available for your child 24/7.**

In Loco Parentis - Roles

Teachers

- As teachers, it is easy to expect the agenda of the classroom to dominate the evening activities by the homework assigned and the assistance expected from parents. Keep watch on the homework load so you don't begin to dominate the family "space."
- This same principle applies to other activities within the school which can consume a lot of time (sports, student government, etc.).

- You, your classroom, and PA are just pieces of the larger puzzle that parents are trying to put together in the lives of their children as they grow and develop.
- Respect parental choices when they say "NO" to PA and some of the school activities that are available.
- All PA programs exist to assist the family in the development of their children, not replace the family.

Parents

- Most teachers are parents as well and need to give time to their families. While a call at home may certainly be necessary at times, take advantage of the PA phone system to leave voice mails or call directly to the teacher's room. Discuss with your child's teacher the time which would be best for you to call the classroom.
- Guard your family time with passion.

- Recognize that the choices you make for and with your child have consequences. If you choose to develop your child in areas outside the school which are time consuming and impact the child's ability to meet the expectations of the classroom, then you should be willing to accept the possible impact – lower homework grades, lower overall grades, etc.
- Take the responsibility to help your child balance their areas of involvement within the school. Life does exist outside of PA.

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Thoughts for teachers and fathers:

Ephesians 6:4 and Colossians 3:21 speak directly to fathers to make the authority channel clear and to warn fathers - "do not provoke your children", "do not exasperate your children". Fathers have to continually be on guard not to stir their children up to anger. Since teachers stand in the place of the father's authority, the same warnings apply. Some applications for teachers:

- Don't overprotect the child - a proper balance of risk taking is necessary for their physical, moral, and spiritual development. In the classroom, don't fence the children in from every direction.
- Flee the temptation to show favoritism - all of us have experienced the sad results of partiality.
- The importance of encouragement - "break the will, not the spirit". Be especially watchful of how your words discourage. It is often the tongue that gets us in trouble. Take notice of the positive and communicate the positive to the parents. Don't let parents just hear from you when "Johnny or Sally have been bad". You can actually help parents see positive attributes about their children that they may be overlooking. In fact, our goal should be that we recognize the positive at a far greater frequency than we do the negative. However, our busy lives normally drive us to only have time to get involved and contact parents when things go bad. Resist this tendency and emphasize the good attributes and the good things that your students do. In doing so, you will remind parents of the importance of recognizing the positive as well.
- Balance tenderness and mercy with firmness and discipline - Cherish the child but don't protect them with so much mercy and grace that you shield them from the necessary unpleasantness and pain that will later bring great fruit. Remember that Eli lost his sons because he would not rebuke them (1 Samuel 3:13).

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Conclusion:

I Peter 4:10 – “As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

- **The teachers at PA have gifts that the parents of PA do not have and likewise, the parents have gifts that the teachers of PA do not have.**
- **Listening to each other can go along way in promoting an environment best for our children.**
- **All our gifts come from God and exist for reasons beyond ourselves. They are given to glorify God and given for the good of others.**
- **Parents should never underestimate the many ways that God flows grace through the gifts of teachers into the lives of their children and families.**
- **PA teachers are a blessing to the families of PA, used by God to strengthen the families in ways they cannot do on their own. The children of PA would be incomplete without them.**

**“Both parents and teachers should consider themselves as parental teachers, one of whom happens to be at home emphasizing parenting and the other at school emphasizing teaching. And each must recognize the other as such. To teach is to parent, to parent is to teach.”
(Jay Adams)**