

# Preparing the Child for the Path

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No one enjoys struggles or difficulties. Difficult situations make us feel uneasy, but when we see our children in difficult situations, the uneasy feeling is magnified. We may know how to help them through the situation, and we want to help them because we love them. By helping them, we may relieve their stress and ours. But, we must consider the long term impact our decision to intervene may have on their ability to adequately cope in stressful situations.

“Many college students are showing an alarming lack of even basic internal coping skills.” (Reilly, Deidre. "[Coddled Kids Crumble](#)." *LifeZette*. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Nov. 2015.) This is a societal issue that stems from adults believing that they are not doing enough for their children. Research shows that colleges are finding that students no longer have the ability to cope with the slightest bump in the road. This is leading to changes in the educational process in college that are not for the long term benefit of students or society. As parents and as educators at Prince Avenue Christian School, we must guard against removing the opportunities for students to develop these coping skills.

“Students haven’t developed the skills to soothe themselves, because their parents have solved all their problems and removed obstacles. They don’t seem to have as much grit as previous generations,” states Dan Jones (Reilly, Deidre. "[Coddled Kids Crumble](#)." *LifeZette*. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Nov. 2015.) Students need to develop these skills so that they can cope with the increasingly difficult issues that our society is facing. If we do not give children the opportunity to face difficult situations while they have the safety net of parents surrounding them, obtaining those skills later in life will be even more challenging and more stressful because the consequences are greater.

Look back through the years, and remember when your children learned to walk. As parents, we sometimes held their hands to give them balance or to guide them along the way. However, we recognized that in order for children to learn to walk on their own we had to let go at some point in the process. We knew that when we let go, they were probably going to fall. Nonetheless, we had to allow them to fall and then get back up because we knew that falling was a part of learning to walk.

I believe that this same concept applies to all aspects of learning. Students must experience difficult situations in order to learn what they did wrong and how to correct it in the future.

In *Philippians 3: 14*, Paul encourages us to “press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus”. Paul endured many hardships in his ministry. He was beaten, stoned, shipwrecked, robbed and endured long journeys. Most of our children will never endure these types of struggles. However, we need to equip our students to “press on” through their own difficult times.

In order to do that, we must allow our students to struggle through some hard situations. We can offer advice, but we must allow them to make their own choices. Then we must require them to accept responsibility for those choices. Could we choose to allow them to complete a project without our help? Should we let them decide how to study for an assessment and then discuss the success or failure of that strategy? Could we encourage our children to ask the teacher questions instead of handling it for them?

As parents we are constantly either preparing our child for the path that is before them or preparing the path for the child. Although preparing the path may be easier now, preparing the child to walk their own path will lead to the student having the long term ability to cope with the difficult situations they will face throughout their lives.