

Show And Tell

Imagine a classroom busy with children, arriving one by one to attend a day's class or workshop, as in the home school set-up. At the door way, a child lingers and hesitates to come in while she or he hangs on to mom's skirt or dad's shirt. Teacher looks on, approaches the child and encourages the child to come in, hoping that the child will readily agree to enter the room, hoping that not too much time will be spent doing this. There are children already inside the classroom and cannot be left for long. Imagine this scenario happening over and over during the first few weeks of classes. It is at this crucial period when, sometimes, even the teacher may be the cause of a child refusing to go to school for good! This kind of teacher - child struggle is so common in the regular school setting. And yet, year after year, this event becomes an anticipated ritual, a dreaded one by the teacher and child. How creative should a teacher be to avoid this kind of school opening "rigodon" ? To a child who is about to enter an unfamiliar environment, bringing along an item that belongs to a special family member like mom or dad, will feel more secure. That special item provides the link to the familiar upon entering the unfamiliar. It provides the child some degree of comfort and assurance that the familiar is still there. The very wise teacher, therefore, would best let the child hang on to that special item to keep the tears from flowing. And so during the rest of the day, this special item becomes a fixture throughout the child's activities among the rest of the children. Imagine if all children, on their first few days of classes would have to bring a special item from their home. This is perfectly alright! What a sight to behold to see the children with all kinds of personal items attached to themselves. Won't it make you, the teacher curious enough to ask about such items? If it does make you curious, don't you think each little child would also be just as curious? I have seen such curiosity occur time and again ! And I have seen a child or two attempt to hide their precious items from overly curious classmates! I have not mentioned grabbing yet! But when grabbing occurs, the already settled child once again gets unsettled and cries. Now the teacher has to find ways once again to deal with a new situation in the classroom. It seems like an endless cycle. Show and Tell ! Children simply love to show off their personal effects and they also love to tell about these! On the very first weeks of classes, engage the children and their families to show and tell about their favorite items. Before the children show up for a class or workshop, notify the family that they would be encouraged to bring a special object, safe and manageable, to show and tell about. Just the prospect of bringing a favorite toy or item would already excite the child about going to school. The thought of having new friends be curious about something owned by the child already adds to the confidence the child should muster to enter the room full of new friends. The attention given by the teacher and classmates to each child and that special object, turn by turn, would significantly contribute to the child's growing self-esteem in that new environment. Teacher now be very careful about this important event in the new classroom. The goal of show and tell is to help each child settle in with a growing sense of confidence in his classmates, teacher and environment. It is not a show off and tell about event, it is not a competition. A child who brings in mommy's handkerchief should receive significant attention as would the child who brings in a colorful book. Whatever item brought in by each child must be used as a springboard for the child to feel more secure about the environment and thus, be eager to come back the next day, the next day, and so on... Oh by the way, teacher must also join in and show and tell ! After a day's event of show and tell, each child has not only learned about and appreciate their classmates' uniqueness, but each child has also learned to speak in front of an audience. Each child has also learned to be an attentive audience. But the most significant lesson of all after a show and tell event, is that the child feels valuable, important among his group of friends and teachers.

About the Author

Ani SC Torres, M.Ed in Special Education is the Administrative Coordinator for Academics of The Master's Academy Home School Program in the Philippines.

Source: <http://www.edarticle.com>