

Responding to Hostile Parent Comments

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Parent Letter page 1

I'm not clear on why and what the purpose of buying these stacking cups is. Is this something that the kids are required to buy to be able to participate in a during school activity? If the child does not have the money to purchase these cups will they be provided at school? Is this a PE activity or classroom activity? If it is a PE activity, what is it taking the place of?

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How was the decision made to use stacking cups for a PE activity? Were other less expensive options considered such as rubiks cube, pick up sticks, hackey sack, or hopscotch? Why are stacking cups considered an appropriate activity for PE rather than playing kickball, basketball, dodge ball or some other legitimate physical activity?

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What is the deadline the children must have their stack of cups by? If the kids are required to purchase these cups, why didn't the school district purchase a shipping container full of these things from China and then sell them to the kids at cost which would have been \$1 for 12 cups rather than a ridiculously marked up price of \$30 for 12 cups?

What would you do if you received this letter from an angry parent?

- Initial reaction?
 - Your action?

Parent Letter points:

- Financial concerns
- Appropriate activities

What do you think the parent was thinking?

Why did he write this letter?

- His feelings about PE in schools
- Why send this to the school board?

Response to Letter: Financial Concerns

- "Speed Stacks cups are not a required purchase. I would never make my students purchase any equipment for class."
- I have had several students and parents ask me if they could get some Speed Stack Cups for their home. The least expensive way for me to do this was to set up a group order so as to minimize the cost for those who want to participate.

Response to Letter: Appropriate Activities

- Provided research and URL about the benefits of Speed Stacking.
- Discussed appropriate and inappropriate EPE activities
- Attached NASPE statement on dodgeball
- Provided URL to NASPE website

Gave additional information about EPE program

- Invited letter writer and his family to participate in the "eight week healthy student challenge."
- NASPE standards listed
- SPARK & PEP grant information

Why is it better to act, rather than react, when faced with unpleasant situations?

Resources that can be used to enhance positive communication with parents.

- PE Central: Supporting/Defending Your PE Program
 - www.pecentral.org/professional/defending/parentletter.html
- NASPE:
 - www.aahperd.org
- PE Links 4 U
 - <http://www.pelinks4u.org/>

How do you respond?

- Where are parents coming from?
(understand parent's concerns)
- Validate the parent's concerns
- What points are important to share
with parents?

Scenarios:

- "Please do not ask my child to do exercise outside of class because of all of their homework they do not have time to exercise."
- "Why are you making my child work out with a sprained arm?"
- "Please excuse Mary from PE today. She's having a struggle from her past. Please keep this in consideration." (written by student)
- Your experiences?

Group Activity

- Each group writes a hypothetical letter from a parent.
- Pass written letter to another group for their response.
- Open for discussion

Discuss Others' Experiences

- What concerns are common?
 - What have you seen?
 - How would you respond?

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